



Around The Neighborhood

Winter/1995

A Newsletter for People Who Care For Young Children

A Special Issue on Creativity

This newsletter focuses on creativity, a theme on many Neighborhood programs, but particularly this quarter in the weeks about MAKING & CREATING, DANCE, and PLAYTHINGS.

"Play is an expression of our creativity, and creativity, I believe, is at the very root of our ability to learn, to cope, and to become whatever we may be."

From YOU ARE SPECIAL by Fred Rogers

A 4 year old was playing with a toy airplane. As he made it swoop and dive, he was playing at being in control. After a moment or two, he stopped his play and looked into the plane's empty cockpit. He seemed to have a problem and began searching for something. In a few minutes he came back with a small wooden block and turned it into a pilot for his plane.

In those few moments of play, he was involved in important learning skills: problem-solving; sticking to a task; using a symbol to stand for something else (which he will need for reading); as well as gaining in self-esteem. All from his creative play.

In the Neighborhood

One way *Mister Rogers' Neighborhood* stimulates creativity in children is to introduce them to people who are creative. In the next few months of Neighborhood programs, children meet lots of adults who use creativity in their lives — a poet and a playground designer, a sculptor and a saxophone player, a blind artist and a balloon artist. With such variety, children can come to know there are many different ways people can find meaning in life and make things happen because of their own uniqueness. Often, too, these guests talk about how their creative medium helps them express their feelings in healthy ways.

Through the Neighborhood of Make-Believe, children see a story played out that's creative and imaginative. For example, ordinary things might become fun and whimsical, like in the week about PLAYTHINGS (#1566-1570), when spinning pennies become gymnastic elephants.

In Make-Believe, creative ideas also help solve complicated and sensitive problems. For example, when the King's command doesn't slow down the speeding Trolley in the week about FAST & SLOW (#1681-1685), the Neighbors work on creative solutions. In the week about KINDNESS (#1591-1595), having been given a too-small crown by King Friday, "Sir Thomas Tune" figures out a way to wear it on his wrist, thereby kindly accepting a gift that was not quite the right size.

Mister Rogers often encourages creative thinking by asking questions like, "What do you think could happen next?" or "What kind of poem would

you make up?" He usually adds, "Children have such good ideas!" Child care providers can build on that when they listen caringly to children's ideas.

In Child Care

Providing Playthings

Just as adults have their own way of expressing themselves, different children are comfortable with different materials. That's why they need a variety of playthings to stimulate whatever creative play they enjoy.

When those are open-ended materials, like blocks, paints, clay, dress-up props, and paper towel tubes, children can make of them what they need.

Inviting Guests

Child care providers can introduce children to people in their own neighborhood whose work or hobbies are creative. Invite parents, relatives, or community friends for a brief visit to do something they enjoy, like poetry-reading, storytelling, flower-arranging, cooking, wood-working, painting, or cake-decorating. Remember that children's attention spans are short, and it helps to give them some related activity afterwards.

Exciting New Offer

Family Communications, Inc. is offering a 25% discount on the retail price of its materials for participants of the Mister Rogers' Child Care Partnership. For the form entitling you to the discount, write to Family Communications, Inc., Dept. CC, 4802 Fifth Avenue, Pittsburgh, PA 15213.

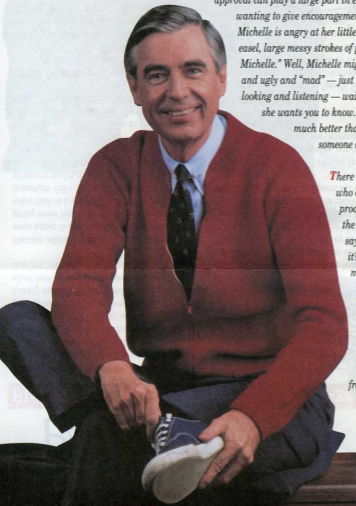
This offer includes Fred Rogers' new book YOU ARE SPECIAL...*Words of Wisdom from America's Most Beloved Neighbor*, full of quotes from his writings and speeches, with chapters on Childhood, Learning, Discipline, Creativity, and the Relationship between parents, child care providers, and teachers.

