

Get ready to see

Stuart Little

at Wheelock Family Theatre



A social story to help families prepare children*
for a visit to

Wheelock Family Theatre

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WHEELOCK
FAMILY
THEATRE

Affordable.

Professional.

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Theatre for all Families and Children.

***PLEASE NOTE:**

Social stories were originally developed for children on the autism spectrum, but we have found that they are helpful for preparing any child who is very young or who is coming to the theatre for the first time. Wheelock Family Theatre offers a social story for each of our productions. We hope you find them helpful!

I am going to see a play called *Stuart Little* at Wheelock Family Theatre.



When I get to the theatre, we will walk through the lobby. It might be crowded.

I will take deep breaths and be patient as we move through the crowd.



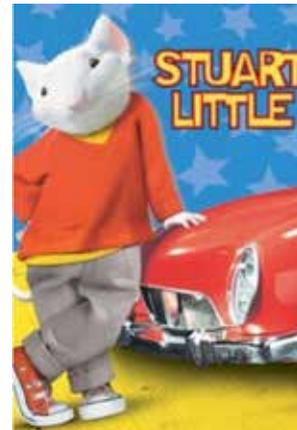
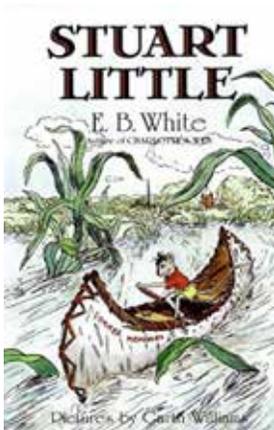
In a play, people on a stage tell a story — right in front of us! These people are called actors.



This story is about the adventures of a young mouse named Stuart Little.

It is based on a book by E.B. White.

There is also a movie version of the story.



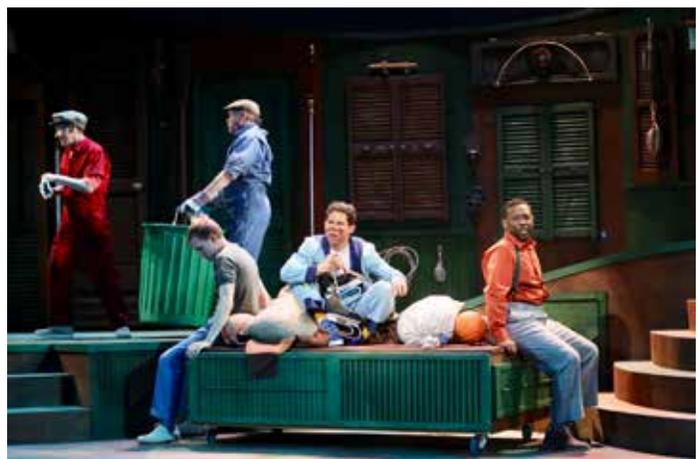
When I sit down in the theatre, I will see the set. A set is an imaginary place, built on the stage, to show where the story happens.

Here is a picture of the set for *Stuart Little*.



The story takes place in New York City and in a small town in Connecticut, but the set doesn't change.

The actors telling the story will help me to imagine different places.



This play has a lot of music in it. Some of the actors play instruments, like guitar, bass, piano, trumpet, cello, violin, and flute.



In other scenes, I will hear or see drums, a slide whistle, or a bell.

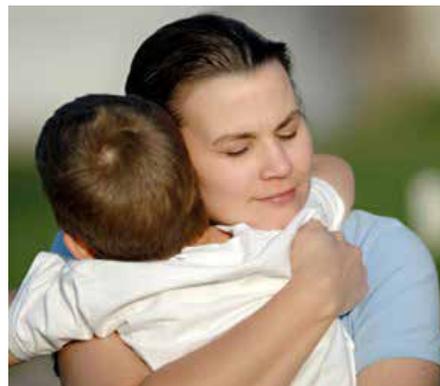


There are other sounds in this play too, like cats meowing, a dog barking, and a bird whistling.

If anything is too much for me, I can always cover my ears or close my eyes.



I can hug or hold hands with my mom or dad — or with someone else who came with me to the theatre.



If I need a break, I can go into the lobby —



or to a quiet, cozy space nearby.



If I need something to hold on to, I can ask an usher for a squishy toy.



I will know that the play is about to start when the lights in the room get darker and the lights on the stage get brighter.

The audience will get very quiet. It is important that I try to be quiet during the show, so I can hear everything.



There are some unusual things about this play.

Stuart is a mouse,



but the rest of his family is human.



Sometimes the actors telling the story are playing animals or birds.

But the actors do not crawl on their hands and knees like real animals or birds.

They walk on two feet like humans.

The actors use movement and costumes to give us hints about what kind of animal they are playing.

Jeff, who sometimes plays the dog, wears a stocking cap with floppy ears.



