



Around The Neighborhood

Spring / 1993

A Newsletter for People Who Care For Young Children

A Special Issue On Reading

This issue of "Around The Neighborhood" focuses on reading. In it, you'll find an interview with Dr. Margaret Kimmel, a book list with tips on using your local library, Mister Rogers' letter about helping children develop a love of books and a page of tips for parents.

Maggie Kimmel on Reading

When we decided to focus this issue on reading, we turned to a good friend and our frequent consultant, Dr. Margaret Mary Kimmel. Known to her friends as "Maggie," she's Professor and Chairperson of the Department of Library Science at the University of Pittsburgh, with a special interest in children's literature. Her book, *For Reading Out Loud* (co-authored with Elizabeth Segal, published in 1991 by Dell), has been praised by providers, teachers, and parents as a useful guide about reading to children. Maggie has also been a Neighbor on the program. (see photo below)

Maggie Kimmel tells a "Button Soup" story to Mister Rogers and Mr. McFeely in episode #1627 scheduled for April 27.

Maggie's own life story also connects with the week on ABILITIES & DISABILITIES (programs #1386-1390 airing June 7-11. See article on back page.) Maggie had polio at the age of three and now uses a motorized cart. Maggie's abilities are an inspiration to us all.

Here are some of Maggie's ideas for providers about giving children warm feelings about books and reading.

Why should we read books to children?

"Reading should be as natural to child care as graham crackers!" Maggie enthusiastically suggested. "Think of how much we give children when we read! We're giving them experiences with some of the most important skills they'll need for school: listening, speaking, reading, and writing!"

"Listening to stories read or told can be a wonderful way for children to be exposed to the importance of stories. This, in turn, will encourage both listening skills and language skills. What's important is sharing stories and books with children; we don't need to be actresses or actors."

Maggie clarified, "I worry that some providers might feel pressured to 'teach' children to read. Actually, the very best way to help young children is to give them the underlying foundation of *appreciating reading and thinking of it as a valuable and pleasurable activity.*"

What are some ways child care providers can use books and stories and reading?

"There should be as many books as blocks! It's not enough to use a book because it makes a point for a curriculum lesson. We need to give children experiences with books and stories each and every day — just for their general pleasure.

"If you give children a warm and cozy feeling for storytime, you're giving them a warm and cozy attitude towards books, too. That's why it can help for children to snuggle up to the adult who's reading or hug a favorite stuffed animal.

"Later on, when a child opens a book, those warm feelings come back to him or her, because they've become part of the whole reading experience. (continued on page 4)

Extended Recording Rights for Child Care Providers

Family Communications, Inc. recently announced that child care providers now have the right to record MISTER ROGERS' NEIGHBORHOOD and keep the tapes for up to seven years for their work with young children. So you may want to keep your children's favorite episodes for special days or for times when the regularly scheduled episodes don't fit in with your plans.



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Dear Providers and Parents,

We can all play a really important part in children's learning when we help them love books and reading. I think the best way we do that is through our love — our love of the books and our love of the children. Someone in my childhood helped me learn that in a very real way:

"Aunt" Sara McComb, the librarian at our local public library, was one of my real "neighbors" when I was growing up. I think she knew every book in the place. And I know she knew every kid, what we were interested in, and what books and magazines had just come in that would need our attention. She was an "appreciator" of books. You could tell she liked books — often just by the way she held them. At times it looked like she was even hugging a certain favorite she was about to offer. And besides liking books, you could tell she liked you.

One of the things I remember best about "Aunt Sara" was the way she'd tell stories and read books by showing that she cared about what we thought of the pictures, the characters, and what was happening in the stories. What I learned from her and from my own years of experience with young children is that you don't have to be an actor to read a story to children. What children want is for us to talk with them and listen to them. They want our attention. They want us to recognize that their story — the one they bring to our story — is important, too. Naturally, when you invite children to talk about the story, you might make story time less controlled. But that invitation also can make children's time with books more personal and, therefore, much more important for each child.

That's the way Aunt Sara was. I can hear her now at story hour, pointing to a picture and saying, "Peggy, this child likes to swim like you." Or, "Freddy, this little boy plays the piano, too." In helping us make our own connections with the books, she let us know she cared about us. And because she cared about us, we cared about her and about her books. I can't help but think there's a lot of Aunt Sara in my life and my work today, just as there's a lot of you in the children in your families and in your work...that will help them in their lifelong learning and growing.

Sincerely,



Fred Rogers, host of **MISTER ROGERS' NEIGHBORHOOD**, celebrates 25 years on PBS.

