

Get ready to see
Akeelah and the Bee
a play at Wheelock Family Theatre



A guide to help families
prepare children on the autism spectrum*
for a visit to
Wheelock Family Theatre

A publication of the
Wheelock Family Theatre
Access and Inclusion Program

***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 has never been to the theatre before. Wheelock Family Theatre offers a generic social story, as well as a customized one, like this, for each of our productions. We hope you will find them helpful!

I am going to see a play called

Akeela and the Bee

at Wheelock Family Theatre.



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

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



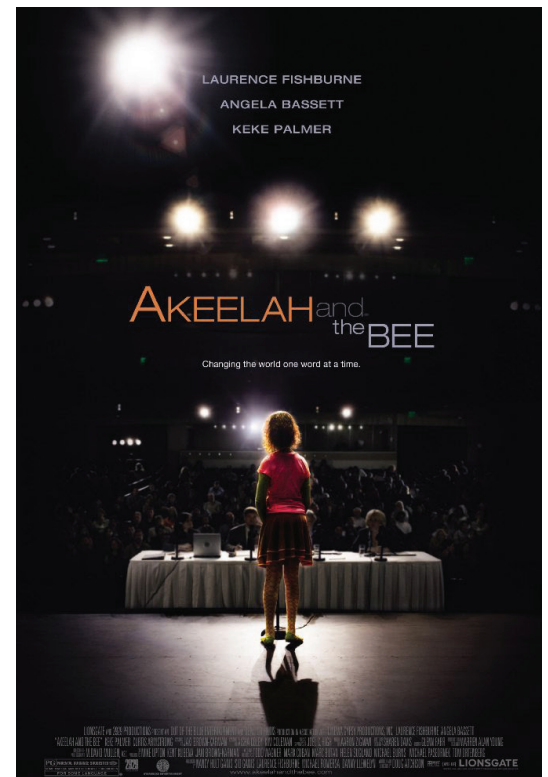
In a play, people on stage tell a story — right in front of us!
These people are called **actors**. To tell the story, the
actors talk and wear special clothes called costumes.



This play is about an 11-year-old girl who is so great at spelling
that she competes against other great spellers.
These contests are called spelling bees.

This play is based on a movie, also
called ***Akeela and the Bee***.

If I have seen this movie, I might
already know some things that are
going to happen.



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.



Akeela and the Bee takes place in different parts of Chicago, Illinois and in Washington, DC.

There is only one set, but it has 3 giant TV screens on it.

Whenever the story moves to a different place, the pictures on the TV screens change to show the new place.

When the story is in Akeelah's neighborhood on the south side of Chicago, the set and TV screens look like this.



This is how they look outside Doctor Larrabee's house.



This is how they look inside Doctor Larrabee's house.



This is how they look outside Akeelah's school.



This is how they look at the National Spelling Bee in Washington, DC.



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.

This is Journey.



She is the actor who plays Akeelah.



These are some of the other characters in the play:

Georgia



Javier



Trish



Ruth



Willie



Dylan



This is Ramona.



She is
the actor
who
plays
Akeelah's
mom
Gail.



This is Gary.



He is
the actor
who
plays
Mr. Chiu.



This is Johnny Lee.



He is the
actor who
plays
Akeelah's
spelling
coach
Doctor
Larrabee.



Sometimes parents in the play will act mean or angry.



But this is OK. I know they are just *pretending* to be mean or angry.

Sometimes Akeelah's spelling coach Doctor Larrabee acts grumpy and stern in the play.

But this is OK.
I know that he is just *pretending* to be grumpy or stern.



In the story, sometimes Akeelah and her brother Reggie get sad because their dad died.

But I know that they are just *pretending* to be sad.



Even though I might feel scared or worried or sad,
I know that these actors are nice people
and they will not hurt me.



If I am scared or worried or sad,
I can 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



to take a break, I can go into the lobby,



or go to a quiet, cozy space nearby.