Felton, the actor who plays Stuart,



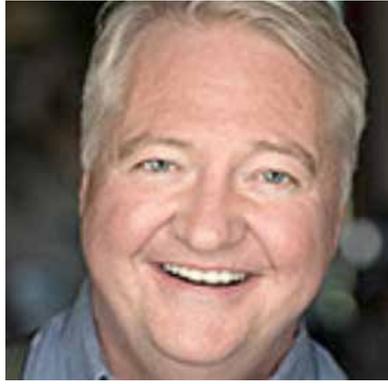
draws whiskers on his face.



He also clips a long belt to the back of his pants, so it hangs down like a tail.



JT, who plays
Snowbell the cat,



wears a hat with ears
like a cat's attached to it.



Margalo the bird wears a coat made of
cloth that looks like feathers,
and holds her arms out like wings.



At one point, other actors flap
long pieces of fabric for her that
look even more like wings.



Because Stuart is a mouse, he is small and the humans around him are big.

To help us imagine this, objects around him are giant.

When Stuart chases a ping pong ball, it is the size of a beach ball.



When his brother George catches it, it is regular ping pong ball size.



When Stuart hides under a newspaper, it is as big as a blanket.



When Stuart's mom makes him some ice skates, she uses paper clips as blades.



Some things in the story might make me nervous or scared.

But I know it is just pretend and no one is going to hurt me or any of the actors.

All of the people in the play are nice and kind in real life.

The Littles have a cat named **Snowbell**. He is a little bit of a trouble maker.



He is friends with other cats who want to eat Margalo the bird.



Sometimes, actors move through the aisles in the theatre. But I won't worry.

I know they won't hurt me or anyone else in the audience,

and they will soon go back up onto the stage.

If I get scared, I can always cover my ears or close my eyes.



I can hug or hold hands with my mom or dad — or with someone else who came with me to the theatre.



If I need a break, I can go into the lobby



or to a quiet, cozy space nearby.



If I need something to hold on to, I can ask an usher for a squishy toy.



At the end of a scene, some people will clap. Clapping tells the actors that I liked their performance.

If I want to clap, I can.
If I don't want to clap,
I don't have to.



The actors often pretend parts of the set are different things than they really are. For example,

when Stuart takes a bus to Central Park, the driver sits on top of the piano and pretends to drive.

Other actors walk behind her. They push the piano and act like bus passengers.



Stuart meets a nice woman named Doctor Carey.

She she has a miniature sailboat – just the right size for a mouse.

She asks Stuart to be the captain and sail the boat in a race.



Other actors hold up green cloth
and make it ripple like water.

When Stuart stands on top of the
piano, it rolls like a boat on the water.



The other boat sinks and its captain gets angry.

But he is not really mean or
angry. He is just pretending.

The actor who plays him is
really a nice person.



I know it is all just pretend.

If anything is too much
for me, I can always
cover my ears or close
my eyes.



I can hug or hold hands with my mom or dad —



or with someone else who came with me to the theatre.



In the middle of the play, we will have a break called **intermission**.

Lots of people will get up from their seats, and go back to the lobby.



During this time the lobby can get crowded and loud.

I can go to the lobby if I want to, but I don't have to.

I can also stay in my seat

or go to a quiet, cozy space in a different room.



I can ask for a snack.

I can eat my snack
in the lobby or outdoors.
But there is no eating or
drinking inside the theatre.



I can ask to use the
bathroom if I need to.



If I am thirsty, I can ask to
use the water fountain.



After intermission, everyone will
come back into the theatre and
sit down in their seats again.



When the lights in the room get darker and the lights on the stage get brighter, I will know that the play is about to start again.



It is important that I try to stay quiet, so I can hear everything.

The actors will come back on stage to finish telling the story.



In the second half of the play, Stuart leaves home to find Margalo. He goes without his parents, but I will not be scared. I know he is an actor just pretending to go away by himself.



Also, lots of nice people make sure that Stuart is OK.

He visits his friend Doctor Carey. She is a dentist. She is pulling out a patient's tooth,

but I won't be scared. I know she is only pretending and she is not hurting the man.



If I am nervous or sad, I
can always cover my ears
or close my eyes.



I can hug or hold hands with my mom or dad —



or with someone else who came with me to the theatre.

When the play is done, all of the actors
will come out on stage and bow.
This is called a curtain call.



People will clap a lot,
so the actors will know
how much they liked the play.



Sometimes people will
stand up and clap.
Sometimes they will cheer.



If I want to clap or stand up or cheer, I can.
But I do not have to do any of these things.

When the play is over,
we will go back to the lobby.
It might be loud and crowded.



If the sound is too loud, I
can always cover my ears.



I will take deep breaths
and be patient as we move
through the lobby



and go outside.



I can hold hands with
my mom or dad —
or with someone else who
came with me to the theatre.



After this I will leave
Wheelock Family
Theatre.



Going to the theatre is very exciting!

I hope I will have a great
time when I go to see
Stuart Little.



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For more information about access and inclusion at Wheelock Family Theatre, please contact Jeri Hammond, Director of Education, Outreach, and Community Engagement, at JHammond@wheelock.edu or (617) 879-1175.

We hope you found this social story helpful!