Fred Rogers' creativity flows all through the Neighborhood programs: he writes the scripts, composes the songs, and works almost all the puppets. As a role model for children, he often shares with them his delight in creative play — and in creative work.



A Letter From Mister Rogers

Fred Rogers, host of *MISTER ROGERS' NEIGHBORHOOD*, begins his 28th year on PBS.



When I see a child making an angry painting, or dancing a happy dance, or making up a sad song, I see the creativity of childhood at its healthiest. Those are children's ways of "talking about feelings." Talking about feelings can be difficult for all of us, at any age, and especially for young children who don't have many words. Even though it may be hard for them to tell us what's going on inside them, they do have creative ways to express their feelings — through what they make.

Some adults may be bothered that the children's paintings and drawings don't look like what they're trying to make. One boy I know drew sailors in a boat who were huge, so huge in fact that they would surely have overturned the boat if they were real. We need to remember, though, that children may not be trying to make a picture that looks exactly like the objects of the outside world when they draw. Most of the time they're producing symbols of their inside world.

Because children need to know they're loved by the people they care about most, our interest and approval can play a large part in encouraging their developing creativity. But sometimes in our wanting to give encouragement, our enthusiasm can be counter-productive. Suppose Michelle is angry at her little brother Jay. As she's painting her feelings of anger on the easel, large messy strokes of paint, an adult comes over and says, "That's very nice, Michelle." Well, Michelle might not mean it to be nice at all. She may mean it to be messy and ugly and "mad" — just the way she's feeling. What's the best adult response? Quiet looking and listening — waiting for the moment when Michelle might let you know what she wants you to know. There is so often much more than meets the eye! (And how much better that Michelle could let her anger out on the easel rather than hurt someone or ruin something.)

There can also be much less, as with young toddlers and preschoolers who are generally more fascinated by the process than by the product. When they paint, they marvel how the paint drips down the papers. "Let me make whatever happens," they seem to be saying. It's safer for us to say, "Would you like to tell me about it?" than to ask, "What is it?" They can often say, "Nothing" or make up elaborate stories about their "drips."

We don't have to understand all of a child's creative efforts. What's important is that we communicate our respect for their attempts to express what's inside themselves. No matter how children choose to express themselves, they can begin to know, as we do, the pleasure of creating something unique from inside ourselves.

Sincerely,

Creativity isn't just for artists! Think about how many times in your day you have to think creatively — figuring out how to make interesting meals with leftovers, stretching dollars, finding new solutions to problems. When you help your child play and think creatively, you're giving him or her a gift for managing in this world that will last a lifetime!

Here are some ways to stimulate creativity around the house and at some hard-to-manage times:

The Creativity Kit

for times when your child says, "There's nothing to do," or for when you need some time for work around the house or breathing space for yourself

Hand your child a shoebox in which you have collected throw-aways, like:

- used greeting cards
- used wrapping paper and ribbons
- yarn
- plastic tops
- stickers from junk mail
- beads from a broken necklace
- mail order catalogs
- paper towel rolls
- old calendar pages
- buttons

After spending a little time getting your child started using these things, you might find your child can stay busy for a while, discovering new ways to use them in their play with familiar toys...or making collages with paste and paper.

The Take-Along Bag

for times when you're waiting at a restaurant, going on a car trip, or visiting with friends or relatives

Keep a few things in an easy-to-carry bag to help children manage the time creatively. Here are some things you could put in the bag:

- a small notebook and pen or pencil
- paper towel tube and a small toy
- a handkerchief and yarn or string
- markers or crayons and blank paper
- a bag of plastic zoo or farm animals
- pipecleaners

Open Questions

for times when you're standing in line at the bank or supermarket or when you don't have any playthings for your child

What If...

