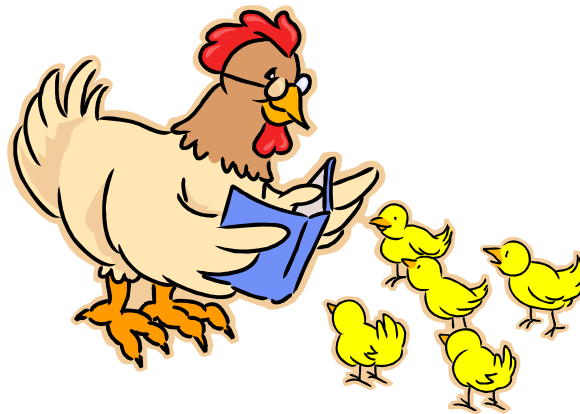


Wichita Collegiate School Early Childhood

“READ AND ROMP DAY”



Kathy Wagner - Early Childhood Physical Education
Suzanne Mattix – Early Childhood Librarian
Jenny Paulseen - Early Childhood Librarian (retired)

Wichita Collegiate School
9115 E. 13th
Wichita, Kansas 67206

Telephone - 316-771-2207

kathywagner@wcsks.com smattix@wcsks.com

Kathy Wagner's Physical Education web page address:

https://www.edline.net/pages/Wichita_Collegiate_School/Early_Childhood/EC_Physical_Education

(*Note – large spaces between words in Kathy's web page address are underscore lines.)

Wichita Collegiate School

Early Childhood

“READ AND ROMP DAY”

“Read and Romp Day” is a collaborative effort between the Physical Education department and the Library. It is organized so that children have the opportunity to move to different reading stations throughout the facility, listen to a volunteer read a story, and participate in a physical activity that corresponds with the book. Although our event is organized for Early Childhood and Kindergarten students, it is easily adaptable to the elementary age.

Information we consider when organizing this event:

- 1. Length of Entire Event** - We want “Read and Romp Day” to be a special event for our students so we arrange to have it take up a big part of their school day. We have one event in the morning and another in the afternoon. Half day students come to “Read and Romp Day” shortly after arriving at school and full day classes are divided evenly among the morning and afternoon sessions, depending upon lunch schedules. Each session lasts 2 hours and 15 minutes.
- 2. Attention Span & Time at Each Station** - This always varies, but we know our Preschool and Kindergarten children are not able to sit for very long. Our stations need to be relatively short (approximately 12 minutes). We choose books that are fun and interesting, but can be read quickly, allowing more time for children to be active. To keep students interested and focused, it is important that they not spend too much time at one station. Some method of timing must be established. Place a timer at each station or designate volunteers to say “rotate.” We use the basketball clock in our gym (but not the horn – it scares the children) and a whistle is blown so that all stations can rotate at once.
- 3. Number of stations** - To determine the number of stations, we take the total number of participants in each session (a.m. and p.m.) and divide it by the number of students we want in a group. If you want more flexibility in your time and rotation procedure, you can double up the number of students at a station and have an empty station in between each group. This means that a group does not have to worry about everyone being done with a book or an activity at the same time and allows students to rotate to the next session without waiting for the group ahead of them to finish. Remember, however, that more students at a station may require more equipment or supplies.
- 4. Location** - We are fortunate enough to have two gymnasiums for our activities and a hallway and music room between the two gyms. We use all of this space. If you have half day students, those classrooms could also be used since those students would be attending the event. Classrooms make good

music stations. When choosing a location, make certain that stations are in close proximity to your gymnasium and restrooms are nearby.

5. Space and Noise Level - Plan activities according to the space that you have and consider how noisy the activities can get. We have two large gyms and during our first year, planned two music stations at diagonal corners in each gym. Even when played softly, the music made it difficult for readers at other stations. Since then, we plan only one activity in each gym that requires music.

6. Choosing the Books - In many cases, we choose the books after selecting the activities. We go through the Physical Education equipment storage room, look at equipment, activity books, and music, and determined how we might use them. The librarian then goes on a search for books that might fit the equipment or game we discuss. (*Example: After seeing that a yarn ball and an oversized badminton birdie can make an ice cream cone, we selected Duke, the Dairy Delight Dog.*) However, if the librarian has a particular book that she is interested in, we generally find or create an activity that compliments the book.

When pairing up a book with an activity, always consider the length of the book. A longer story generally needs an activity that takes fewer instructions, thus providing more time for play. A shorter book allows more time for directions, so activities can be a little more detailed.

7. Provide A Variety Of Activities - Attempt to vary the activities. Provide dances, relays, and simple games and activities that take little explanation. Use your imagination! Be sure to provide many different ways to move and use simple equipment. This keeps the children interested. (*Examples – A jump rope can become a snake for children to jump over, or a scooter can be used to lie on and become a crocodile.*) Choose equipment that allows the children to stay under control and within their own station, since you will not want their activity to interfere with another station.

