

Panda Kindergarten

Authors/Illustrators: Joanne Ryder and Dr. Katherine Feng

- **Summary:** This book introduces 16 young pandas who grow up at the Wolong Nature Preserve in China and explains the role that the preserve plays in nurturing and caring for the pandas as they grow up.
- **Reviews:** This inviting book introduces 16 cubs at the China Conservation and Research Center for the Giant Panda at Wolong Nature Reserve. Ryder describes the organization's purpose and procedures to save the animals from extinction, focusing on the reserve's efforts to keep the pandas healthy and safe and placing less emphasis on their primary role as a breeding center, which works well for the intended audience. The author explains that as the pandas grow older, they may be released into the wild or they may stay in the safety of the compound to "have cubs of their own." She also describes how staff members help to care for twins, whereas in the wild, only one baby can survive. Feng's clear and detailed photographs are visual treats, giving readers a glimpse into the feeding and care of the pandas. There's a high cuteness factor as the cubs play, sleep, and interact with caregivers. Additional facts about giant pandas are appended, but are almost hidden on the CIP page. The colorful photography and smooth text pair well for a quick, instructive read-a-loud.—*Nancy Call, Santa Cruz Public Libraries, Aptos, CA* (Retrieved from amazon.com)
- **Author/Illustrator Information, Joanne Ryder:**
<http://authors.simonandschuster.com/Joanne-Ryder/1240247>
- **Author/Illustrator Information, Dr. Katherine Feng:**
<http://www.phototc.com/leaders/leader.php?who=22>
- **Discussion Questions:**
 - Before reading the book, what do you think a panda kindergarten class would be like?
 - If you were in panda kindergarten, what kinds of activities would you do?
 - What do you think the pandas do on the playground?
 - What is something new you learned after reading *Panda Kindergarten*?
- **Curricular Activities**
 - Reading/oral language – Read the book out loud and ask students to recall characteristics of newborn pandas
 - Writing – Write a journal entry pretending to be a panda in the kindergarten. What kind of things would you do and see there, etc.
 - Math/ Technology – Calculate the distance from your school to the Wolong Nature Preserve
 - Science –
 - Research how the pandas are cared for at the Wolong Nature Preserve and what role nature preserves play in maintaining endangered species around the world.

- Research the life cycle of a panda
 - Research other endangered animals
 - Social Studies – Compare and contrast the lives of panda kindergarten to human kindergarten classrooms
 - Art – Make a poster of an activity the pandas can do in kindergarten
 - Drama – Have students act like the pandas. Have them try to mimic their behaviors, posture and facial expressions
- **Related Books:**
 - *National Geographic Readers: Pandas* by Anne Schreiber
 - *Giant Pandas Volume 4* by Marcia S. Freeman
 - *Red Pandas* by Sara Swan Miller
 - *Backyard Bear* by Anne Rockwell, illustrated by Megan Halsey
- **Other titles by Ryder:**
 - *Where Butterflies Grow*
 - *My Father's Hands*
 - *A House By the Sea*
- **Websites for further study or enrichment:**
 - <http://nationalzoo.si.edu/Animals/GiantPandas/PandaFacts/default.cfm> - Smithsonian National Zoological Park information about pandas.
 - <http://animals.nationalgeographic.com/animals/mammals/giant-panda/> - National Geographic Society information about pandas
 - http://www.globio.org/glossopedia/article.aspx?art_id=22 – Wolong Nature Reserve information for children.
 - <http://childrenschoiceaward.wikispaces.com/Panda+Kindergarten> – Activities Page for the Washington Children's Choice Picture Book Award
 - <http://www.pandaexpress.com/pandakids/html/index.html> - Panda Kids website has facts, information, games and activities.