A Page For Parents

Reading is an important skill for anyone – grown-ups or children. We try to give children experiences with books during their time with us. It's a good way to help them get ready to learn. Some parents have expressed concern about what they can do to help their children, so we asked some experts to give us their advice.

The Importance of Reading To Children

Parents sometimes ask what they can do to help their children become ready for school and for academic learning. They may worry about when their children are going to learn to print their names or start reading a book. Yet, most experts agree that the most important thing a parent can do is to begin reading to children at a very young age. When children see you read (newspapers, magazines, books, or lists) and when they see you enjoy reading books to them, they can come to know that reading is valuable and interesting. They can also begin to see that the letters printed on the pages of a book represent real words that can be spoken and understood.

There are a number of other things that you can do to help children become ready to be successful readers. Many of you may find that you have been doing these things all along.

For Infants (up to 1 year old)

Even babies can begin to turn the pages of a cloth or cardboard book while sitting in the warm comfort of your lap. As they grow old enough to help turn the pages, they are learning some important things about reading. These include coming to know which is the front and back of a book, how the pages turn, and that the print on a page may be related to the pictures they see.

For Toddlers (1 to 3 years old)

As children get older, they may still want to sit in your lap to look at books or to hear you read to them. As toddlers, though, they may want to help a little more often, by turning the pages or maybe even holding the books themselves. Toddlers like to name the pictures, so simple picture books are often favorites. This is an age when parents can begin to make homemade books with their children...books containing photographs of people and events that are important to the children, or books containing magazine pictures of animals and everyday objects that the children can name.

Their interest in print at this age may be limited to recognizing the logos and symbols of their favorite stores or eating places. More often than not, toddlers much prefer to "read" the pictures in a book and ignore the words altogether.

Since learning to read is closely related to learning to write, you might want to find ways to encourage your child to use crayons and pencils. To help them develop the finger coordination they need for later writing development, you can begin to give older toddlers chunky crayons or fat markers and paper. Because children's ability to control their fingers is not well developed, it's a good idea to protect the writing surface with some paper underneath. Children will often begin to draw their own representations of the world around them. Some parents write down the words children say about their drawings, to help them begin to learn that letters represent words they speak, too.

Preschoolers (3, 4, and 5 year olds)

Three, four, and five year olds are growing in their interest in words, both spoken and written. They may have favorite books that they want you to read over and over. Many preschoolers begin to recognize the letters of their names or the letters on a store window and may ask parents what the words say. Preschoolers will often pretend to write letters to people and may fill an entire page with scribbles arranged in lines that resemble adult writing. This early pretend writing comes before children actually begin to print letters as we know them, and it's an important stage in learning to read and write.

All of these are ways for parents to help children get ready for school and learning. And, your appreciation of their early interest in books, stories, and reading is the best encouragement of all.

**MISTER
ROGERS'
NEIGHBORHOOD**

Mister Rogers' Neighborhood is produced by Family Communications, Inc., a not-for-profit corporation that produces audio, video and print materials designed to encourage communication between children and adults. For more information and a catalog, please write or call; Family Communications, Inc., Dept. A, 4802 Fifth Avenue, Pittsburgh, PA 15213; 412-687-2990.

During the week of June 7 - 11 we'll be showing some of the classic programs with Chrissie Thompson, granddaughter of the McFeelys, who was at that time, eight years old. Her lower spine had never grown in completely (called spina bifida), so she was paralyzed from the waist down and walked with the help of braces and crutches.

4 We hope these programs will be a helpful bridge for you to talk with the children about disabilities. Through your caring attitude and your interest in the children's concerns, you can be a valuable person in helping them develop a lifelong sensitivity to people who have disabilities.

Here are some ideas that may help you as you talk with children about disabilities:

- It's natural that children's questions about disabilities can make us feel somewhat uncomfortable. It can help to think about our own feelings and reactions when we see or meet someone who has a disability.
- Young children don't understand how bodies work. They need reassurance that their bodies grow together and that parts don't just fall off, like with their toys.
- Because young children don't know much about cause and effect relationships, they may worry they could "catch" the disability from the person. It can help them to know that's a natural concern, and we can give a simple and realistic answer about the cause of the disability.
- Young children tend to think that when people do "bad" things, something bad happens to them. Even when we don't know why a person has a disability, we can help children know that things like a disability or illness don't happen as a punishment.
- As with most of children's questions, it's usually best to give simple and direct explanations. In general, it's best to give children a little, while letting them know they can ask if they want to know more.
- While it's important to acknowledge and talk about someone's disability, we can also help children by emphasizing all that person can do.

