

MAGIC MAZE

FLORIDA VACATION READERS
SUMMER, 1971

CLUE SHEET

The following pages are intended to be simple, essential directions, in many cases purely reminders, of things that are necessary to do in order to conduct a pleasant and successful summer reading program in your library. You in Florida should remember you are not alone in threading the Maze for not only again is Oklahoma with you but selected public libraries in Wisconsin are with us, and several pilot counties in Florida have been chosen by the Department of Education to use the program in their school libraries open this summer. This is an exciting development and you will be notified later just which counties these are so that you can dovetail your efforts with theirs.

CLUE #1 - KNOW THE RULES

In order to have a relaxed, smoothly-running program, it is imperative that every staff member who is ever likely to come in contact with the project understands the simple guidelines upon which the program is based. They are as follows:

1. All children who can read are eligible to join. There has been some problem in the past with pre-schoolers who really cannot read but whose parents have been extremely eager for them to participate. This year, therefore, we worded our first guideline thus:

"The Magic Maze is open to all children who can read. Pre-school children who cannot read will have co-ordinated activity of an appropriate nature planned for them (such as story hours) according to the resources of the individual library."

This means, then, you will make your decision on actual membership on the basis, not of grade level, but of ability to read individually the simplest book material your library offers. Remember fluency is not the criterion either. In sensitive pre-school cases, you will have to be gentle but discerning. What other activities you can plan for the youngest set will be entirely up to you. Maybe you can find some local Girl Scouts who would be willing to hold a weekly picture book read-aloud if naught else is feasible. Let only the readers, then, be full-fledged members.

2. No reward or recognition for individual achievement is to be given. This is sometimes a hard thing to not do, but it isn't

as hard on the children as it is on you and, secondly, parents. You must constantly remind yourself of the child who achieves only one book and how he feels when he sees the names of his peers who read ten in the local press. Is he going to be a more avid user of your library?

This year we have incorporated a certificate of participation on the back of the reading record to be signed by you, at the end of the summer, for any child who has one book or more recorded on his record. Since these records are usually returned at the end more-or-less privately, there will be no embarrassment of any kind. We cannot stress too strongly one other factor which is intangible but extremely important. Let each staff member, and especially yourself, record or stamp each title a child presents with a smile of pleasure and a word of commendation. This is worth a thousand stars on an honor roll. This is what individualizes the program for each child. If you have no time for elaborate programming, you have time for just a moment of personal contact. We repeat. That which costs you nothing is worth everything.

3. To register a child, print or write his name on a reading record and on an ID card. Give him the latter immediately. You will have decided whether your children are to carry their records home and back each time or whether you will keep them on file. You may wish to keep a 3 x 5 card registration file for your own use which will contain his name, address, school and new grade. If not, it would be wise to include at least the school and new grade on the reading record.

Next send the child to choose his books, or have someone help him if at all possible. It would be well to have him check back with you to see whether he has chosen wisely, but in any event, make it clear to him that he is to bring the finished books to you when he returns. No book reports, please, at that time, just a brief conversation about the book.

When you write the title on the record (only the title, please) you or he can stamp it and it looks grandly official. Some bookmobile patrons keep their records and do their own recording but much is missed this way. And then when it's all over, you sign his certificate and have already decided how he is to receive it to keep. If this is done in a group situation such as a classroom visit in the fall, let it be soon and without fanfare (auditorium assembly or awards day).

Each child has meanwhile received a button as soon as he discusses one book with you. He receives only one during the summer and at no other time. "Hardship cases" like lost buttons are left to your discretion.

4. Reading records are interchangeable from one library to another. This is meant to be between cities or in moving from one part of



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a large city to another. Obviously, if you elect to keep his record on file, you are not going to want to be sending it hither and yon at a whim. This should be explained if the occasion arises.

5. Summer reading is for fun. This is our last guideline and our most important. When he has filled ten lines on his record, a child should feel eager to go on on his own or you may have made the whole thing too complicated!

CLUE #2 - PLAN YOUR OWN LOCAL FLOURISHES

You have now gone over the ground rules. The rest is up to you. Posters and streamers are furnished to help your publicity efforts. Blank space on posters (as on reading records) is for your library's name and the dates through which your program runs. These are chosen by you.

Needless to say, newspaper, radio and TV coverage of any kind is all to the good. This is up to you. Publicize through the schools before vacation begins. The school librarian is your friend and ally but so are teachers and principals.

Special programs can be as many or as few as your circumstances permit. They can take any form your local resources provide. Do you have any amateur magicians in town? They'd be great this year when the whole theme is magic and fantasy and "other worldliness."

And let this theme take hold in your mind. Arrange your book displays to cover everything from science fiction to Alice in Wonderland. How about a magic carpet (borrowed from the local furniture store) just to be unrolled for picture book hour?

CLUE #3 - WORK OUT A TIME TABLE FOR THE WHOLE SEASON

Even before the advent of your supplies from the printer and us, you may have decided just which will be your opening date and your closing one. We cannot overemphasize a complete schedule ahead.

When will you call a staff meeting for discussing the program?

When will you do each step of the publicity?

What do you need to prepare for opening day?

When will you schedule each special event or program?

When will you have a closing affair or will you have one?

How far down will you allow the materials to get before you contact the State Sorceress for more? Yes, you can write us but, please, not when

you're down to the next to last button. Give us at least a week to supply you. We will do so as long as extra material holds out.

And what day will you sit down and fill out the evaluation questionnaire we will be sending you at the close of the program? Yes, we really need it back. Remember this program is federally funded under Title I of the Library Services and Construction Act and the support you give it will provide it again each year.

May I please ask, in closing, that when doing publicity, especially in local papers, you impress upon the paper that LSCA is to be mentioned when describing this project. Last year it was somewhat discouraging, when reading the clipping service, to see item after item which never mentioned that this was a statewide, nationally-known, federally-funded project. So many papers make it sound as if it were purely a local affair. I know many of you are thinking how at the mercy of the press you are but you're really not if you make the effort to discuss this personally with your local news person. Explain it to your board and bring their influence to bear on the proper kind of news facts you want in the paper. Remember it will bear fruit in many ways toward better library service for all.

If I could cast a happy spell upon all of you now for a successful summer project, I would but the magic is all really up to you!

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