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WELCOME Educators, Parents, & Caregivers - this guide is for you!

Filled with conversation starters and resources galore, this guide can be utilized to prepare young audience members for the show, introduce them to the theater, encourage them to reflect on their experience, engage them in an activity, and enrich their overall experience with the play.

We built this guide for you, and we want to hear from YOU! At the end of this guide, there is a link to a survey. Please let us know what you thought - we appreciate your feedback!

THE WORLD OF ELEPHANT & PIGGIE'S "WE ARE IN A PLAY!"

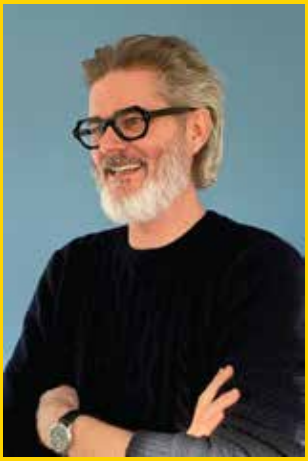
THEMES: ***Friendship*** ~ ***Caring*** ~ ***Problem Solving***

Based on the *Elephant and Piggie* Books by Mo Willems

SYNOPSIS OF THE PLAY:

An elephant named Gerald and a pig named Piggie are best, best, "bestus" (a word Gerald and Piggie made up that means "very best") friends, but Gerald worries that something could go wrong that would end their friendship. Piggie is not worried at all. She's even happier and more excited than usual. That's because she and Gerald are invited to a party hosted by the Squirrelles, three singing squirrels who love to have a good time. And so begins a day when anything is possible.

AUTHOR/CREATOR INFO:



Books, Script, and Lyrics by: Mo Willems

Mo Willems is an author, illustrator, animator, and playwright. He was the inaugural Kennedy Center Education Artist-in-Residence (2019-2022), and he continues to collaborate in creating fun new stuff involving classical music, opera, comedy concerts, dance, painting and digital works with the National Symphony Orchestra, Washington National Opera, Ben Folds, Yo-Yo Ma, and others. Willems is best known for his #1 New York Times bestselling picture books, *Don't Let the Pigeon Drive the Bus!*; *Knuffle Bunny: A Cautionary Tale*; *Knuffle Bunny Too: A Case of Mistaken Identity*, and his celebrated Elephant and Piggie early reader series. He began his career as a writer and animator on PBS' *Sesame Street*, where he garnered six Emmy Awards.

Music by:

Deborah Wicks La Puma (she/her/hers) is a composer, music director, orchestrator and choral conductor. She is one of most produced Theatre for Young Audiences artists working today, with her work being seen across the globe and enjoying both popular and critical success. Her arranging credits include TYA hits such as T*he Best Christmas Pageant Ever*, Mo Willems' *Knuffle Bunny*, and Joan Cushing's *Miss Nelson is Missing* and *Petite Rouge*. Ms. La Puma received her MFA from NYU's Tisch School of the Arts, and her BA from Stanford University. She is a proud Mexican-American with dual citizenship and a "Navy Brat" who grew up in Brazil and Portugal.

MO WILLEMS'S DRAWINGS!

Mo Willems is known for his unique art style that uses simple shapes to make characters with lots of personality!

Mo wanted to create art that kids could recreate, using shapes that most kids already know how to make. Mo arranged these shapes in a way that gave his art clear expressions and personality that lots of people, grown ups and kids alike, came to love! Can you use the following guide to create a drawing of Piggie?

Piggie

Thank you Laura Flocker. Based on Piggie from *My Friend Is Sad* by Mo Willems.

1 Start with a "U" shaped body.	2 head	3 arms and legs
4 ears and nose	5 eyes and a mouth	6 What will she say?

My Book **the end**

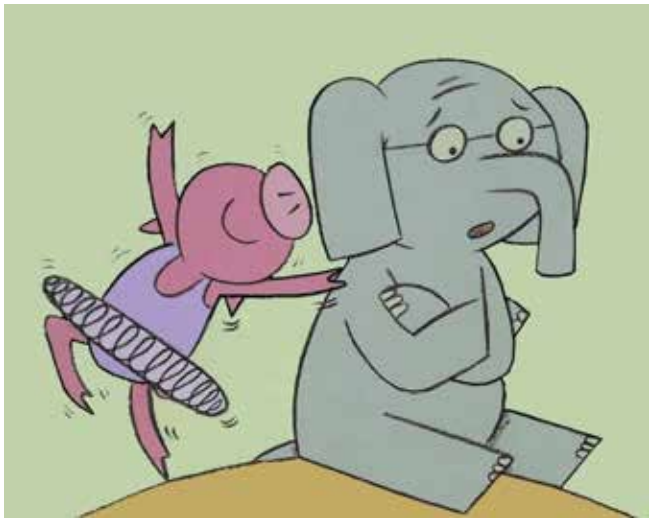
by_____

A few years ago, Mo Willems created a video series called LUNCH DOODLES with Mo Willems! In these videos, Mo shows viewers around his home studio, talks about creating art, and teaches viewers how to make drawings like him! Check it out!