Waiting can be hard for a young child, but you can fill the time with questions that stimulate creative thinking. Here are some suggestions to get you started:

- What would it be like if everything was purple? What if there was purple spaghetti?
- What other things would be funny purple?
- What if you were a giant? What would you do when you got up in the morning?
- What would it be like if we had to do everything backwards?
- How would it look if trees grew from the sky?
- What could we do if we lost our voices? How could we tell each other what we want?

Story-Starters...

With very young children, you can begin storytelling by asking what is happening in the pictures of a book. When they're older, try "story-starters," like:

- Once upon a time a mother went shopping. What do you think she was going to buy?....
- There was a little child who was crying and crying. When her friends asked, "Why are you sad, little girl," she said....."

Some children might like to take turns with you, adding a little to the story as it goes along. Others like to tell their own stories from beginning to end.

Of course, a good foundation for children's own storytelling is being read to by a favorite adult. When you read to children, you're letting them see how other people are creative with ideas, words, and pictures...and you're giving them a warm experience with books.

**MISTER
ROGERS'
NEIGHBORHOOD**

Mister Rogers' Neighborhood is produced by Family Communications, Inc., a non-profit company 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. CC, 4802 Fifth Avenue, Pittsburgh, PA 15213; 412-687-2990.

Check 'Em Out! — Books to Share With Children

January 2-6 — "Day and Night Care"

Good Morning, Good Night written and illustrated by Ivan Gantshev. The sun and the moon argue about which is more important, but then agree that each is special.

January 9-13 — "Families"

A Baby Just Like Me written and illustrated by Susan Winter. Soft illustrations help tell the story of Martha, her friend Sam, and the new baby sister who is not what Martha expected. In time the new sister becomes a friend, and Martha appreciates being her big sister.

January 16-20 — "Making & Creating"

Brown Honey in Broomwheat Tea by Joyce Carol Thomas, illustrated by Floyd Cooper. Joyous poems by Thomas are complemented by Cooper's glowing paintings.

January 23-27 — "Celebrations" (Opera)

Songs from Mother Goose compiled by Nancy Larrick, illustrated by Robin Spowart. Easy melodies and clear bright colors grace this collection of nursery rhymes.

January 30-February 3 — "Playthings"

The Wheels on the Bus adapted and illustrated by Paul Zelinsky. A fresh look at traditional and well-known songs.

February 6-10 — "Dance"

Five Live Bongos by George Ella Lyon, illustrated by Jacqueline Rogers. "CRASH BANG ARTI-CHOKE! WIPPA ZIPPA ZAND! Dance to the music of the Found Sound Band!"

February 13-17 — "Love"

Mama Do You Love Me? written and illustrated by Barbara Joosse. A young Inuit girl tests her mother's love and finds she'll be loved "until the umiak flies into the darkness and the puffin howls at the moon."

February 20-24 — "Fast & Slow"

Not So Fast Songololo written and illustrated by Niki Daly. This charming South African story of a young boy's new shoes is universal in appeal.

February 27-March 3 — "Mistakes"

The Tale of Peter Rabbit written and illustrated by Beatrix Potter. "Scritch, scratch," went Mr. McGregor's rake as Peter realized the mistake he made. A classic tale that is set aright by camomile tea and a loving mother.

March 6-10 — "Alike & Different"

Seven Blind Mice written and illustrated by Ed Young. Each of the mice finds a different part of the elephant, and only when they talk to each other, do they realize it is one animal. Black backgrounds dramatically highlight the colorful images in this award-winning picture book.

March 13-17 — "Secrets"

What Am I? Looking Through Shapes at Apples and Grapes by N. N. Charles, illustrated by Leo and Diane Dillon. Bright bold colors and die-cut shapes can help even very young children with the question-and-answer rhymes.

