

# Overture

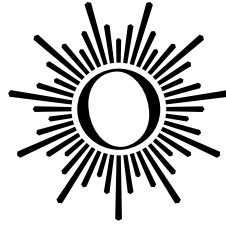
A Performing Arts Series  
for Students

# *Onstage*



**A Year with Frog and Toad**

**Mon, Feb 22, 2010**



# Overture Center

FOR THE ARTS

## ABOUT OVERTURE CENTER FOR THE ARTS

Overture Center for the Arts fills a city block in downtown Madison with world-class venues for the performing and visual arts. Made possible by an extraordinary gift from Madison businessman W. Jerome Frautschi, the center presents the highest-quality arts and entertainment programming in a wide variety of disciplines for diverse audiences. Offerings include performances by acclaimed classical, jazz, pop, and folk performers; touring Broadway musicals; quality children's entertainment; and world-class ballet, modern and jazz dance. Overture Center's extensive outreach and educational programs serve thousands of Madison-area residents annually, including youth, older adults, people with limited financial resources and people with disabilities. The center is also home to ten independent resident organizations.

Internationally renowned architect Cesar Pelli designed the center to provide the best possible environment for artists and audiences, as well as to complement Madison's urban environment. Performance spaces range from the spectacular 2,250-seat Overture Hall to the casual and intimate Rotunda Stage. The renovated Capitol Theater seats approximately 1,110, and The Playhouse seats 350. In addition, three multi-purpose spaces provide flexible performance, meeting and rehearsal facilities. Overture Center also features several art exhibit spaces. Overture Galleries I, II and III display works by Dane County artists. The Playhouse Gallery features regional artists with an emphasis on collaborations with local organizations. The Wisconsin Academy of Sciences, Arts and Letters' Watrous Gallery displays works by Wisconsin artists, and the Madison Museum of Contemporary Art offers works by national and international artists.

### Resident organizations

Bach Dancing and Dynamite Society  
Children's Theater of Madison  
Kanopy Dance Company  
Li Chiao-Ping Dance Company  
Madison Ballet

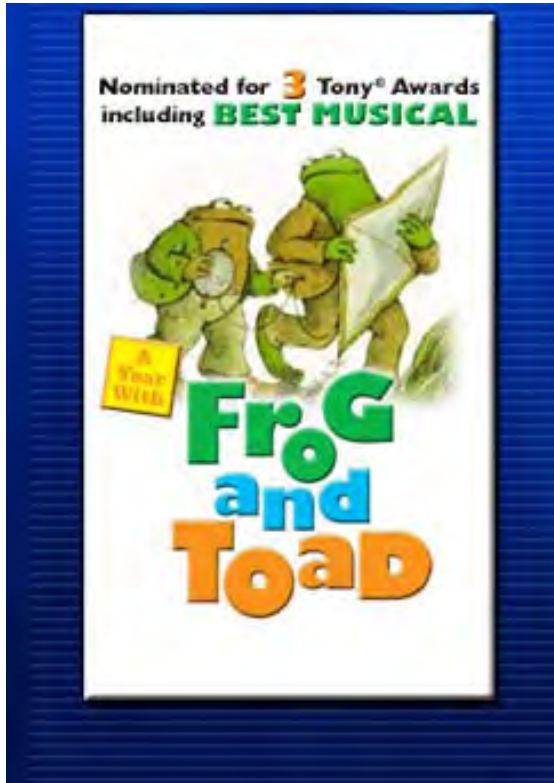
Madison Museum of Contemporary Art  
Madison Opera  
Madison Symphony Orchestra  
Wisconsin Academy of Sciences, Arts and Letters  
Wisconsin Chamber Orchestra

### Credits:

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# A YEAR WITH FROG AND TOAD



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## We Want Your Feedback!

OnStage performances can be evaluated online! Evaluations are vital to the future and funding of this program. Your feedback educates us about the ways the program is utilized and we often implement your suggestions. [CLICK HERE](#) to fill out an online evaluation. We look forward to hearing from you.

