

SENSORY-FRIENDLY PERFORMANCE
PARENT'S GUIDE



ELEPHANT
A blue elephant wearing glasses and a pink pig are each inside a green five-pointed star. A pink ampersand (&) is positioned between the two stars.
PIGGIE'S
"WE ARE IN A PLAY!"

Sun, Apr 21 at 4 PM

Sponsored by



**AUTISM STRONG
FOUNDATION**

2023-24 season - Elephant & Piggie's "We Are in a Play!"

Based on the Elephant & Piggie books by Mo Willems

Published by Hyperion Books for Children

Script and Lyrics by Mo Willems

Music by Deborah Wicks La Puma

Presented through special arrangement with Music Theatre International (MTI). All authorized performance materials are also supplied by MTI. www.mtishows.com

Presented by:

BANK OF AMERICA 

Today's celebration is brought to life, in part, by:

Stephanie Couch

Dr. Daniel Donner

Erik & Amelia Peterson

Kristin Tokić

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What to expect at a sensory-friendly performance

Sensory-friendly theatre is an approach to the audience experience that "softens" the environment. What does that mean exactly? In general, we make the theatre available to everyone, including those who may need more flexibility to help manage all of the sensory experiences that come along with attending a performance. Below are some of the adjustments Children's Theatre of Charlotte is making to create a more sensory-friendly environment tailored to each show:

- Lights in the theatre will stay low during the show, instead of turning all the way off.
- We will lower the sound levels when needed.
- We sell fewer tickets for the sensory-friendly performances so families have more room to move as needed.
- We provide fidgets, headphones and weighted toys to help children feel more organized and settled.
- Someone will be at the front of the stage with glow sticks to help give families a warning when sensory-rich moments are nearing. Raising one stick means there's a smaller sensory moment coming up (like a loud sound or a change in lighting). Raising two sticks means a more intense sensory-rich moment is about to occur.
- We provide a quiet room if children need to leave the theatre to feel more settled or regroup during the show.

Support materials for you

We provide several guides to help prepare your family for your visit:

The Social Story walks your family through our facility and what to expect on your visit.

The Child Guide goes with each performance.

The Parent Guide like this one helps parents support their children's learning and experience in the theatre.

The Sensory Table provides access to weighted toys, fidgets, and headphones for use as needed.

Special thanks

to Julie Higginbotham of Precious Developments. Julie has worked as our consultant in the creation and preparation of our sensory-friendly performances. We're grateful for this valued partnership.

Learning opportunities and sensory-rich moments in Elephant & Piggie's "We Are in a Play!"



Welcome to the show! This is a fun musical with Elephant Gerald and Piggie. Ready to play?

Sensory-rich moments:

This musical contains lots of fun lighting, silly sound effects, and great themes around friendships. This guide notes sensory-rich moments throughout the show. We have made our typical adjustments for this Sensory-Friendly Performance, so keep in mind that our fabulous Ushers have resources available throughout the show in case you need them. Once you are settled into your ticketed seats, you can also move around to another seat if you'd feel more comfortable there. We're here for you!



Meet Elephant Gerald and Piggie! These two friends make the perfect pair!

How do we define friendship, especially to children?

Sensory-rich moments:

This production opens with fun music, set shifts and lighting changes. There are some mild shouts and sound effects, then the scene moves into a cute musical number with more lighting shifts. It moves into the next scene with a darker lighting shift before brightening again.



These friends are ready to play.....but what should they play? So many ideas.....

How often do we allow children to explore their creativity freely as they play?

Sensory-rich moments:

This scene contains more silly sound effects and some music as these two play together. It moves into the next moment with a dog howl sound offstage.



Learning opportunities and sensory-rich moments continued



Piggie got an invitation!! How exciting!

Doing things for the first time can be fun when we can support each other along the way.

Sensory-rich moments:

This scene contains more dog sounds and sound effects before moving into the next moment.



Now THESE are some fantastic costumes.....

Costumes can help us explore different versions of ourselves

Sensory-rich moments:

This moment contains more sound effects. When the "zip" moments happen, there is a brief, soft flashing light that happens at the back of the stage and doesn't impact the rest of the stage or house. There are other soft lighting and set shifts in this scene, and it transitions into the next with lighting shifts and "party" chants.



What happens when elephants dance? You and the Squirrelles about to find out.....

We can dance and play literally however we want - have fun with it!