March 20-24 — "Nighttime"

While I Slept written and illustrated by Gary Bilezikian. Nighttime sounds are described with few words and softly rounded forms.

March 27-31 — "Kindness"

Chrysanthemum written and illustrated by Kevin Henkes. A young girl thinks she has a perfect name until she goes to school. Then Mrs. Delphinium Twinkle, the music teacher, restores her bloom.

Special thanks to Dr. Margaret Kimmel of the University of Pittsburgh School of Library Science for suggesting these books for our newsletter.

WITHE ROBERT MICHROPODIO
CHILD CARE PARTNERSHIP

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MISTER ROGERS' NEIGHBORHOOD CHILD CARE PARTNERSHIP



Plan & Play Activities For February 20-24/Theme: Fast & Slow

Thoughts for the Week

We live in a society that seems so rushed. Parents often tell us how hard it is to take time to relax and enjoy things. They are also concerned that they have to hurry their children so much of the time—getting up and getting dressed, eating, and moving quickly through the day's activities. Parents worry about how all the rushing around affects their children and themselves.

Because adults are often in such a hurry, it may seem easier to do things for children rather than giving them time to do things for themselves. It takes time to learn, to think, and to practice the important skills that develop during childhood. So whenever we let children take their time to do things, we give them support for learning and growing.

By letting children sometimes do things at their own pace, we may find that they can accept more easily the times when they have to hurry.

1681 Monday

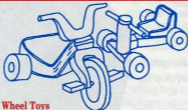
Mister Rogers makes a game of dropping a small ball into tubes. In the Neighborhood of Make-Believe, Mayor Maggie discovers that the Trolley moves too slowly and then speeds up. She sings the song "Peace and Quiet" with slow and fast variations.

Singing Fast and Slow

The children can choose one of their favorite songs and try singing the song fast and then slow. You might point out that some songs are easier to sing slow, and others seem like they should be sung fast. Some songs can be sung either fast or slow. Let the children sing several songs and then finish with a slow version of one of them to help the children calm down before going on to something else. "Peace and Quiet" might be a good choice to help them settle down.

1682 Tuesday

Mister Rogers has a pair of roller skates. He shows his safety gear and remembers a time when he went rollerskating with a friend. Mr. McFeely brings a videotape that shows how people make roller skates.



Wheel Toys

You might begin this activity by letting the children each find a toy that has wheels and come together to show what they have found. Give them time to play with the wheels of the toys. Can they make the wheels go fast? Can they make them go slow? The children might want to go for a walk and point out the things they see that have wheels: cars, buses, trucks, bicycles. Are the vehicles moving fast or slow? When they play outside today, you can point out the wheel toys they can use (wagons, tricycles, and other riding toys).

1683 Wednesday

Mister Rogers looks at the Speedy Delivery Alphabet Book. In the Neighborhood of Make-Believe, Daniel is sad because he cannot say his ABC's, but Betty Aberlin shows him he can spell some important words, like his name, the word "tame," and the words "I love you."



Word Box

The children who know their ABC's might want a chance to show you that they can sing the alphabet song. Other children might want to point out letters that they recognize from things that are posted in the room or in a book. Then you can show the children that letters are put together to make words. Ask them what words they would like to see and write each word on a strip of paper. Then give each child a "word box" to store the words he or she would like to have. You will probably have to work with every child individually as you write each word on a separate piece of paper. If children want a phrase, like "I love you," you could help them see how to put the words together.

1684 Thursday

Mister Rogers shows a wooden toy that is a gymnastic figure and visits with world-class gymnast Chainei Umphrey. In the Neighborhood of Make-Believe, the neighbors create scaffolding to try to catch the speeding Trolley and slow it down.

Safe Gymnastics

You might begin by talking with the children about safe ways to play. Some children could show a safe way to do a somersault; others could show a safe way to balance on a low walking beam. Then you can arrange a variety of safe and easy gymnastic activities by:

- taping a line on the floor for a "tightrope";
- setting up an obstacle course of chairs or other objects for the children to go around;
- setting up a series of pillows to climb over;
- creating a tunnel to crawl through.