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



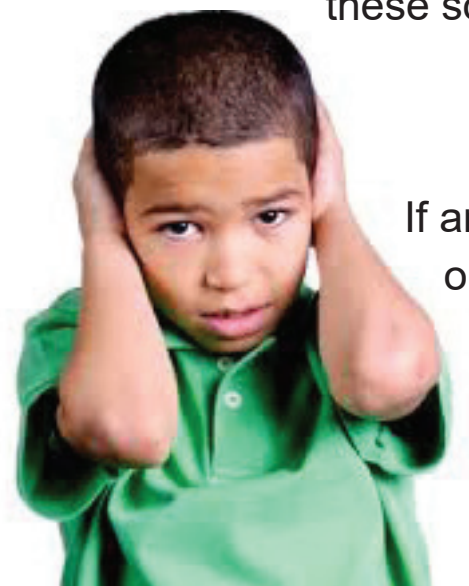
There is a lot of loud music
and loud sounds in this play –
especially in between scenes.

At the very beginning and later on in the
play, I will hear the
sounds of gunshots
and sirens.

These are sounds to help
me feel like I am in Akeelah's
neighborhood.

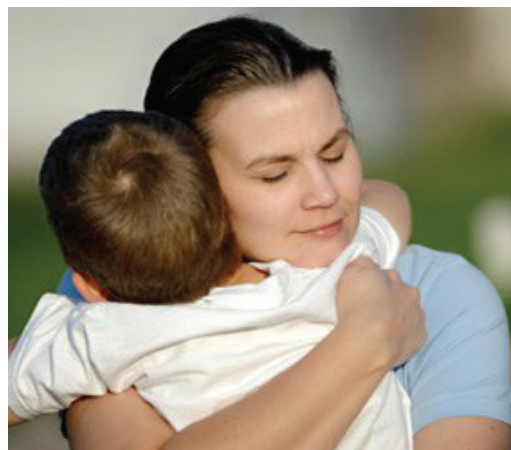


Even though I might be scared or overwhelmed by
these sounds, I know they are only pretend.



If anything is too loud
or scary, I can always
cover my ears.

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 to take a break, I
can go into the lobby,



or go 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.

I don't have to clap if I don't
want to.



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

The break is called **intermission**.



During 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.

I can also stay in my seat or go to the quiet, cozy space.

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 to the theatre
and sit down in
their seats again.



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



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

The audience will get very quiet again.

It is important that I try to be quiet during the show, so I can hear everything.

The second part of the play, will have loud music and other loud sounds, just like in the first part.

If I am scared or if the sound is too loud,

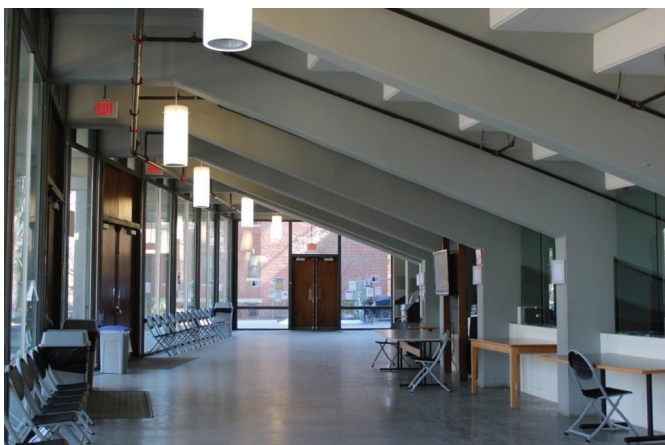


I can cover my ears or close my eyes.

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 to take a break, I can go into the lobby,



or go to
a quiet,
cozy space
nearby.



If I need something to
hold onto, I can
ask the usher
for a squishy
toy.



At the very end of the play, 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.

If I want to clap,
I can.

If I want to
stand up, I can.



I do not have to stand up or clap if I don't want to.

When the play is over, we will go
back to the lobby.

It might be crowded.



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



and go
outside.

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
Akeelah and the Bee!

This social story is a publication of the
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Access and Inclusion Program.

We hope you found it helpful!