Sensory-rich moments:

This scene begins with a set shift and the entrance of the Squirrelles. This is a busier musical numbers with multiple light shifts, as well as lights that move on the set. There are moments of dialogue that pause or stop the song periodically, including a shouting "stop" moment, before the energy builds into the end of the song.



Learning opportunities and sensory-rich moments continued



Hmmmm.....Piggie has a trumpet.....

There are so many beautiful languages spoken in our community, and there are ALWAYS ways we can communicate with each other!

Sensory-rich moments:

This scene begins with a little dancing as Piggie gets a trumpet. There are lighting shifts to start, and whenever Piggie "plays" the trumpet, the lighting shifts with brighter projections on the set. We will cue each one at the front of the stage, and remember, we have sunglasses if you feel you need extra support.



WHYYYYYYYY is Gerald so upset?

How do we prepare children when we have to move from one activity to another?

Sensory-rich moments:

There is a short scene before this one with a pretend cowboy duel with lighting shifts, sound effects, some shouts, and dramatic falls. It moves into this next dramatic ballad with some shouting and a soft lighting shift. The drama and pretend crying builds, and the song stops periodically before it ends.



Ice cream is such a fun treat....but have you ever heard of an Ice Cream Hero??

It's important to help each other consider other humans around us.

Sensory-rich moments:

This scene begins with "ice cream" shouts from offstage. It moves into a softer opening to a catchy musical number with set changes, bigger lighting shifts, and energy that builds through to a brief "meltdown" moment at the end. It transitions into a quiet moment with a set and lighting shift.



Learning opportunities and sensory-rich moments continued



Piggie's new toy looks so fun! What will Gerald think of it?

Sharing is so hard, and everyone plays differently with toys.

Sensory-rich moments:

This scene begins with a softer song that builds in energy and contains lighting shifts throughout. It comes to a stop, then begins again, much faster, to the end. This scene also contains a big "oops" moment where a toy "breaks" at stage front. The scene becomes very quiet with big emotions, a shout, and a very abrupt start to the next song.



Uh-oh, Piggie sure is SAD and MAD!

How do we handle it when things break, even by accident?

Sensory-rich moments:

This song starts right after Piggie says "and...and.... and..." with an abrupt lighting shift. There is some fog on stage and quick lighting shifts. Remember that we have sunglasses available if you need them, and you can sit further away from the stage if you'd be more comfortable. The song ends quickly with some somewhat unkind words from Piggie and an emotional response from Gerald.



Now it's Gerald's turn to have some big feelings...

Friendships and feelings can be challenging, and it's important to feel the feels and work through them.

Sensory-rich moments:

This scene has a softer musical number with some lighting shifts before transitioning into some BIG audience engagement time!



Learning opportunities and sensory-rich moments continued



Yikes! Gerald and Piggie just realized we're all here!

How do we become comfortable being in front of others?

Sensory-rich moments:

This brief scene contains some surprise shouts and introduces cast engagement with the audience. Be sure to show them some love!! :) It moves into a musical number with LOTS of dancing and singing, so get ready!!



Showtime for Elephant Gerald and Piggie!

When kids put on shows for others, they get to explore their creativity and imagination!

Sensory-rich moments:

This is a longer, super engaging musical number that starts with a set shift. Get ready to sing and dance as part of the show! There are lighting effects that will move onto the walls and ceiling out in the house, and there are lights along the balcony that will fade on and off and change colors, but there is little impact down into the house.



The show is almost over, and Gerald and Piggie did a great job with the Squirrelles!

These guides are a great way to remember your experience at Children's Theatre of Charlotte, so it doesn't have to be "the end" of the fun!

Sensory-rich moments:

The energy comes way back down for this scene and ballad. There is a voice-over moment before the song starts, and the lighting will move progressively lower through the end of the song. It lightens back up at the end to move into the final scene.



Learning opportunities and sensory-rich moments continued



Gerald, Piggie, and the Squirrelles have a finale for you!

Take time to reflect on friendships to acknowledge beautiful growth.

Sensory-rich moments:

This scene opens with a bit more audience engagement and some brief happy chants before moving into the finale musical number. There are lighting and set shifts, and the lights will go completely out on the set before coming back on for one last wave and applause for the production.

Thanks for joining us at Children's Theatre of Charlotte for this special performance. We hope to see you at our other sensory-friendly performances in the future.



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