LUNCH DOODLES with Mo Willems!

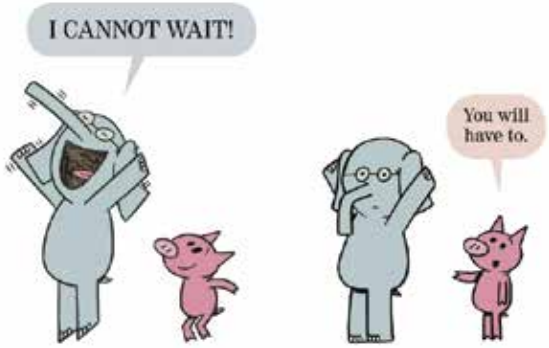
UNLIKELY FRIENDSHIPS!

How can Gerald and Piggie be best, best, "bestus" friends when they are so different?



PIGGIE:
Carefree
Enthusiastic
Impulsive

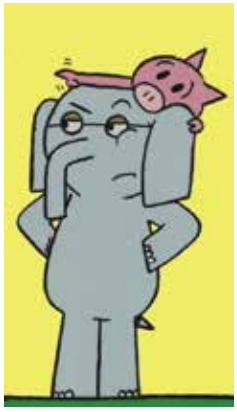
ELEPHANT:
Often worried
A planner
Reserved



Their personalities work well together!

Piggy had never been to a party before, but Gerald knows about parties.

Gerald doesn't think he can dance, but Piggy encourages him.



They can learn and grow from each other!

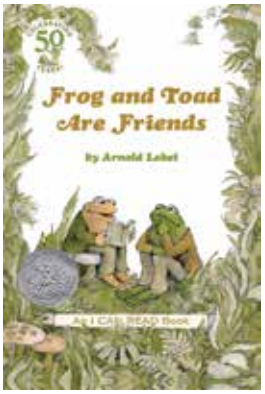
Gerald gives Piggie good advice and shows her how to consider potential problems.

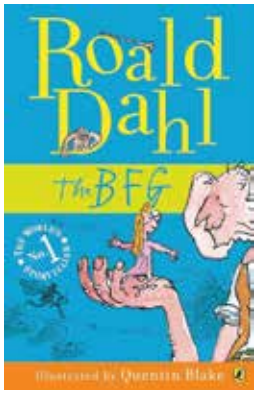
Piggie helps Gerald to be more open to new experiences and how to be optimistic.

Though they have their differences, great friends have a lot in common!

They both care about each other's feelings, they have similar interests, and they have a lot of fun together!

Other unlikely "bestus" friends - IN BOOKS!





Other unlikely "bestus" friends - IN NATURE!

What are some things that might make two people seem like they wouldn't be friends?

Have you seen an unlikely friendship in your school or neighborhood? If so, describe it!

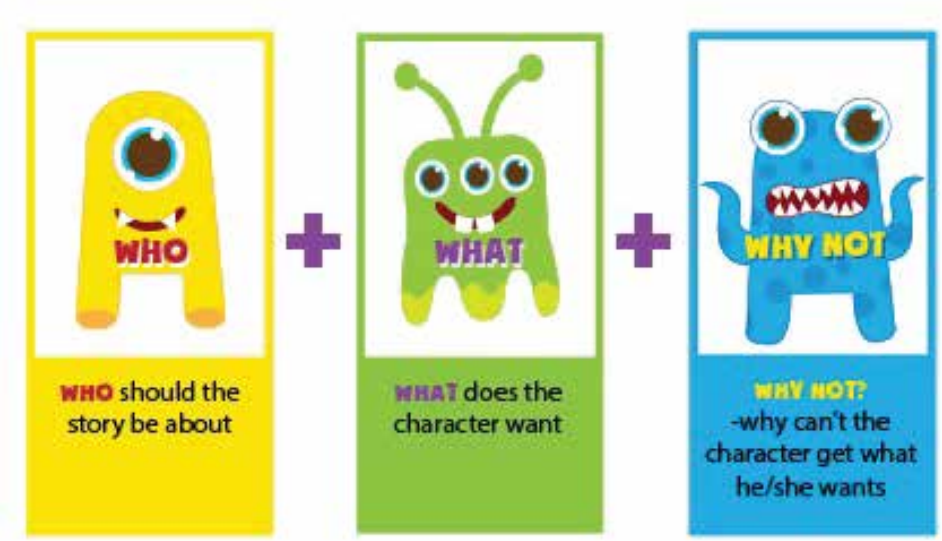
What can you do to be a good friend to someone who might seem different from you?

