

THE LAST WORD

Learn to Tie Your Shoelaces . . . Please!

Melanie A. Lyttle

I had to know how to tie my shoelaces before I left kindergarten. It was on my report card.

But apparently you don't have to know how to do that anymore, or at least not in our local school district. I find that to be a real problem for me professionally!

I'm not saying that learning sight words or counting to one hundred isn't important. There is a lot that kindergarten teachers have to accomplish, and I don't know how they do it. I'm not against Velcro on shoes, but I'm not a huge fan of flip-flops or Crocs that seem to magically fly through the air during freeze tag.

However, when I do a summer library program, one of our activities is playing worm tag outside between stories; and it still seems a bit strange that most every child about to enter first or second grade has untied shoes. Cue the whiny voice and puppy dog eyes: "I can't tie my shoes. Can you do it for me?" I get a bit frustrated!

This has been happening to me for a few years, so I do plan accordingly and include time to tie shoes. I have games to play

between stories that aren't as active in case one group has a higher percentage of potential projectile shoes or shoelaces that won't stay tied. As I read stories, I am usually also checking to see the footwear of the day to help determine what activity to do next.



My biggest gripe is when a child in third or fourth grade doesn't tie his shoes and then seems surprised when he falls down. I draw the line at tying *their* shoes.

Over the years, I have talked kids through the "bunny ears" method of tying shoes, but that's it. I have also decided that they really should—and probably do—make Velcro shoes for older kids.

Maybe I shouldn't play running games between stories, but the kids and I both enjoy them. I'd hate to see that stop just for a

few kids who don't know how to tie their shoes.

Sometimes I just long for the good ol' days when Shoe Tying 101 was on every kindergarten agenda. ☺

Melanie A. Lyttle is Head of Public Services at Madison (OH) Public Library.

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