(Maggie Kimmel, continued from page 1)

"It can also help to have a cozy place, maybe a corner, or a special area, where children can easily find some books, handle them, look through them, and have time to enjoy the pictures.

"You can help children make their very own books. For example, when you see children playing out a story with toys or blocks, you might ask them to tell you what's happening. You could write down the words and then read their story to them.

"Or, if you see that a child is making a lot of similar drawings, you might want to suggest making the pictures into a book.

"When we let children know that the stories about them, their play, their ideas, and their family are important, we're saying to them, 'You are important.' So we're boosting their self-esteem at the same time.

MISTER ROGERS' NEIGHBORHOOD
CHILD CARE
PARTNERSHIP

Around The Neighborhood

Spring, 1993

A Newsletter For People

Family Communications, Inc.
4802 Fifth Avenue
Pittsburgh, PA 15213
412-687-2990

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For more information about the project contact your local public television station or Family Communications.

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University of Illinois
at Urbana-Champaign

WILL-TV Channel 12

Division of Broadcasting
1110 West Main Street
Urbana, IL 61801



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MISTER ROGERS' NEIGHBORHOOD CHILD CARE PARTNERSHIP



Check 'Em Out! — Books To Share With Children

Listed below are Maggie Kimmel's recommendations for books that go along with our theme weeks. We've also included the books and stories that are featured on *Mister Rogers' Neighborhood* during the next three months.

April 5-9 — "Nighttime"

Hildiddid's Night by Cheli Duran Ryan. An old woman celebrates the night. This book has stunning black and white illustrations.

April 12-16 — "Fathers and Music"

What Mary Jo Shared by Janice Udry. A father becomes the focus of his daughter's "show and tell" day at school.

(On program #1624 Mister Rogers reads a book called *What Is a Father?* written by Lani Droz, the daughter of a staff member. When Lani was a young girl, she wrote that book as a gift for her father.)

April 19-23 — "Environment"

Where the Forest Meets the Sea by Jeannie Baker. A young boy and his father wonder about the past and future of the Australian rain forest in which they are camping.

April 26-30 — "Mouths and Feelings"

Eat Up, Gemma by Sarah Hayes. Gemma's family has trouble getting her to eat, until her brother makes a fancy hat made of fruit.

(On program #1627 Maggie Kimmel tells a version of the "Stone Soup" story. On program #1630 Mister Rogers reads *Are You My Mother?* by P.D. Eastman.)

Using the Library

Besides these suggestions, you might want to take advantage of your local library and consider a field trip there. Here are some ideas about that from Maggie:

The best way is to begin by making a relationship with the librarian. You might even want to invite her to your center or child care home, so she can get to know your situation.

Since the librarian has probably had experience with groups of children at the library, she might be able to give you some ideas that can help smooth your visit there.

May 3-7 — "Growing"

The Carrot Seed by Ruth Krause. Despite family doubts, a young boy plants a seed, cares for it, and harvests a beautiful carrot.

(On program #1635 a young girl reads *One Fish, Two Fish, Red Fish, Blue Fish* by Dr. Seuss.)

May 10-14 — "Dress-Up"

Shoes from Grandpa by Mem Fox. A cumulative rhyme that describes different clothes that family members will give a young girl to "go with the shoes from grandpa."

May 17-21 — "Art"

Is It Red? Is It Yellow? Is It Blue? An Adventure in Color by Tana Hoban. Brilliant color photographs showing colors in everyday sights and objects.

(On program #1645 Mister Rogers reads *Spot's Baby Sister* by Eric Hill and visits with the author-illustrator of the Spot books.)

Author-illustrator Eric Hill talks with Mister Rogers about how he turns an idea into a book on program #1645 (scheduled for May 21). For this week's focus on ART, Eric Hill makes some sketches of the dog named SPOT, the character of his books which are familiar to many children.



She may suggest some times in her day that are quieter and therefore, more appropriate, for your field trip.

If the library has a rather large children's section, she may want to bring some books to the tables, rather than having the children roam through the stacks of shelves in the room.

For a library trip, the children need the same preparation from you that you'd give them for any field trip—they like to be told what to expect. Will there be story time? Will they have time to look at books? We're all more comfortable when we know what's ahead.

May 24-28 — "Imaginary Friends"

Jimmy Lee Did It by Pat Cummings. A young boy's imaginary friend (Jimmy Lee) is blamed for all that goes wrong.

(On program #1649 Mister Rogers has a blank book with no words or pictures.)