If you noticed someone being left out, what could you do to try to include them?

"YOU are in a Play!"

Elephant and Piggie put on a play...and so can you.
Actors are storytellers, so the first thing you need is a STORY!

How do you create a MAIN CHARACTER?



You can create a brand new character or select one from a favorite fairytale or book. Whichever character you choose, but sure to know WHO, WHAT, and WHY NOT!

Let's use the book "A Big Guy Took My Ball!" - featuring Elephant & Piggie!

WHO: Piggie

WHAT: wants to play with a large ball

WHY NOT: a big guy took her ball!

How do you build a STORY for your character?

RISING ACTION:

- Piggie asks Gerald to help her get the ball back
- Gerald is ready to help his friend
- Then Gerald realizes the "big guy" is...a whale!
- The Whale enters to speak with Gerald and Piggie....

CLIMAX:

- What is going to happen?! Is the whale going to give back the ball? Is the whale going to sit on them? Is the whale going to yell at them?

FALLING ACTION

- The whale is lonely and wants friends to play with!

ENDING

- Piggie, Gerald, and the whale play with the ball together!

WHO will perform your story?

Choosing which actor plays which character is called **CASTING.** But actors aren't the only ones who put on a show! Check out **WHO'S WHO IN THE THEATER** on **Page 16.**

How will you PERFORM your story?

There are many ways to tell a story! Here are some of them:

Remember! You don't need a fancy stage, elaborate costumes, or stage lights to put on a play. Just your actors' tools (body, voice, imagination), your story, and an audience!

SENSORY FRIENDLY THEATER

A production designed with ALL kids in mind!

CTM has created *Elephant and Piggie's "We're in a Play!"* to be sensory friendly. The main goal of a sensory friendly/relaxed performance is to create a space where youth and their families feel comfortable, supported, and free to be themselves.

What does "Sensory" mean?

Most of us have 5 senses: sight, taste, touch, smell, and hearing. Some people have different ways of processing this sensory information:

Over-sensitive: You might be bothered by certain textures of food or clothing, or you might be easily overwhelmed by loud noises or bright lights.

Under-sensitive: You might not feel pain as much as others, or you might seek out a lot of sensory input, like bumping into things or needing a lot of movement.

What is a Sensory Friendly show?

We worked with designers, artists, and consultants on all elements of this production to provide a show where all youth (including those with autism or sensory communication needs) can enjoy the performance.

How do you make a show Sensory Friendly?

We adjust certain sensory elements to be less intense for people who are sensitive to lights and sounds. For example, the house lights (lights in the audience, as opposed to lights on stage) will be kept on at a low level throughout the performance. Music and sound effect levels will be lowered.

Want to learn more about our Sensory Friendly Shows?

For the MYArts Social Story - CLICK HERE!
For a MYArts Seating Map - CLICK HERE!
For more information about Sensory Friendly Shows at CTM - CLICK HERE!

A VAUDEVIILLE REVIEW!

Before there was television....

Before there was radio...

There was VAUDEVILLE!!!

What is Vaudeville?

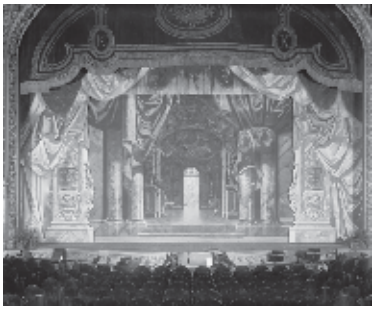
Vaudeville was a live form of entertainment between the 1890s and the 1930s that consisted of 10 to 15 individual unrelated acts (as opposed to a show that tells one story).

How is Elephant and Piggie's show like Vaudeville?