Enjoy the show!  
Overture Education Team

## Dear Teachers

This Spotlight on Learning: Educator's Resource Guide for A Year with Frog and Toad OnStage performance is designed to:

- Maximize students' enjoyment and appreciation of the performance;
- Extend the impact of the performance by providing discussion ideas, activities, and further reading that promote learning across the curriculum;
- Promote arts literacy by expanding students' knowledge of music, storytelling and theater;
- Illustrate that the arts are a legacy reflecting the values, customs, beliefs, expressions, and reflections of a culture;
- Use the arts to teach about the cultures of other people and to celebrate students' own heritage through self-reflection.

In this Resource Guide, you will find valuable information and suggestions for activities that can help prepare students to see this performance, ideas for follow-up activities and resources you can access on the web. We've also included Wisconsin Academic Standards for each activity in order to align the experience with your curriculum requirements.

# ABOUT THE ARTISTS

**Work Light Productions (WLP)** is dedicated to creating and producing live entertainment. From touring productions of the Tony Award® winning musicals *Avenue Q* and *A Year With Frog and Toad*, their critically acclaimed productions reach tens of thousands of concert goers and theater lovers each year. In keeping with their mission to develop original works, WLP has launched 3 new musicals in the last 2 years with the introduction of *The Musical Adventures of Flat Stanley*, *Frankly Ben*, and *The Ant and the Elephant*, and has begun work on a new musical based on Roald Dahl's *James*.



[Visit Work Light Productions.](#) Their website provides a good introduction to the performance.

- [Listen to the music](#)
- [Watch a video](#)

**Author Arnold Lobel** wrote and/or illustrated over 70 books for children. A born storyteller, Lobel had a following of literally millions of young children with whom he shared the warmth and humor of his child-like vision of life.



## The "Frog and Toad" Books

- *Frog and Toad Are Friends* (1970)
- *Frog and Toad Together* (1972)
- *Frog and Toad All Year* (1976)
- *Days with Frog and Toad* (1979)

[Find the books](#) at the Madison public library.

[Find the books](#) at your local Madison school library.

# BOOK SUMMARY

Frog and Toad are great friends who enjoy spending time together. Frog is very optimistic and happy most of the time while Toad broods and is more pessimistic. Despite their differences, they respect each other and remain great friends. This musical explores their friendship through the four seasons.

## SPRING

The Birds come to wake up Frog and Toad from their winter slumber. Toad does not believe it is spring already. After waking up from a long winter nap, Toad finds his good friend planting a garden. Toad decides to make a garden but grows quite impatient at his slowpoke seeds. Frog explains that seeds need patience and if he were a seed he would not want to grow for someone who is yelling at him. Toad apologizes and becomes a kind gardener who protects the seeds. He sings, dances and plays tuba for them. He falls asleep and to his surprise tiny sprouts appear in the morning. Toad is ecstatic, except he has no mail. Frog decides to write his friend a letter and sends it by his friend Snail to deliver ASAP.

## SUMMER

The two friends decide to go for a swim. Toad looks funny in a bathing suit and Frog respectfully turns his eyes when Toad climbs into the water. But, the other animals tease Toad. The day turns out jolly at the expense of Toad and his very silly suit. Later that day, Toad decides to invite Frog on a picnic, but Toad finds a note on Frog's doors saying that Frog has gone away to be alone. Toad begins to worry so much that Frog is upset with him that he drops their picnic in the water. Frog is fine, he just likes to think about things that make him happy and the thing that makes him the most happy is that he has Toad for a friend.

## FALL

Frog and Toad do all kinds of fun activities with each other; bake cookies, fly kites, rake leaves and tell stories. One stormy night, Frog decides it's the perfect night for a ghost story and he begins to tell Toad about the time he was on a picnic with his family and they got lost in the woods. They left him alone while they looked for the way out. Frog was very frightened of the large terrible frog that lives in the woods, who likes to eat frog children for dessert. He ties up the big frog when it approaches and he and his parents go home.

## WINTER

Frog and Toad enjoy sledding adventures together. Toad's letter from Frog finally arrives. Toad is very touched by the letter from his friend. On Christmas Eve, Toad fears something terrible has happened to Frog because he is late. But when Frog arrives, Toad finds out that he was late because he was wrapping Toad's present.

## VOCABULARY

The words listed below are all used in *A Year with Frog and Toad*.