May 31-June 5 — "Potato Festival"

Vegetable Soup by Lois Elbert. Brightly-colored illustrations of larger-than-life vegetables highlight all the ingredients for vegetable soup.

June 7-11 — "Abilities & Disabilities"

Mom Can't See Me by Sally Alexander. A daughter describes family life with her mother who cannot see.

(On programs #1387-1390 Chrissie and Terry Thompson plan a puppet show about the fairy tale of "The Princess and the Pea.")

June 14-18 — "Feeling Safe"

The Bear's Bicycle by Emily McLeod. Bicycle safety is described with humorous illustrations featuring an oversized bear.

June 21-25 — "Jealousy"

She Come Bringing Me that Little Baby Girl by Eloise Greenfield. A young boy is annoyed with the attention lavished on his new baby sister — especially when he had counted on a brother.

June 28-30 — "Wishing and Pretending"

Tar Beach by Faith Ringgold. A young girl and her brother pretend their Harlem rooftop is a beach, as they imagine what it would be like to fly over the city.

Think about asking the librarian for books that might help a child who is going through a new or difficult experience, or when there's something specific you want to talk about with the children. Librarians can be a handy resource for you, all through the year, and they like to be of help to the people in their communities, especially to people like you who work with children.

The Environment: April 19-23

Mister Rogers and Mr. McFeely visit a recycling center on program #1617 (scheduled for April 20) on the week about the ENVIRONMENT.

One of the best ways children learn about anything is from the example of people they love. When we turn off lights, and when we separate items for recycling, when we find new uses for throw-away things, and even when we marvel at a flower, we are letting our children know that caring for our planet is important to us...and so it's likely to be important to them, because they usually like to be like the people they love.



Imaginary Friends: May 24-28

In order to read, children have to be able to imagine things, people, and experiences that aren't really there. So, when children make up their own stories and play imaginatively, they're getting an important foundation for learning to read.

Some children like to imagine with words, by making up stories, and some children like to create in other forms, like building with blocks or making pictures or dancing. On program #1648 (scheduled for May 26) in the week about IMAGINARY FRIENDS, Mister Rogers watches a rehearsal for an "umbrella dance" created by Tome (pronounced "Tommy") Cousins and his dancer friends. They pretend about rainy weather. There are lots of ways we can encourage children to be imaginative!

Abilities and Disabilities: June 7-11

Chrissie Thompson is the granddaughter of the McFeelys. She has spina bifida and has made many visits in Mister Rogers' Neighborhood. Sometimes she and Mister Rogers would look at books, and one time they made books from pages on which they pasted cut-paper designs. On the visits with Chrissie that are scheduled to repeat June 7 - 11, she and her sister Terry plan and stage a puppet show of the familiar fairy tale of the "Princess and the Pea."



Neighborhood Poster

April May June/ 1993

How To Use The Broadcast Schedule

The broadcast schedule identifies the *Mister Rogers' Neighborhood* programs that PBS stations broadcast on specific dates. (Check with your local PBS station to find out if it broadcasts *Mister Rogers' Neighborhood* on dates different from those shown on this schedule.) The schedule also shows the theme for each week of programs and some of the events occurring in each episode.

The specific episode number (for instance, "#1614" for April 1st) corresponds to the program description and activities in the *Mister Rogers' Plan & Play Book*. The *Plan & Play Book* contains easy and appropriate activities for preschoolers. It also contains words to many of the songs from *Mister Rogers' Neighborhood* and a special section with recipes and how-to's.



Copies may be ordered from Family Communications or your local public television station.

A Special Note

The activities for programs 1636-1650 (scheduled for May 10-28) appear in a booklet of additional activities available through your public television station or Family Communications.

April	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
This Week: WHEN PARENTS GO TO WORK				1	2
				#1614 Oboist Natasha; Feelings When Parents Work	#1615 Day Care & Talk about Feelings; Exercises; Balloons
This Week: NIGHTTIME	5	6	7	8	9
	#1596 Nighttime Fears; How People Make Flashlights	#1587 Mister Rogers Visits Russian TV Program	#1588 Help with Fears of Firefighters Gear & Bathroom Drains	#1589 Russian Visitor Tatiana Vedeneva — Children's TV Host	#1590 People Who Work and Care for Us at Night
This Week: FATHERS AND MUSIC	12	13	14	15	16
	#1621 Jazz Music with Ellis Marsalis & Sons	#1622 How Bandages Are Made; Pretending with Dolls	#1623 Sweeper Fears; Live Wolves; Rogers' Grandson	#1624 Ella Jenkins; Feeling Shy; "Big Bad Wolf"	#1625 Cellist Yo-Yo Ma & son; Fatherly Feelings
This Week: THE ENVIRONMENT	19	20	21	22	23
	#1616 Reusing Instead of Throwing Away	#1617 A Visit to a Recycling Center	#1618 Sculpture from Used Things; Solving Problems	#1619 Mister Rogers Goes Smokeyling; Care for the Sea	#1620 Cooperation Helps Solve a Garbage Problem
This Week: MOUTHS AND FEELINGS	26	27	28	29	30
	#1626 Laughing Boxes; Many Expressions Mean Many Feelings	#1627 A Storyteller Visits...with Button Soup Story	#1628 How People Make Toothbrushes; Feeling Angry	#1629 Mister Rogers Visits the Dentist	#1630 How People Make Toothpaste; Reading Aloud