Instead of choosing one Elephant and Piggie book, the writers of the musical decided to feature stories from many Elephant and Piggie books. Each story in the music is a short episode, usually featuring a song, before the next story is told...just like Vaudeville!

Where did Vaudeville take place?

Vaudeville took place all over the United States, typically in beautiful theaters built around the turn of the century. Rafael Castanera, the Scenic Designer for *Elephant & Piggie's "We Are in a Play!"*, was inspired by these old theaters when designing the set. However, instead of angels carved out of marble, he wanted Elephant, Piggie, and their friends to be carved into the set instead!



The B.F. Keith Theatre in Washington DC

"The Elephant and Piggie Theater" at CTM

What is the same about the real vaudeville theater and the scenic design for Elephant and Piggie? What's different?

Friendship Scenes

A social emotional learning activity

Grades: K-3
Time: 20 minutes
Materials Needed: None!

The Characters of Gerald and Piggie are Bestus Friends! Sometimes friends have lots of fun together. Sometimes friends need to help one another. Sometimes friends need to work through a problem together. In this activity, student actors can practice how they may navigate challenges with friends in their own life.

For this activity, you will talk through a series of scenarios with the students. Please feel free to use our suggested scenario ideas, or suggest your own!

Activity Instructions:

1. Share with the students that in this activity, students will be using their problem solving skills, and their acting skills to consider how they might work through certain challenges they might have with their friends.
2. Introduce a scenario to the students:
    a. A friend is feeling sad because they dropped their ice cream cone on the ground, how would you help them feel better?
    b. A friend is worried about going down the slide for the first time, what could you do?
    c. Two friends are frustrated because they both want a turn on the swing first! How can these friends solve this problem?
    d. A friend is sad because they were not invited to the other friend's birthday party. How can these friends work through this conflict?
    e. Two friends are feeling sad because one of them is moving to another state with their family. How can these friends help each other feel better?
3. Ask the students for some suggestions of things they could try to work through this conflict and make a list on the board or on a piece of paper.
4. Invite a few actors to act out the scene, using one of the suggestions from the list. One actor should pretend to be each of the friends!
5. Talk with the students about what went well with each idea, and what they could try differently next time. Try a few different ideas for each scenario!

Social Emotional Learning Competencies Addressed through this activity:

- Learners will be able to recognize and label a variety of their own basic emotions.
- Learners will be able to use verbal and nonverbal language to demonstrate a variety of increasingly complex emotions.
- Learners will be able to, with adult guidance, demonstrate a variety of strategies to manage strong emotions.
- Learners will begin to be able to, with adult guidance, focus their attention by demonstrating a variety of strategies to tolerate distractions.
- Learners will be able to, with adult guidance, identify how others are feeling, based on their verbal and nonverbal cues, and respond with compassion.
- Learners will be able to predict how someone else may feel in a variety of situations.
- Learners will be able to present their own point of view.
- Learners will be able to recognize and respect that individual differences are important to self and others.
- Learners will be able to identify the different relationships they have with others.
- Learners will be able to describe in simple terms how words, tone, and body language are used to communicate with others.
- Learners will be able to, with adult guidance, adapt behavior based upon peer feedback and environment cues.
- Learners will be able to demonstrate listening skills, start and stop conversations, and take turns in conversations.
- Learners will be able to understand the perspective of others in a conflict situation.
- Learners will be able to, with adult guidance, generate possible choices and actions they could take in a given situation, including positive and negative options.
- Learners will be able to identify how to get help from a trusted adult in a variety of situations.

Solving a Big Big Problem

A design thinking activity

Grades: 3-5
Time: 30 minutes
Materials Needed: Paper and things to write with (pencils, pens, markers or crayons).

Gerald and Piggie need to work together to solve problems in *Elephant and Piggie's We are in a Play!* Can you solve big problems like Gerald and Piggie? In this activity, students will use their design thinking skills to solve a big, big problem!

Activity Instructions:

1. Share with students that in this activity, they will be using their problem solving skills to solve a big, big, problem!
2. In Mo Willems's Book, *Today I Will Fly* Piggie sets a goal that she wants to fly! This makes Gerald very worried for Piggie's safety. In this activity, we are going to come up with some solutions for how Piggie could fly, while still being safe.
3. Start by discussing the following questions with the students, write a list of their responses on the board or a piece of paper:
    a) What would Piggie need in order to fly?
    b) What would Piggie need to be safe while flying?
    c) Where are some places Piggie could go that would make it safer to fly?
    d) What could Gerald do to help Piggie accomplish her goal?
4. Pass out a piece of paper to each student and invite them to draw a picture of their suggestion for how Piggie might fly while still being safe.
5. After all the students have completed their drawings. Invite them to talk about their idea to the group, describing the considerations they made in their design for safety, fun, and function.
6. Invite the other students to ask questions about things they wonder about the design, as well as celebrating details of the design they appreciate!
7. Invite a few student actors to demonstrate (safely) how the design might work in a variety of different variables (wind, birds flying by, rain, etc).
8. Congratulate the students on using their problem solving skills, and have a discussion about how these same skills can be applied to other problems they encounter.