If any of the activities seem too difficult for some children, adjust them so that everyone can feel successful.

1685 Friday

Mister Rogers plays with a toy crane in the sandbox. In the Neighborhood of Make-Believe, the Trolley is going too fast, and the King has ordered it to stop. The Neighbors use a crane-like device to stop it and discover a switch that slows it down.

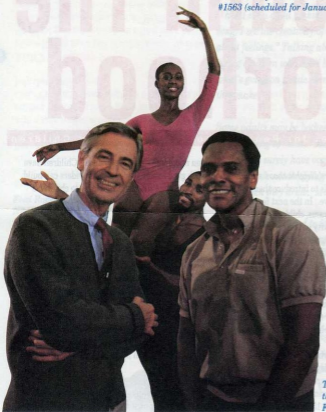


Fast and Slow, Then Stop

Select fast and slow songs from a tape or record and let the children move to the music. Once the children have felt the difference between fast and slow, they can play a game by stopping when the music stops. First play the slow music and ask the children to stop. Then play fast music and let the children see how hard it can be to stop when you're doing something fast. If you end with the slow music, it could be easier for the children to calm down.

Highlights of Coming Programs

The week on CELEBRATIONS is full of creativity — besides an opera, there's also a visit with Wynton Marsalis on program #1563 (scheduled for January 25).



The people of The Dance Theatre of Harlem show Mister Rogers how they can be creative through movement on program #1574 (scheduled for February 9) in the week about DANCE.



Mister Rogers and Mr. McFeely marvel at the creative way sculptor Alan Dwight found "secrets" inside a piece of marble on program #1598 (scheduled for March 15) in the week about SECRETS.

Neighborhood Poster

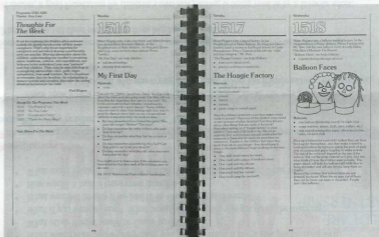
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How To Use The Broadcast Schedule

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 *Mister Rogers' Neighborhood* is broadcast 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, "#1516" for January 2nd) corresponds to the program description and activities in the *Mister Rogers' Plan & Play Book*. The 370-page *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 your local public television station or Family Communications.



January	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
	2	3	4	5	6
This Week: DAY & NIGHT CARE	#1516 Visit to a Child-Care Home; Caregivers	#1517 Feelings When Parents Are Away; Zipper Factory	#1518 Exercises — Care for Our Bodies; Balloon Factory	#1519 Eyeglasses; Scary Dreams & Nighttime Fears	#1520 Feelings When Parents Return; Graham Crackers
	9	10	11	12	13
This Week: FAMILIES	#1551 How People Make Orange Juice; Cousin Mary Owl	#1552 Adoption Is One Way to Make a Family	#1553 Pediatrician Exam; Cousin Reunion Plans	#1554 Adoption Is Forever; Caring for Puppies	#1555 Penguin Exhibit; What's a "Kissing Cousin"?
	16	17	18	19	20
This Week: MAKING & CREATING	#1556 Miniature Golf; Creative Play in Sand and Dirt	#1557 Chinese Dumplings; Learning from Grandparents	#1558 How People Make Hocking Horses; Friendships	#1559 Poet May Sarton; Kitten Birth Film; Covers & Masks	#1560 Bob Leathers — Playground Designer
	23	24	25	26	27
This Week: CELEBRATIONS	#1561 How People Make Trumpets; Plans for Comet Celebration	#1562 Show of Stars at Planetarium; Feeling Good & Bad	#1563 Jazz with Trumpeter Wynton Marsalis	#1564 Different Feelings about Birthdays; Candle Factory	#1565 Neighborhood Opera; Star for Kitty
	30	31			
This Week: PLAYTHINGS	#1568 Gymnast Performs; Importance of Good Teachers	#1567 Ella Jenkins; How People Make Toy Wagons			