Adieu	French for farewell or goodbye
Bamboo Shoot	The hard, woody stems of the bamboo plant (a tall tropical grass)
Hibernation	To spend the winter in a sleeping state
Hubbub	Loud noise
Indisputable	Certain to be true, undeniable, without a doubt
Magnanimous	Unselfish, generous in forgiving
Rutabaga	A root vegetable somewhat like a turnip
Underrated	Underestimated, rated too low, not given enough credit
Aghast	Shocked and amazed
Agog	Eager and excited
Dusky	Somewhat dark
Escargot	An edible snail dish, often served as an appetizer before the meal
Exhausting	Very tiring
Fleeter	Faster

# SONG LIST

Each of the songs and scenes in *A Year With Frog and Toad* corresponds directly to a story from the Frog and Toad books.

These stories are strung together to fill the year that passes during the show. Below you will find a list of the songs from the show and the stories that they represent.



## Song Title

"Spring"  
 "Seeds"  
 "The Letter #1"  
 "Getta Loada Toad"  
 "Alone"  
 "Cookies"  
 "The Kite"  
 "He'll Never Know"  
 "Shivers"  
 "Down the Hill"  
 "Toad to the Rescue"  
 "Merry Almost Christmas"

## Story

Spring  
 The Garden  
 The Letter  
 A Swim  
 Alone  
 Cookies  
 The Kite  
 The Surprise  
 Shivers  
 Down the Hill  
 Christmas Eve  
 Christmas Eve

## From the Book

Frog and Toad are Friends  
 Frog and Toad are Together  
 Frog and Toad are Friends  
 Frog and Toad are Friends  
 Days with Frog and Toad  
 Frog and Toad Together  
 Days with Frog and Toad  
 Frog and Toad All Year  
 Days with Frog and Toad  
 Frog and Toad All Year  
 Frog and Toad All Year  
 Frog and Toad All Year

There are two songs that do not correspond directly to a specific story in the book but are still in the show. The song "**A Year With Frog and Toad**" serves as a narrative device for the musical and is sung by the Birds. It sets up the audience for what they are about to see and introduces the main characters of Frog and Toad. The song returns twice; accompanying the migration of the Birds and showing the passing of seasons.

The running joke of Snail singing "The Letter" pays off with a new song, "**I'm Coming Out Of My Shell**" in which he expresses his pride in his accomplishment in delivering the letter.

[CLICK HERE](#) to view the lyrics to these songs.

# THEATER CONVENTIONS

Although we all know that what happens on stage is not real, when we watch a play, we willingly suspend our disbelief. We let ourselves pretend that the characters are real people and not actors and that the events we see are actually happening. To prepare your students for this production, we recommend that you discuss the following theater conventions with your class, prior to attending this performance.

## SET DESIGN AND SCENERY

This show takes place over the course of one (1) year with all four seasons (spring, summer, winter and fall) represented.

- How can the scenery be changed to show each season during the show?
- What things do you think will be onstage for each of the seasons?
- During the show, try to remember all of the things that were onstage for each season and talk about those things as a class.

## ACTORS AND COSTUMES

There are no human characters in *A Year With Frog and Toad*. The main characters are a frog and a toad. In the show, human actors and actresses will play the roles of animals. Some of the actors in the show play many different characters. An actor might be a bird in one scene and a mole in the next.

- How do you think the costume designer will dress the actors playing Frog and Toad, so these actors look like amphibians?
- What gestures and movements do you think the actors will perform to help the audience know they are playing animals, not humans?
- While watching the show, notice how much the actors can change with their costumes and their gestures.



# WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN FROGS AND TOADS?

Many people don't know the difference between frogs and toads. Because they belong to the same animal group, they do share some similarities, but they are also quite different animals!

