

Get ready to see  
***A Year with Frog and Toad***  
a musical 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 ***A Year with Frog and Toad*** at Wheelock Family Theatre. 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.

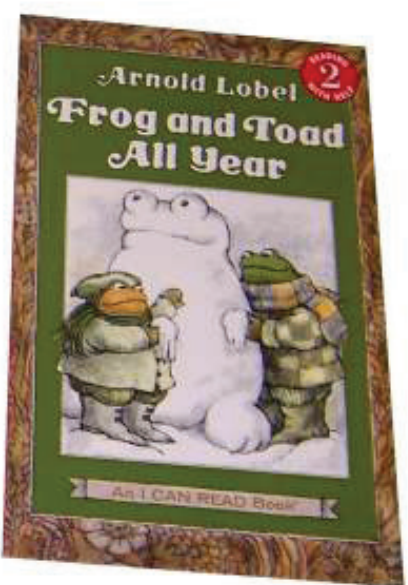
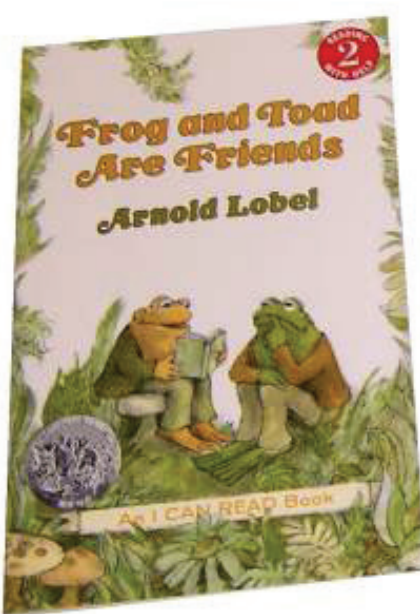




Sometimes the actors sing and dance too.



This play is about two best friends, Frog and Toad.  
It is based on three books by Arnold Lobel.



If I have read any of these books, I might  
know some of the stories in this play.



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.

***A Year with Frog and  
Toad*** takes place in  
the woods near a pond  
and at Frog's house  
and Toad's house.

Here is a model of  
the set.



Here's what the full-sized set looks like.

Toad's house is on the left.

Frog's house is on the right.



The houses in the set can turn around.

This is the **inside** of Toad's house.



This is the **outside**.



Frog's house works just the same way.

Many of the characters in this play  
are animals or birds or insects.

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

They walk on two feet like humans.

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



For example...

Snail wears snail-brown clothing,

and his rolled-up back pack looks a lot like a snail's shell.

Also, Snail moves very slowly  
- even when he *thinks* he's going very fast.



Young Frog and his parents wear many different shades of green,

but they move around like humans.



The Squirrels wear grey clothing and have big fluffy tails.

They also bend their wrists and elbows to make it look like their arms are very short.



The birds wear light, flowy clothing.

They also hold their arms slightly out to the sides, away from their bodies.

This makes their arms look a bit like wings.





The rest of the actors are children, dressed like the four seasons; winter, spring, summer, and fall.



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

The play tells the story of a Frog and a Toad who are best friends.

This is Larry. He is the actor who plays Toad.



This is Neil. He is the actor who plays Frog.



Here is Larry dressed as Toad.



Here is Neil dressed as Frog.





In one part of the story, some animals make fun of Toad because he looks funny in his bathing suit.

Even though they tease him a little, Toad doesn't get too upset.



He knows he looks funny in a bathing suit.



He knows the other animals are still his friends.



There is a lot of music and singing in this show.



At the end of a scene or a song, 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.



If anything is too loud,  
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 I can go to a quiet,  
cozy space nearby.



If I need something to  
hold onto, I can play  
with a squishy toy.





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.



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 in their seats again.



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

After a little while, Frog will tell a scary story.

But I won't worry, because I know the story will be funny at the end.

The story is about a time when Frog was very young.

In this story he gets lost in the woods with his parents.



When they go away to get help, Young Frog meets a character called

the **Large and Terrible Frog**.

At first we see only a pair of huge red eyes on the backdrop

and hear a strange, echoing voice.





Then, the Large and Terrible Frog  
comes onto the stage.

He does have red glowing eyes, but he  
is much smaller than we expect.

He is only  
a little taller  
than a  
grown-up  
human.



He seems scary and mean at first,  
but he is not. He is just lonely.

All he really wants is a friend to  
play jump rope with him.



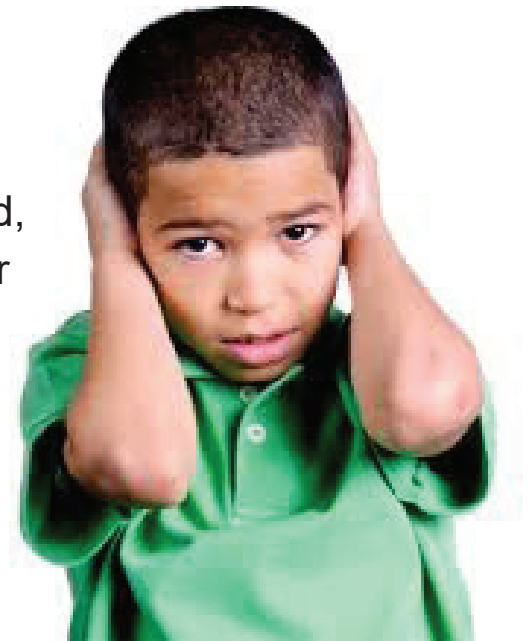


This is Stephanie.  
She is the actor who plays The  
Large and Terrible Frog.

She is not really mean or scary.  
She is just an actor ***pretending***  
to be mean or scary.

Even though I might be scared,  
I know that Stephanie is a nice  
person and she will not hurt me.

If I am scared,  
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 to the  
theatre with me.





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



or go to the quiet,  
cozy space.

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 walk 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  
**A Year with Frog and Toad!**

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

We hope you found it helpful!

