

PENSACOLA OPERA

A Brief Social Story™
Hansel and Gretel
with Pensacola Opera



The opera is a place where people wear costumes and sing songs to tell a story.

Before the show begins, people might be talking a lot and it might be noisy. That is okay. There will be a quiet space where I can go to get away from the noise. If I need a break from the noise, I can ask my family or teacher to take me to the quiet space.

When the show starts, people will come onto the stage. The singers might ask the audience to join them in a dance. I might like to try to dance, too. There may be someone dressed up like a witch. If I get scared, I can hold my teacher or family member's hand or ask to go to the quiet space. There might be music playing and sometimes the people might sing. The people in the audience will try to stay quiet to listen to the show. I will try to be respectful to the performers and others watching the performance by staying in my seat, sitting quietly, and watching the performance.

I might need to go to the bathroom during the show. If I need to go to the bathroom, I can ask my family or teacher to take me to the bathroom.

At the end of the show, people might clap if they liked the show. I might want to clap, too. The characters will bow and they might ask the audience if there are any questions. If I want to ask a question, I can raise my hand and wait for them to point to me to ask my question. If they point to me, I will try to talk loudly so everyone can hear my question.

When it is time to leave, everyone will stand up and walk to the exits. I will try to wait my turn to walk out of the theatre and out of the door. If I am respectful during the show, my family and teachers will be so proud of me. I might like going to the opera!

THE NATIONAL OPERA CENTER
AMERICA

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VANDERBILT KENNEDY CENTER
TREATMENT & RESEARCH INSTITUTE FOR AUTISM SPECTRUM DISORDERS

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Tip Sheet

Hansel and Gretel

with Young Patronesses of the Opera

Young Patronesses of the Opera has joined with Nashville Opera to implement a revolutionary program, All-Access Opera Education, to make opera inclusive for ALL students—providing special evidence-based toolkits designed in collaboration with the Treatment and Research Institute of Autism Spectrum Disorders at Vanderbilt University. The program bolsters accessibility for children with autism spectrum disorder (ASD) and other disabilities and creates exciting new learning opportunities and audience experiences for students through opera. It is the first program of its kind to be documented for replication in communities across the United States. Partners include Arizona Opera, Pensacola Opera, Michigan Opera Theater and now Young Patronesses of the Opera in Miami. We hope it is helpful to your students or your family!

Supports:

1. **Social Story**

We have developed and provided multiple versions of a **Social Story** for children to use prior to the opera. Social Stories™ describe a situation or experience in order to provide children with an idea of what to expect. Creating predictability can be reassuring for children entering a new situation and can allow children to respond to challenges in an adaptive way. We recommend reviewing this social story with your student or child prior to attending the opera. Social Stories™ are an evidence-based practice as identified in the autism intervention literature review, *Evidence-Based Practice for Children, Youth, and Young Adults with Autism Spectrum Disorder* (2014) by the National Professional Development Center on Autism Spectrum Disorders.

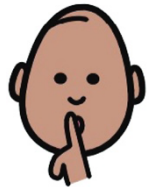
2. **Story Board**

We have developed and provided a **Story Board** online that can be projected or printed out for use during the performance. A story board is a visual schedule that outlines the sequence of events. Visual Schedules can be used to outline what might happen at a doctor's visit, the sequence of events occurring over a whole day, or, as in this case, the sequence of events occurring within the plot of the opera. Reviewing the story board prior to the performance will also familiarize your child or student with the story and prepare them for what to expect, both of which may enhance their experience at the opera. Visual schedules are an evidence-based practice as identified in the autism intervention literature review, *Evidence-Based Practice for Children, Youth, and Young Adults with Autism Spectrum*

Disorder (2014) by the National Professional Development Center on Autism Spectrum Disorders.

3. Quiet Space

If you or your child or student need to take a break from the noise and/or commotion, it is highly effective to have a designated room or area as a "Quiet Space" to visit. It can be a hallway outside of the performance space, a classroom, or any other place conveniently located near the performance.



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Resources:

- **VKC-TRIAD Community Engagement Initiative:**
<http://vkc.mc.vanderbilt.edu/vkc/triad/community/>
The Community Engagement Initiative includes the Families First and Organizational Engagement Programs. Families First is a free workshop series for caregivers of young children with Autism Spectrum Disorder. The Organizational Engagement Program focuses on supporting organizations in building capacity for inclusion by providing training, developing supports, and collaborating on modified events.
- **Vanderbilt Autism Resource Line:** Local 322-7565 or Toll Free (877) ASD-VUMC (273- 8862) A toll-free helpline for families and professionals to access information about autism- related clinical, research, and outreach services at Vanderbilt University.
- **Tennessee Disability Pathfinder:** 1-800-640-4636 or tncpathfinder@vanderbilt.edu
The Tennessee Disability Pathfinder is a free, statewide, information and referral service for persons with disabilities, family members, service providers, and advocates.
- **National Professional Development Center on Autism Spectrum Disorders:**
<http://autismpdc.fpg.unc.edu>
The National Professional Development Center on Autism Spectrum Disorders is a multi-university center to promote the use of evidence-based practice for children and adolescents with autism spectrum disorders.
- **Mayer-Johnson:** www.mayer-johnson.com
DynaVox Mayer-Johnson is the leading provider of speech generating devices and symbol-adapted special education software used to assist individuals in overcoming their speech, language and learning challenges.

A Detailed Social Story
Hansel and Gretel
with Young Patronesses of the Opera

The opera is a place where people wear costumes and sing songs to tell a story. When I go to see Hansel & Gretel, I might go with my family or I might see the show at my school.

When I get to the performance, there will be a lot of places to sit. My family or teacher will help decide where we should sit. Before the show begins, people might be talking a lot and it might be noisy. That is okay. There will be a quiet space where I can go to get away from the noise. If I need a break from the noise, I can ask my family or teacher to take me to the quiet space.

An adult might come to the front and start talking loudly. This means that the play is about to start and everyone in the theater should finish their conversations and be quiet. I will try to finish my conversation and be quiet when an adult starts talking loudly on stage.

When the show starts, people will come onto the stage. The singers might ask the audience to join them in a dance. I might like to try to dance too. There may be someone dressed up like a witch. If I get scared, I can hold my teacher or family member's hand or ask to go to the quiet space. There might be music playing and sometimes the people might sing. The people in the audience will try to stay quiet to listen to the show. I will try to be respectful to the performers and others watching the performance by staying in my seat, sitting quietly, and watching the performance. If the music or the singing gets too loud, I can ask to go to the quiet space.

The people in the opera are called characters. Sometimes the characters might pretend to be happy and sometimes they might pretend to be angry or sad. When the characters are angry, they might yell or growl or stomp around. I might get scared. If I am scared, I can ask my teacher or family member to hold my hand, take a break, or go to the quiet space.

I might need to go to the bathroom during the show. If I need to go to the bathroom, I can ask my family or teacher to take me to the bathroom.

At the end of the show, people might clap if they liked the show. I might want to clap too. The characters will bow and they might ask the audience if there are any questions. If I want to ask a question, I can raise my hand and wait for them to point to me to ask my question. If they point to me, I will try to talk loudly so everyone can hear my question.

When it is time to leave, everyone will stand up and walk to the exits. It might be crowded with everyone trying to leave at the same time. I will try to wait my turn to walk out of the theater and out of the door. If I am respectful during the show, by staying in my seat, sitting quietly, and watching the performance, my family and teachers will be so proud of me. I might like going to the opera!