8. Snack - This is a regular part of the Early Childhood day, so we plan this as one of our stations. We set up a quieter area outside the gymnasiums. The children are served a snack and read a book. To help defray costs, parents provide us with the ingredients that we need to make our snack. Teachers tell us the name of their snack person for that day and we send home a note, in advance, asking them if they would be willing to provide an item for our snack station. We mention what item to bring and when to bring it. Parents actually appreciate this, as they do not have to come up with a special snack for their child's classroom! For fun, we attempt to find a snack that goes with our story. (*Example: Butterfly crackers to go with "The Butterfly House."*) Providing snack, however, means that you must be aware of school nutrition guidelines and food allergy policies. Some parents, whose children have food allergies, choose to send a separate snack to school for their child on this day. Be sure it is clearly marked.

9. Restroom Break - The first year that we did “Read and Romp Day”, we had a bathroom break planned in the rotation. The teachers, however, did not feel that this was necessary, so we eliminated it after the first year. Teachers or volunteers take children to the restroom, as needed.

10. Volunteers - This event can not be done without many volunteers. Each station needs a reader and a romper in the morning and afternoon. At the beginning of the year, classroom teachers put up a sign up sheet for volunteers. This gives us a good starting point. If we need additional help, teachers and room mothers help us recruit parents, and our Friends of the Library volunteers do much of the paperwork (volunteer name tags, student cards, etc.) ahead of time. When asking for help, remember that most parents like to come to an event when their own child will be there, so be prepared with this information ahead of time. Communication with volunteers is very important, so send them information in writing. When the event is over, send them a written thank you and call students together at the end of the event to publicly thank the volunteers. Appreciated parents will be more willing to help you again in the future.

If a school has difficulty recruiting parent volunteers, consider using high school, middle school, or upper elementary students as your readers and rompers. Older students often enjoy reading to younger children and they are wonderful at organizing the activities. This cross divisional interaction between grade levels is often supported and encouraged by administration. In addition, it is a wonderful community service project for older students.

If a school wants to hold a “Read and Romp Day” event but feels their students are too old, one option is to coordinate with local elementary schools or child care facilities to bring their children to the event. Older students from the school can then serve as the readers and rompers.

Sometimes we discover that an idea we had does not work as well as hoped. Usually, it is the parent volunteers who first notice this situation. Volunteers are generally very good at “tweaking” a game to improve it or just coming up with a whole different idea. We appreciate their input, so at the end of the event, we always ask for feedback regarding the activities and the event, overall. Some of our best ideas over the years have come from helpers. Volunteers also appreciate that we value their opinions.

11. Classroom Teacher Participation – We want this day to be fun for everyone involved. Therefore, we feel it is important that volunteers not have to be responsible for discipline. Our administration supports our request that classroom teachers stay with their children throughout this event. Our teachers are very cooperative. They enjoy “Read and Romp Day”, as well. The integration of reading and physical activity reinforces their mission in the classroom.

12. Assistance from the Maintenance Department – “Read and Romp Day” requires the assistance of the maintenance department to prepare facilities for the event. We prepare a list of things (in writing) that we need done in preparation for the event. In that request, we provide a time frame for when we need things ready or taken down. In our request, we reference the gym areas, eating area, classrooms, and restroom facilities. Many people will be attending our event, so we want our facilities to look their best.

13. Art Work – Since the snack area does not have any “romping,” we decorate the area with art work done by the children. We provide a theme for the snack area based on the book that will be read at that station. The classroom teacher works with the children to produce beautiful works of art. Over the years we’ve had some wonderful themes including winter, zoo, cats, sunflowers, farm, bears, garden, ocean, dinosaurs, circus, and butterflies. When the snack area is decorated, it is a beautiful sight! Take pictures and post them after the event.

14. Making Use of Other Resources – If you have a particular teacher, parent, or friend of the school that has a special talent that can be used at “Read and Romp Day,” consider inviting them. We always make use of our school music teacher and have invited parents who work at dance and art studios. Many people enjoy sharing their skills with students.

15. Promoting the Event –Take every opportunity to promote the event. Use school newsletters, notes to parents, signs in the hallway, and announcements over the public address system. Contact the local television stations and newspaper. They are always looking for stories on fun ways that children learn.

At our event, each child has a card that the teacher carries as they rotate through the stations. This card has squares with the name of all the books. As a child completes a station, the appropriate square is either stamped with a rubber stamp or a sticker is placed on the square. We use a stamp or sticker that corresponds with the book (*Example: bear book/bear stamp, frog book /frog sticker*). Our reasoning behind this is that non-readers can recognize the sticker and remember what the story is about. This allows children to talk about the books and activities with their family. When doing this, they are promoting the Library and Physical Education department. They are getting excited about reading and physical activity! This is exactly what we want!

16. After the Event – Take time to thank everyone who made the event possible. Often times the greatest assistance comes from the secretary, teacher’s aide, maintenance staff, or administration. Be sure to thank the parents and teachers, as well. A handwritten note is a nice touch and reminds people that you appreciate their help and support.

Place a brief story about the event in your school newspaper or on your school web site. It’s a great way to build support for this event and your department.

17. Photography – If pictures were taken and your school allows it, post photos where children, parents, and teachers can see them. If a video was done, take a few minutes to show children part of it. They love seeing themselves and it will only reinforce their excitement of the event. Remember to get permission from administration before photographing or video taping students.

18. HAVE FUN!!!