## FROG AND TOAD SIMILARITIES

- Frogs and toads are amphibians, animals that begin their lives in the water (breathing with gills) and then, during maturity, live on land (breathing with lungs). The word amphibian means "double life." Frogs and toads are found all around the world, on all continents except Antarctica.
- Like all amphibians, frogs spend their lives near water because they must return to the water to lay their eggs. Frogs and toads begin their lives as tiny eggs laid in clusters on or very near the water. The eggs hatch into tadpoles that swim in fresh water and breathe with gills. As a tadpole grows, it develops legs and loses its tail. When this process is complete, the froglet breathes with lungs and lives on land.
- Frogs and toads eat insects that live in and around the pond. They eat tiny creatures like snails, flies, water beetles, mosquitoes, worms and dragonflies. They use their tongues to catch their food. An amphibian's tongue is attached at the front of its mouth; not at the back, as human tongues are. Their tongue is long and the end of it is very sticky.
- Frogs and toads are both cold-blooded. This means that their body temperature changes as the temperature of their surroundings changes.
- Frogs and toads take water into their bodies through their skins. They don't drink with their mouth as humans and many other animals do.
- Frogs and toads live for many years. Frogs have been known to have lived for more than 20 years. There are records of toads living more than 36 years!
- Neither frogs nor toads will give you warts! That is just a myth.



# WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN FROGS AND TOADS?

## FROG AND TOAD DIFFERENCES



<http://static.howstuffworks.com/gif/frog-1.jpg>

### FROGS

- Need to live near water
- Have smooth, moist skin that makes them look “slimy”
- Have a narrow body
- Have higher, rounder, bulgier eyes
- Teeth in upper jaw
- Eggs are laid in clusters
- Have longer hind legs
- Take long high jumps
- Have many predators

### TOADS

- Do not need to live near water to survive
- Have rough, dry, bumpy skin
- Have a wider body
- Have lower, football shaped eyes
- No teeth
- Eggs laid in long chains
- Have shorter, less powerful hind legs
- Will run or take small hops rather than jump
- Do not have many predators
- A toad’s skin lets out a bitter taste and smell that burns the eyes and nostrils of its predators, much like a skunk does



<http://www.dicts.info/img/ud/toad.jpg>

# SCIENCE ACTIVITIES

## THE SEASONS BOOK

### GETTING STARTED

*A Year With Frog and Toad* takes place over the course of one year in the lives of Frog and Toad, and spans the four seasons. Create a large table on the board. Write the four seasons (spring, summer, fall, winter) across the top of the table, and the following words as rows on the left side: months, weather, holidays, and activities.



SOURCE: [http://www.maine puzzles.com/Images/Childrens-Floor-Puzzles/6210\\_The\\_Four\\_Seasons\\_Floor\\_Puzzle\\_lg.jpg](http://www.maine puzzles.com/Images/Childrens-Floor-Puzzles/6210_The_Four_Seasons_Floor_Puzzle_lg.jpg)

As a class, brainstorm facts about each of the four seasons.

- In which months does the season occur and the various holidays (include the dates) that fall in that season?
- What is the weather like and what activities do students like to do during these seasons?

**MATERIALS:** Pass out four (4) sheets of white paper (for the book pages), two (2) colored sheets of construction paper (for the book cover and back page), and old magazines.

- Have students label each of the four white sheets of paper with each season: spring, summer, fall and winter.
- Then, have students find images in the magazines that represent each of the seasons, cut them out, and glue them onto the white paper.
- When students have completed this process, they can draw a background and other relevant seasonal items on the paper, and write one or two sentences to describe the season at the bottom of each page.
- Create a cover page that includes a title, the student's name and a picture that reflects their favorite seasonal activity.
- Once the books are finished, have students tell a partner what their favorite season is and why. Give students time to read their books to a friend or share their season books with the class.

**Wisconsin Academic Standards:** Science –Earth and Space Science (E); Art – Visual Communication and Expression (E)

# SCIENCE ACTIVITIES

## HOW DO ANIMALS LIVE?

All of the characters in *A Year With Frog and Toad* are animals. Help your students do research on the various animals (frogs, toads, birds, turtles, mice, lizards, moles, squirrels, snails) and how they actually live and behave. Focus on the behaviors that will be highlighted in the show (eating habits, habitat, migration, hibernation, movement, etc). Give students a list of questions or prompts to guide their viewing of the performance. After the show, have students brainstorm a list of the things that they think were human characteristics given to the animal for the show, as opposed to actual characteristics of the animal.



SOURCE: <http://www.teara.govt.nz/files/hero7208.jpg>

## WHERE ARE THE BIRDS GOING?

The Birds open this performance with the line, "We flew south for the winter." Discuss the migration of birds and why that is important so that your students will understand what the Birds are referring to.

