

**Puppet Showplace Theater brings social emotional skill-building — with puppets, laughing, and sharks!
— to post-COVID families**

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Photos: <https://www.dropbox.com/sh/r4w4cvbkaq0t5gz/AAD6YqgnYDypUAIWlvwDQqfBa?dl=0>

Show trailer: <https://vimeo.com/766295782/9a45c792ef>

More information and tickets: <https://www.puppetshowplace.org/performances>

(Brookline, MA) Imagine a clown giving a TED talk about feelings, for 5 year olds. With puppets. And games. And sharks! That's [***Please Ship This Wet Gift***](#), on stage at **Puppet Showplace Theater** in Brookline Village for **two weekends, April 22 - 30**.

Puppet Showplace Theater has been presenting puppet theater for young children and their grownups for 49 years, but **today's pandemic kids have missed out on learning social and emotional skills**, and making first experiences of puppetry and theater all the more important.



Attending to the emotional needs of pandemic kids:

"We're presenting *Please Ship This Wet Gift* — one clown's presentation about terrible feelings, on our stage April 22-30 — in part because we know for today's young children, **it's not just their first puppet show — they're catching up on firsts that they missed, including emotional skills**," says Interim Programming Director **Veronica Barron**.

"For 49 years, we've had children in our theater seeing a live performance for the very first time. But today's 3 year olds were born at the start of the COVID-19 lockdown. Today's 4 year olds were just learning how to walk, and today's 5 year olds were barely learning to speak before we entered the height of COVID: grownups started wiping down groceries, and kids couldn't have play dates or hug their grandparents anymore."

***Please Ship This Wet Gift*: a clown-and-puppet show about terrible feelings**

Please Ship This Wet Gift was created by two childhood best friends — performer Marta Mozelle MacRostie and director Hannah Simms. **"I've learned from and worked with a bunch of fancy people,"** says Mozelle MacRostie, a graduate of UMass Amherst and recipient of the Jim Henson Foundation Family Grant for her prior work for children, **"But I've also taught preschool.** And the gist of the show is: you can have your feelings. They're allowed. We don't need to not have them."

"When kids have really big feelings that they don't have skills to handle, it can make it really difficult for them to play. They're kind of my favorite — the kids who kind of can't deal. They're so full of feelings. They have a really sweet side to them, but then typically there's a lot of behavioral issues. They act out, and can't do the things the other kids are doing."

Mozelle MacRostie and Simms created the show in hopes of offering new tools to children and families:

"In *Please Ship This Wet Gift*, we're modeling emotional coping skills that are sort of a game — and I think games are fantastic coping skills. **If a child went home and felt like they could talk to a caregiver using one of the games from the show — that would be a dream.** And if they just have fun, that's also great!"

Post-COVID children need support in building social and emotional skills

Parents, teachers, caregivers, and researchers have seen the need to support young children in building skills that might typically have emerged through normal social interactions.

"The biggest challenges are trying to get our kids to be able to interact with other kids. Before our school started in-person learning in October, they only saw any other children for an hour or two every other week at a distance," reported one family in the [Early Learning Study at Harvard](#) in 2021.

"Usually, Kindergarteners come to school in part to **learn to build a group culture with their classmates.** By the end of the year, they are delighted to know their routines, and to feel a sense of ownership of their group dynamic, and know their place in it," says Elementary Specialist **Rosalie Norris** of Melrose Public Schools.

"In my experience, that has translated to a first grader understanding that within a month, and a second grader getting it within a few weeks. **But this year, I'm seeing 1st, 2nd, and 3rd graders who are still not sure how to commune** — even in April, they're still struggling."

At Puppet Showplace Theater, we find that live performance in general, and puppetry in particular, offer unique opportunities to practice empathy, self-regulation, and emotional awareness of self and others. "Puppetry touches people — young children especially tend to see themselves in these symbols, and it can be easier to access those emotions," says Mozelle MacRostie.

"I have been involved with the Puppet Showplace Theater for many years as a neighbor, as a performer, as an audience member, and as a parent," says **Susan Linn**, Ed.D, a puppeteer, psychologist, founder of Fairplay (formerly the Campaign for a Commercial-Free Childhood) and author of [Who's Raising The Kids?](#)

"At a time when childhood is increasingly dominated by screens, the Showplace affords children opportunities for crucial live, hands-on, and truly interactive, creative experiences that are so important for healthy development, and are, unfortunately, becoming increasingly rare."

Show Details

Please Ship This Wet Gift will be performed on April 22 and 29 at 1:00 pm and 3: 00 pm, and on April 23 and 30 at 10:30 am and 1:00 pm. All shows will take place at Puppet Showplace Theater, located at 32 Station Street, Brookline, MA. The show is recommended for ages 4 and up; all ages are welcome. Tickets are \$14.50 and can be purchased at www.puppetshowplace.org/performances. Contact the box office at boxoffice@puppetshowplace.org or call 617-731-6400 x 101 for assistance.

About Brave Bucket Co.

Marta Mozelle MacRostie (Performer/Designer) is a puppeteer, clown, designer, and builder based in NYC. Marta's previous work for family audiences *Help Save the Monkey!* (with collaborator Liz Hara) premiered in the 2014 New York Children's Theater Festival, and was awarded a 2014 Jim Henson Foundation Family Grant. She holds a degree in Puppetry & Music from UMass Amherst, studied clown at Movement Theater Studio, and is a many-time alum of the O'Neill National Puppetry Conference.

Hannah Simms (Director) is a director and teacher based in Hartford, CT, where she is an ensemble member at HartBeat Ensemble. She is a graduate of the Dell'Arte School of Physical Theatre, the NTI Advanced Directing Semester at the Eugene O'Neill Theater Center, and the Ada Comstock Program at Smith College.

Marta & Hannah met on their afterschool softball team in Amherst, MA. Their team never won a game, but they did do the bunny hop in the outfield.

About Puppet Showplace Theater

Puppet Showplace Theater is dedicated to presenting outstanding puppetry to diverse audiences through performances, workshops, and community outreach activities. Founded in 1974, the theater is a treasured Boston-area cultural institution and one of the few dedicated puppetry centers in the United States. Puppet Showplace presents over 300 performances a year in its intimate Brookline Village theater, and reaches further audiences through touring productions at schools, libraries, theaters, and cultural centers. From children's birthday party performances to provocative Puppets at Night shows, the theater's programming is designed to connect with a diverse audience of all ages, backgrounds, and abilities. Workshops, classes, summer programs, and training opportunities are offered to both children and adults, and partnerships include local and emerging artists to develop new and innovative puppetry productions. www.puppetshowplace.org

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