

# THE LAST WORD

## The Curious Case of Band-Aid Contagion

Shawn D. Walsh

I don't think anyone could have prepared me for the fact that germs are not the only things that are contagious. The need for a Band-Aid can spread faster than a cold germ!

For kids under about ten, every small cut, abrasion, or invisible hurt needs a Band-Aid. Logically, when you have a large group of young children, the chance of someone legitimately needing one is high.

Combine that with summer, when more skin is exposed and energy is high. Running, tripping, and just general kid antics increase the risk of needing a Band-Aid. And, of course, all this movement means the Band-Aids their parents put on them will also fall off during a program, and they will need an immediate replacement.

Now for me, nothing is more fun than a colorful Band-Aid or one adorned with characters, especially when I'm feeling sad. However, having any Band-Aids in the library that are not the generic beige plastic adhesive kind is a disaster waiting to happen. Since they have become a badge of honor, if the library has neon ones then everyone will need one!



Please note: there are ways to contain the contagion before it spreads. Be sure to check all shoes before any activity that involves movement. Make sure all laces are tied, double knotted, and loose ends tucked into shoes. Yelling, "shoe check!" is not unheard of in my library anymore. The kids stop where they are, and everyone's shoes are checked for potential problems.

Finally, and this helps with elementary-age children who can discern humor better, offering to cut off an injured appendage and replace it with a wooden one is always good. If the child is really hurting and not just succumbing to the Band-Aid contagion, he or she will proceed to show me the scrape or abrasion. The wide-eyed look of concern believing they may actually need a peg leg or arm frequently means that child is probably just fine and needs only a momentary break to settle down and refocus. Crisis averted!

I never would have thought Band-Aid contagion would be one of my challenges as a librarian, but a large break-out can derail an entire program, and I'm not having that happen again. So bring on the boring beige bandages!

*Shawn D. Walsh is the Emerging Services and Technologies Librarian at Madison (Ohio) Public Library. He is known in the community for his messy, energetic, and creative programs for elementary, middle, and high school patrons.*

Got a great, lighthearted essay? A funny story about children and libraries? Books and babies? Pets and picture books? A not-so-serious look at the world of children's librarianship? Send your Last Word to Sharon Verbeten at [CALeditor@yahoo.com](mailto:CALeditor@yahoo.com).