## WHAT TIME IS IT?

Toad never knows what time it is because his clock is broken. Have your students practice telling time on a clock with hands. Draw five blank clocks (circles with lines or the numbers 1 - 12 for each of the hours). Write the following times under the blank clocks (one for each): 1:00, 5:45, 8:10, 9:30, 11:20. Now have your students draw the hands on each clock where they would be to represent that time. Once they get these times drawn, try more times. Place the students in pairs to play a time game. Have them draw some blank clocks and give each other times to draw on the clocks, or draw the hands on the clocks first and then look at the drawings and write down the times.



SOURCE: <http://technabob.com/blog/wp-content/uploads/2009/04/dali-clock.jpg>

## IS THIS FOOD GOOD FOR ME?

Frog and Toad enjoy drinking tea and eating cookies. Sometimes, Frog and Toad even eat too many cookies! Make a list of students' favorite foods to snack on. As a class, decide which foods on this list are healthy, not very healthy, and why. Then, have students create a collage of foods that are good to eat by drawing or collecting pictures of various food items; and a collage of snack foods that they like to eat that are not as healthy. Make a chart of how much healthy food they should eat in relation to how much snack food, and talk about healthy food choices and eating habits.

**Wisconsin Academic Standards:** Science –Earth and Space Science (E), Life and Environmental Science (F); Mathematics-Measurement (D)

# LANGUAGE ARTS ACTIVITIES

## READING

Read some of the “Frog and Toad” stories aloud in class, or have students read them, in order to become familiar with the characters and some of the events in the show. Students can also read other books by Arnold Lobel, especially those in the *I Can Read* series. Then, have them discuss how the stories are similar to the Frog and Toad books and how they are different.

## SNAIL MAIL

In the past, writing and sending letters by messenger, like Frog does by asking Snail to deliver his letter, was the only means for sending news to someone. Various inventions over the past decades and centuries have made it possible to send news more quickly in both written and verbal form. Have students brainstorm the different ways that people use to get information to other people.



## WRITE A LETTER

Frog writes a friendly letter to Toad to cheer him up. Have your students think about a friend or family member who would like receiving a letter from them. Students can then write a letter and deliver it to them or get help mailing it if the person lives far away.



## STORY TIME

After students have seen the performance and all of the fun activities that Frog and Toad do together throughout the year, have them create their own story of friendship. Ask them to think about a favorite activity they have participated in with a friend or sibling and turn it into a story. Stories can be written or told orally.

**Wisconsin Academic Standards:** Language Arts – Reading (A), Writing (B), Oral Language (C)

# STUDENT ART HANDOUT



© Boowakwala.com



SOURCE: <http://www.boowakwala.com/book/frog-coloring-book.gif>

# POST-PERFORMANCE ACTIVITIES



## REVIEW THE PERFORMANCE

Write a review of the *A Year with Frog and Toad* performance. Start by writing down everything you remember from the show. What kinds of songs and dances did they perform? Who were your favorite characters? Why? What did you think of the music in the performance? What was your favorite part of the performance? Did you have a least favorite part of the performance? Why? Were there any additional aspects of the show that stood out to you (e.g. sets, lighting, costumes and/or a specific dance sequence)? What did you like most about those aspects of the show? How did the performance make you feel?

- Give the performance a rating, out of five stars.
- For each positive star, discuss one thing you liked about the performance. (Example, for a five-star rating, describe five things you liked and why you liked them.)
- For each star under five, discuss one thing you did not enjoy about the performance. (Example, for a three-star rating, list three things you liked and two things you did not enjoy.)

## DRAW OR PAINT YOUR IMPRESSION OF THE PERFORMANCE

Draw or paint a picture that expresses how the performance made you feel. Or, draw or paint your impression, using shapes, lines, colors, patterns and other elements from your imagination that convey qualities of the performance.

## PERFORMANCE FEEDBACK

We love to hear from you. Send your performance reviews and/or drawings to:

**Education Department**  
**Overture Center for the Arts**  
**201 State Street, Madison, WI 53703**

**Wisconsin Academic Standards:** Art – Visual Communication and Expression (E), Personal and Social Development (I); Language Arts – Writing (B), Theater – Play Analysis and Reading (A)

# ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

## [Author Arnold Lobel](#)

Learn about the author and the books he has written.

## [A Year with Frog and Toad Lyrics](#)

Lyrics and video of the songs in this performance.

