


# Family Guide for



## Goodnight Moon & The Runaway Bunny

 **Iowa State Center** | *Great*  
*Stephens Auditorium* | **EVENTS**  
IOWA STATE UNIVERSITY | HAPPEN HERE

Special thanks to

 COCA | 524 Trinity Avenue | Saint Louis, MO 63130 | (314) 725-6555 | [www.cocastl.org](http://www.cocastl.org)  
for the use of this Family Guide

## Watching a Performance with your 3 to 5 year old

At the Iowa State Center, we believe that the arts are a family experience. A visit to the Iowa State Center is a chance for your family to discover and experience a vast new world together. We want you and your family to share performances as part of the important time you spend together – reading, playing, talking, questioning and all the things that you do as a family can be enhanced by a dynamic performance that captures the imagination of your child. Part of the Iowa State Center’s commitment to our youngest audience members is the preparation of this guide to help you plan for and enjoy the performance together.

## Synopsis of *Goodnight Moon* & *The Runaway Bunny*

**Goodnight Moon** is a celebration of familiar nighttime rituals, while **The Runaway Bunny**’s pretend tale of leaving home evokes reassuring responses from his loving mum. Both tales feature endearing rabbit characters, and the soothing rhythms of bunny banter and dream-like imagery never fail to infuse young readers with a reassuring sense of security. Mermaid’s staged adaptation will bring a new sense of appreciation to stories that have delighted several generations.

## The Author and Illustrator

Few writers have been as attuned to the concerns and emotions of childhood as **Margaret Wise Brown** (1910-1952). A graduate of Hollins College and the progressive bank Street College of Education, she combined her literary aspirations with the study of child development. Her unique ability to see the world through a child’s eyes is unequaled. Her many classic books continue to delight millions of young listeners and readers year after year.

**Clement Hurd** (1908-1988) graduated from Yale University and studied painting in Paris in the 1930s with Fernand Leger and others, where he developed his characteristic style using flat, vibrant colors. His work caught the eye of Margaret Wise Brown, and their collaboration produced some of the most enduring children’s books of our time. Clement Hurd was married to Edith Thacher Hurd, and together they also created many beloved books for children.

## The Theater Company

Now in its thirty-fifth season, **Mermaid Theatre** has earned international acclaim for its unique interpretations of the works of Eric Carle (*The Very Hungry Caterpillar*), Leo Lionni (*Swimmy, Frederick & Inch by Inch*) and Sam McBratney (*Guess How Much I Love You*). These widely-traveled productions incorporate innovative puppetry, striking scenic effects, and evocative original music to provide very young audiences with an effortless introduction to the performing arts and the excitement of reading. The new show will feature these same elements.

## Tips for your visit

1. **Plan for the visit with your child using the “Before the Show” section of this guide.** Toddlers and preschoolers are ready and eager to learn. Preparing them through stories, games and play will help cultivate their interest in the performance experience.
2. **Make sure your child is physically ready for the show.** See that he/she has eaten a snack and used the bathroom right before the performance and that you don’t attend the performance during a normal nap time.

- 3. Your enthusiasm is contagious.** Your older toddler or preschooler will be guided by your interest in the performance. If you are actively engaged, your child will be more comfortable with the experience. Accepting your child's interpretation of the performance will help them to build confidence needed to express new thoughts and ideas.
- 4. Prepare your child** for the changes in light levels, which may include complete blackouts. Some children this age are afraid of the dark and if this is true for your child, it might be useful to let them know in advance that the blackouts will happen. Show them the technicians in the back of the theatre who will make the lights go off and on.
- 5. Review your expectations with them.** At a live performance it is best to keep noise to a minimum as the actors can hear you, you have to stay in your seat because sometimes performers come into the audience...helping them understand the reasons for expectations will help to satisfy your curious older toddler to preschoolers questions.
- 6. Bring activities.** Because of their desire to explore, children this age often have "busy hands." Let your child color the guide at the theatre prior to the start of the performance or bring your own activity bag with a few favorite toys from home.
- 7. Don't be disappointed.** We plan our shows for this age child at 1 hour to 1 hour 15 minutes. However, this length may be difficult for some children. Even if they ask to leave, follow up with some of the activities in the "After the Show" section of the guide and reinforce the experience. You will likely hear that they loved the show and want to attend another.

## BEFORE THE SHOW

### Read Books

*Goodnight Moon*, by Margaret Wise Brown – This is a short poem of goodnight wishes from a young rabbit preparing for--or attempting to postpone--his own slumber. He says goodnight to every object in sight and within earshot, including the "quiet old lady whispering hush." Clement Hurd's illustrations are simple and effective, alternating between small ink drawings and wide, brightly colored views of the little rabbit's room.

*The Runaway Bunny* by Margaret Wise Brown – This begins with a young bunny who decides to run away: "'If you run away,' said his mother, 'I will run after you. For you are my little bunny.'" And so begins a delightful, imaginary game of chase. No matter how many forms the little bunny takes--a fish in a stream, a crocus in a hidden garden, a rock on a mountain--his steadfast, adoring, protective mother finds a way of retrieving him. The soothing rhythm of the bunny banter--along with the surreal, dream-like pictures--never fail to infuse young readers with a complete sense of security and peace. This old favorite will comfort and reassure.

### Explore with the Text

**Directions:** Your child will likely be very familiar with the text of *Goodnight Moon*. Whether or not you have a Big Green Room of your own, you can set up your child's bedroom with many of the same objects from the storybook, from a red balloon to mittens to a dollhouse. Then, using the book as a guide, help your child to find each thing in the room, down to the mouse!