May**Monday****Tuesday****Wednesday****Thursday****Friday****3**This Week:
GROWING#1631
Exercises and
Playing for Growing;
Toy Car Factory**4**#1632
A Conservatory
Where People
Care for Plants**5**#1633
Growing Takes
Time — So Does
Learning to Read**6**#1634
Mister Rogers Gets
a Haircut; Growing
Happens Gradually**7**#1635
The Harlem
Spiritual Ensemble
Performs**10**This Week:
DRESS-UP#1636
Nighttime Ballet;
Choosing Costumes
for School Play**11**#1637
A Library Visit &
Storyteller;
Something's Missing**12**#1638
Eyeglasses & Wigs
Change Appearance;
Sneakers Factory**13**#1639
Boys Choir of
Harlem; How People
Make Sweaters**14**#1640
Dress-Up Doesn't
Change You Inside;
Sign Language**17**This Week:
ART#1641
Making Portraits;
Encouraging
Creativity**18**#1642
Picasso as Example
of Creative art;
Spanish Singers**19**#1643
Making Toy
Airplanes;
Skywriters Art**20**#1644
Sculptor
Bill Strickland;
Creative Clay Play**21**#1645
Author-Illustrator
Eric Hill:
SPOT books**24**This Week:
**IMAGINARY
FRIENDS**#1646
Imagine with Music;
How People Make
Colored Markers**25**#1647
Imaginary Friends
Can Help
Lonely Times**26**#1648
Imagination +
Work; Umbrella
Factory; Rain**27**#1649
Blank Books
for Imagining;
Nutritious Snack**28**#1650
Ella Jenkins;
Sign Language;
Inventions**31**This Week:
**POTATO
FESTIVAL**#1361
Making Waffles;
Maple Syrup Process;
Full & Empty**June****Monday****Tuesday****Wednesday****Thursday****Friday****1**This Week:
**POTATO
FESTIVAL**#1362
Repairing a Leaky
Wooden Bucket &
Making a New One**2**#1363
Native American
Family-Friendship
Dance; Woodpeckers**3**#1364
Listening to Sounds;
Disappointment &
Other Solutions**4**#1365
Crafts of Throwaways;
Harvest Time &
Being Thankful**7**This Week:
**ABILITIES &
DISABILITIES**#1396
Film of Chrissy's
Mainstreamed Class**8**#1387
A Television
Camera; Chrissy
Plans Surprise**9**#1388
Chrissy Rehearses
Puppet Show; Help
with Witch Fears**10**#1389
Chrissy Talks about
Her Braces,
Crutches, and Shoes**11**#1390
Making Up Your
Own Stories
and Plays**14**This Week:
FEELING SAFE#1391
Hide & Seek;
A Mobile Home;
Wasting to Win**15**#1382
Playing Safely;
Talking Can Help
When You're Afraid**16**#1393
Seat Belt Safety;
An Organist;
Small vs. Giant**17**#1394
Removing a Spot;
Inkblots;
Calm Things**18**#1395
Feelings about
Hand-Me-Downs;
Tap Dancers**21**This Week:
JEALOUSY#1401
Zippers & Buttons;
Violinists; When
People Go Away**22**#1402
Skunks; Making
New Friends;
Feeling Proud**23**#1403
Elephant Statues;
Feeling Jealous;
Making a Terrarium**24**#1404
Peek-A-Boo;
Playing about
Saying Good-bye**25**#1405
Missing People
When They Go Away;
Sand Toys**28**This Week:
**WISHING &
PRETENDING**#1406
Spinning Flax;
Fears of Wishes
Coming True**29**#1407
Practicing;
A Juggler;
Tadpoles to Frogs**30**#1408
Modeling Dough;
A Sculptor;
Wishing vs. Doing