Common Core Standards Addressed through this activity:

- A.A.Cr.4.i: Investigate Experiment with studio skills, techniques, materials, tools and elements and principles of art and design through practice.
- A.A.Cr.5.i: Plan Brainstorm, discuss, and sketch ideas to solve an art problem.
- A.A.Pr.5.i: Communicate Using art and design vocabulary, communicate ideas and artistic process through verbal and written descriptions
- A.A.Pr.6.i: Share Create, share, and exhibit pieces from an ongoing artistic portfolio.
- A.A.R.6.i: Describe details, subject matter, and the context of an artwork.

Pre-Show Question

1. This play is based on a popular book series by Mo Willems! Have you ever read or heard an *Elephant and Piggie* book? What do you know about the characters of Elephant (Gerald) and Piggie?
2. The characters of Gerald and Piggie are best, best, "bestus" friends! Do you have a "bestus" friend? What do you like about them? What do you like to do together?
3. In this play, Gerald and Piggie go to a party! Have you ever been to a party? What do you like to do at a party?
4. Have you ever seen a play before? What are some things you remember about it?
5. In our production, Gerald and Piggie are not played by a real elephant and a real pig, but by human actors! How do you think the artists working on the show will let the audience know what characters the actors are playing?

AUDIENCE MEMBER GUIDE

Just like the actors, you have a very important role to play as an audience member. The story of the show and everything you see onstage was created especially for YOU! Your energy and attention will not only be noticed by the actors, but by your fellow audience members as well. So do your best to give all of your attention to what is happening on stage!

GUIDELINES FOR YOUR ROLE AS AN AUDIENCE MEMBER

BEFORE THE SHOW:

- **Leave cell phones, electronics, and any noise-making devices at home or turned off.**
- **Food and gum are not allowed in the theater.**
- **Consider using the restroom before the show begins.**
- **When the lights begin to dim, the play is about to begin!**
- **NEED MORE INFORMATION?** CLICK HERE to access our Social Story, which will walk you through seeing a performance.

DURING THE SHOW:

- Notice the many ways that the story is being told - the characters' journey, the dialogue, costumes, scenery, sounds, lights, and more.
- Give the actors and the play your attention - there will be time to talk to the people sitting next to you after the show.
- The story might make you laugh, cry, or gasp - your reactions let the actors know that you are engaged in the story!
- Texting, taking photos, or recording videos is not allowed.
- **NEED MORE SUPPORT**? Ask for a sensory kit! These are perfect if you are sensitive to sound / lights or need a fidget to focus.
- **NEED A SENSORY BREAK**? Just outside our theater is a monitor that streams the show. Students can watch the show this way as they regulate.

AT THE END OF THE SHOW:

- The actors will come onstage to take a bow - you can show your appreciation by giving them a round of applause!
- When you leave, be sure to take your belongings with you. If you borrowed a Sensory Kit, please return it to us.

TALKBACKS:

- After Student Matinees (and some public shows), there will be a talkback, which is Q&A with the actors. Look to your adult to know if you are staying for the talkback.
- If you do stay for the talkback, think of questions that you want to ask the actors about the show - the design elements, the process of putting on a show, what it's like to be an actor, and more. Then raise your hand and someone may choose you to ask your question!

WHO'S WHO IN THE THEATER!

RUN CREW
set up the stage before the show and track props and set pieces during the show

ACTORS
perform the show for the audience

DIRECTORS
bring a unique vision to a production and stage the show

DESIGNERS
create the look and feel of the world of the show through Costumes, Scenery, Sound, and Lights

STAGE MANAGERS
coordinate communication with all roles in the theater and call technical cues during the show

PLAYWRIGHTS
write or adapt the show for the stage

(Young Playwrights from CTM's 2024 Festival)

CTM THEATER REVIEW

Please write or draw in the boxes below.