February**Monday****Tuesday****Wednesday****Thursday****Friday**This Week:
PLAYTHINGS**1**#1568
A Visit to an
Air Traffic
Control Tower**2**#1569
Musical Playthings;
Wanting Something
Too Expensive**3**#1570
Toy Library;
Lucy the Elephant
MonumentThis Week:
DANCE**6**#1571
It's Raining;
Tai-Chi Is Like
a Dance**7**#1572
Shamu
the Whale;
Caring for Fish**8**#1573
How People Make
Shoes; Sam Weber,
Tap Dancer**9**#1574
The Dance
Theater
of Harlem**10**#1575
Tamboritan Folk-
Dancers; A Weaver
at WorkThis Week:
LOVE**13**#1601
Teddy Bear Factory;
Costumes Don't
Change Who You Are**14**#1602
Trip to an Aviary;
Caring for Birds;
Work vs. Play**15**#1603
Tired Feet;
Angry & Loving
Feelings**16**#1604
Shaving; It Can
Help to Talk
about Feelings**17**#1605
Blowing Bubbles;
Filipino Chef;
Plumber VisitsThis Week:
FAST & SLOW**20**#1681
Stroller Factory;
Fast & Slow Trolley;
Controls on Machines**21**#1682
Roller Skating With
Safety Gear; Trolley
Won't Slow Down**22**#1683
Speedy Delivery
Alphabet Book;
ABC's Make Words**23**#1684
World-Class Gymnast;
Planning Helps
People Be Safe**24**#1685
Exercises with Friend
in Wheelchair;
Showing TrolleyThis Week:
MISTAKES**27**#1576
Feelings When
People Laugh
at Mistakes**28**#1577
How People
Make Books;
Mistaken Delivery**March****Monday****Tuesday****Wednesday****Thursday****Friday**This Week:
MISTAKES**1**#1578
Helping Others
After Mistakes;
Eraser Factory**2**#1579
Pianist André
Watts; Practicing
& Mistakes**3**#1580
Poetry Day; Even
Parents Sometimes
Make MistakesThis Week:
**ALIKE &
DIFFERENT****6**#1581
Antique Car Show;
A Song in
Sign Language**7**#1582
Television
Programs Around
the World**8**#1583
Differences Between
a Real Dog and
Pretend "Bob Dog"**9**#1584
Feeling
Jealous;
Making Strudel**10**#1585
Circus Day;
Help with Fears of
Clown Make-upThis Week:
SECRETS**13**#1596
Underground House;
Secrets in Nesting
Boxes; Bike Ride**14**#1597
Treasure Hunt
Game; Love Is a
Good Secret to Tell**15**#1598
Marble Sculptor
at Work;
Invisible Ink Pen**16**#1599
When Secrets Are
Uncomfortable;
Blind Artist**17**#1600
Suitcase Factory;
Surprise
Birthday PartyThis Week:
NIGHTTIME**20**#1586
Nighttime Fears;
How People
Make Flashlights**21**#1587
Mister Rogers
Visits Russian
TV Program**22**#1588
Help with Fears of
Firefighters' Gear &
Bathroom Drains**23**#1589
Russian Visitor
Tutiana Vedeneeva —
Children's TV Host**24**#1590
People Who Work
and Care for Us
at NightThis Week:
KINDNESS**27**#1591
Kind Reaction to
McFeely's Mistake;
Harmonica Factory**28**#1592
Eric Kluss
Blind Saxophonist;
Luray Cavern Visit**29**#1593
Kindness to a Lost
Kitten; Jump Rope
Exercises**30**#1594
How People Make
Bicycle Helmets;
Bicycle Safety**31**#1595
Broadway Dancer
Tommy Tune Is a
Kind Tutor