## [All About Frogs](#)

Visit "Frogland" for all the facts and information about these amphibians.

## [The Seasons](#)

A description of the seasons, and common misconceptions about what causes them.

# WISCONSIN ACADEMIC STANDARDS

## SCIENCE

### Earth and Space Science

E.5. Describe the weather and seasonal changes

### Life and Environmental Science

F.1 Discover how each organism meets its basic needs for water, nutrients, protection, and energy in order to survive.

## ART

### Visual Communication and Expression

E.1 Communicate basic ideas by producing studio art forms, such as drawings, paintings, prints, sculpture, jewelry, fibers, and ceramics

E.5 Use the visual arts to express ideas that cannot be expressed by words alone

### Personal and Social Development

I.2 Make art that shows how they sometimes feel

## MATHEMATICS

### Measurement

D.1 Recognize and describe measurable attributes, such as time, and identify the appropriate units to measure it.

## LANGUAGE ARTS

### Reading

A.1 Use effective reading strategies to achieve their purpose in reading.

### Writing

B.1 Create or produce writing to communicate with different audiences for a variety of purposes

- Write expressive pieces in response to reading, viewing, and life experiences (narratives, reflections, and letters) employing descriptive detail and a personal voice
- Write creative pieces (poetry, fiction, and plays) employing basic aesthetic principles appropriate to each genre

### Oral Language

C.1 Orally communicate information, opinions, and ideas effectively to different audiences for a variety of purposes

- Read aloud effectively from previously-read material
- Participate in group readings, such as choral, echo, and shadow reading

## THEATER

### Play Reading and Analysis

A.1 Attend a live theatre performance and discuss the experience

- explain what happened in the play
- identify and describe the characters
- say what they liked and didn't like
- describe the scenery, lighting and/or costumes

# THEATER ETIQUETTE AND EXPERIENCES

We have a wonderful opportunity at this performance to help youth learn about attending live performances.

Please discuss the following with your students:

1. Sometimes young people do not realize how a live performance differs from watching a movie or television show. A live presentation has not been pre-recorded with the mistakes edited out. This makes it riskier for the performer and more exciting for the audience. It also means the audience has a real contribution to make to the overall event. Each audience member affects those around him/her as well as the performer. Concentrate to help the performers. The audience gives energy to the performer who uses that energy to give life to the performance.
2. An usher will show you where to sit. Walk slowly and talk quietly as you enter the theater.
3. For safety's sake, do not lean over or sit on the balcony railings or box ledges. Please be careful on the stairs. Avoid horseplay and running throughout the building.
4. If necessary, use the restroom before the performance begins. Adults need to accompany young students.
5. You may talk quietly to the people next to you until the performance begins.
6. When the lights in the theater begin to dim, it is the signal that the performance is about to begin. Stop talking and turn your attention to the stage.
7. Stay in your seat throughout the entire performance.
8. During the performance, listen quietly and watch closely. Talking during the performance will distract other audience members and performers. Try not to wiggle too much and don't kick the seat in front of you. These disruptions make it hard for others around you to concentrate on the show.
9. Sometimes during a performance you may respond by laughing, crying, or sighing. By all means feel free to do so! LAUGHING IS APPROPRIATE. (Teachers, please do not hush the students while they are laughing.) If something is funny, it's good to laugh. If you like something a lot, applaud. This will let the performers know that you are enjoying the show.
10. At the end of the show, applaud to say thank you to the performers. The performers will bow to acknowledge your appreciation and thank you for coming.
11. When the lights get brighter in the theater, the show is over. Stay in your seats until the OnStage Coordinator dismisses your school.
12. Please remember:
  - Taking photographs or using recording devices is strictly prohibited.
  - Beverages and food, including gum and candy, are not allowed in the theater.
  - You are only one person among several hundred in the audience.
  - Please respect the performers and your fellow audience members.

Please inform your adult chaperones that ushers will be available throughout the performance if there are any difficulties.

# American Girl's Fund for Children

Funding for this resource guide and the OnStage Performing Arts Series for Students is provided by a generous grant from American Girl's Fund for Children, a philanthropic foundation created to support programs and services for school-age children in Dane County. Since its founding in 1992, American Girl's Fund for Children has supported programs in the arts, culture, and environment.

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FOR THE ARTS

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