My name is _____ and I saw _____ at CTM on _____!
Title of Play *Date*

A moment in the play that I remember most was:

If I could play a character from the show, it would be:

The play made me feel:

Send us your theater reviews!
- Scan them and email them to matinees@ctmtheater.org
- Mail them to us at Children's Theater of Madison, 1055 E. Mifflin Street, Madison, WI 53703

Activities & Resources for the Classroom or Home

Suggested Reading From our friends, the Youth Service Librarians, at

MADISON PUBLIC LIBRARY

Pepper & Boo by Charise Mericle Harper

Nat the Cat Takes a Bath by Jarrett Lerner

Tacos Today by Raúl the Third

Sprinkles & Swirls: A Cool Day at the Pool by Lola M Schaefer

I Did It! By Michael Emberley

I'm Ogre It by Jeffrey Ebbeler

Guess What? by Mo Willems

Baloney & Friends by Greg Pizzoli

See the Cat: Three Stories About a Dog by David LaRochelle

Hi, Jack! by Mac Barnett

The Doghouse by Jan Thomas

What About Worms!? by Ryan T. Higgins

We Are Growing by Laurie Keller

Jack Blasts Off! by Mac Barnett

Problem Solved! by Jan Thomas

You can check out these books and more at your local library!

POST SHOW QUESTIONS:

1. How did the actors use their actor tools or voice, body, and imagination to tell this story?
2. What was similar about the characters of Gerald and Piggie, what was different between them?
3. In this play, we saw a conflict between Gerald and Piggie when Piggie thought Gerald broke her new toy. Have you ever had a conflict with a friend? How did you solve your conflict?
4. How were Gerald and Piggie good friends to one another during this play?
5. In addition to the actors on stage, there are other theater artists who create the clothes the actors wear (called costumes) and the stage they perform on (called the set). How did the costumes and set help you understand the story better?

ACT Now!

Are you inspired to do theater after seeing a play at CTM? There are many ways that you can begin your journey as a performer or theater artist! Here are some ideas:

1. Take a theater class

Build your skills! In an acting class, you will learn how to use your actor's tools of body, voice and imagination to tell stories and work as an ensemble with other actors. Do some research to see if there are any acting or drama classes offered at your school, or take a class at CTM during the school year or in the summer. You can learn more about our class offerings by visiting our website ctmtheater.org. (We have financial support available!)

2. Audition for a play

Ready for the stage? To participate in a play, you may need to audition / try out first. The director may tell you ahead of time specific scenes or songs to prepare, or they may ask you to bring one you chose. You can audition for plays through your school, at community theaters, or even at CTM!

3. Create your own show

Feeling inspired to create? Find a story that inspires you, or write your own story! Gather friends and practice acting your story out. Think about how you can use costumes, props, or lighting to make your story more clear and interesting for an audience. Invite friends and family to watch your performance and take the stage!

4. Start a drama club at your school

Do you think theater would make your school a better place? Find a teacher who would be excited to support your idea and start sharing your love of theater to inspire other students to join!

Remember, there are many ways to be involved in theater beyond just performing on stage. Theater needs directors, designers, playwrights, run crew, and more. Whatever skills or interests you bring, they have a place in theater!

We'd Love to Hear from You!

EDUCATORS & FAMILIES! Send us feedback on this study guide! What was useful? What wasn't in here that you would like to see? **Please email us at education@ctmtheater.org.**

STUDENTS! Send us your theater reviews! You can:

- Scan them and email them to matinees@ctmtheater.org
- Mail them to us at Children's Theater of Madison, 1055 E. Mifflin Street, Madison, WI 53703

Attention, Teachers!

Seeing this show at CTM addresses **Wisconsin Common Core Standards** in Theatre Education, World Languages , Environmental Literacy and Sustainability, English Language Arts, and Social Emotional Learning! **CLICK HERE** for a full list of standards addressed.

ABOUT CHILDREN'S THEATER OF MADISON

MISSION STATEMENT: CTM's mission is to spark imagination and build community through the creation and experience of theater

VALUES: Inclusion • Collaboration • Learning • Joy

SPONSORS for ELEPHANT AND PIGGIE'S "WE ARE IN A PLAY!"

Lead Sponsors

UnityPoint Health Meriter

PARTNER OF UW Health

Associate Sponsors

CI Pediatric Therapy Centers

ACT

This guide was created by: CTM Education Department: Erica Berman Thompson & Lindsay Gleason
Enrichment Guide Created By: Erika Sjoblom