Then ask your child: which things does she or he say goodnight to before going to sleep? Where in the room are they? Make sure to use this opportunity to reinforce your child's vocabulary, and teach them about the parts of a room and a house. Be sure to give them positive feedback on their creativity and use of vocabulary- "Wow, how did you think of air?"

### **Use the book to learn about things that happen at night**

Show your child the windows in the Big Green Room, and the pages that say goodnight to the moon, the cow, the stars, and the air. Can you see any of those during the day? What happens at night so that you can see the moon and the stars?

Then, try drawing or painting a night picture. If you would like, you may use Vincent Van Gogh's *The Starry Night* for inspiration. Use a lot of dark colors for the night sky, and bright colors for the stars and the moon. You can show your child how to draw the sky different ways- is the sky wavy, like clouds, or straight? Does it curve the way the wind curves, or does it go in circles around the stars? And which colors are best- is the sky really really really dark black, or are there blues and purples? Can you see the ground and the trees, or only the sky?

The way a toddler or preschooler sees a painting can be different from the way adults see them. Your child may see a shape when you see a splash of color. Encourage this creativity with positive feedback and add positively framed questions: "I can see how those colors look like a lion – what color is a lion at the zoo?"

You can also provide opportunities for your older toddler or preschooler to experiment with simple art materials. Paint with them using thick tempera paint in just a few colors on paper or provide your child with bath paint and use the back wall of the bathtub as a large canvas. If eating the art materials is unavoidable for your child, use applesauce, mashed peas or chocolate pudding as your "paint".

## **AT THE THEATRE**

### **Color a picture**

Drawings provided courtesy of HarperCollins Publishers of *Goodnight Moon* and *The Runaway Bunny* are on the last page of this booklet for your child to color in.

### **Play "I Spy"**

As you sit in the theatre before the show, try playing a simple game of "I Spy" with your child. "I spy with my little eye...a light" – will help your child notice and identify the theatre lights. Try asking "How many can we find?" to lead to counting games and questions. Let your child ask you to find things for a wonderful insight into the things that interest them in the theatre.

### **How many people did it take to put on this performance?**

At Stephens Auditorium, it takes many people to create a performance. Some of these are actors, puppeteers, teachers and artistic directors who created the performance you will see today. Others are musicians, painters, light and sound technicians who add to the performance by providing the design for it. Still others keep the theatre running by planning which shows to have, making schedules, answering phones, selling tickets, maintaining the building and a million other things. Altogether, it took almost 200 people to do all of that!

There are, of course, more people to talk about when answering the question “How many people are involved with this performance” and that is the audience. Stephens Auditorium seats 2742 and the audience is made up of the most important part of a live performance – YOU.

### **Take a Tour of the Theatre**

As your child grows from a toddler to a preschooler, their understanding of the world around them changes rapidly. Learning at this age takes place primarily through the senses, so it’s important to help them explore and respond to the environment. At the Iowa State Center, we want experiences with performances to be positive. We encourage you and your child to join us after the performance to walk across the stage, visit with staff and explore the theatre and building. This physical exploration can be an exciting way for your child to connect to the experience that they just watched.

## **AFTER THE SHOW**

### **Read Books**

My World by Margaret Wise Brown – *This melodic companion narrated by the endearing rabbit child introduces those elements of his life that he holds most dear. In alternating spreads, Hurd portrays simple, black-and-white images of items or pastimes and full-color scenarios spawned by those images. The final color spread underscores the volume's universality, as well as the little rabbit's contentment: swinging from a tree branch as his parents sit nearby on the porch, he announces: "Your world. / My world. / I can swing/ Right over the world." The volume's words and pictures stretch the boundaries of its time-honored predecessor, affirming that there is, indeed, a warm and welcoming world beyond the great green room.*

Guess How Much I Love You by Sam McBratney – *In this book, a young rabbit named Little Nutbrown Hare thinks he's found a way to measure the boundaries of love. In a heartwarming twist on the "I-can-do-anything-you-can-do-better" theme, Little Nutbrown Hare goes through a series of declarations regarding the breadth of his love for Big Nutbrown Hare. But even when his feelings stretch as long as his arms, or as high as his hops, Little Nutbrown Hare is fondly one-upped by the elder rabbit's more expansive love.*

### **Explore with Music**

Parts of the book *Goodnight Moon* tie in well with the songs “Hey Diddle Diddle” and “Twinkle Twinkle Little Star.”

First, practice singing “Hey Diddle Diddle” with your child, highlighting the rhymed word-pairs such as “the cat and the fiddle,” etc. You could use a book such as “Classic Nursery Rhymes” by Paige Weber to reinforce the song with images. Then ask your child which parts of the book show up again in *Goodnight Moon*.

Then look at the pages that focus on the sky and the outdoors, especially when the bunny says, “Goodnight stars.” This is an ideal point at which to introduce your child to the song “Twinkle Twinkle Little Star.” Again, rhyming lines can be highlighted. There also exists a longer version of the song if your child is prepared for longer songs:

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Twinkle\\_twinkle\\_little\\_star#Lyrics](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Twinkle_twinkle_little_star#Lyrics)

You can easily incorporate dance or music into this with your child by accentuating the rhythm of the nursery rhymes. As you work with your child on these fundamental skills of auditory comprehension and analysis, keep up the positive, specific feedback about their progress and remind them of the show itself.

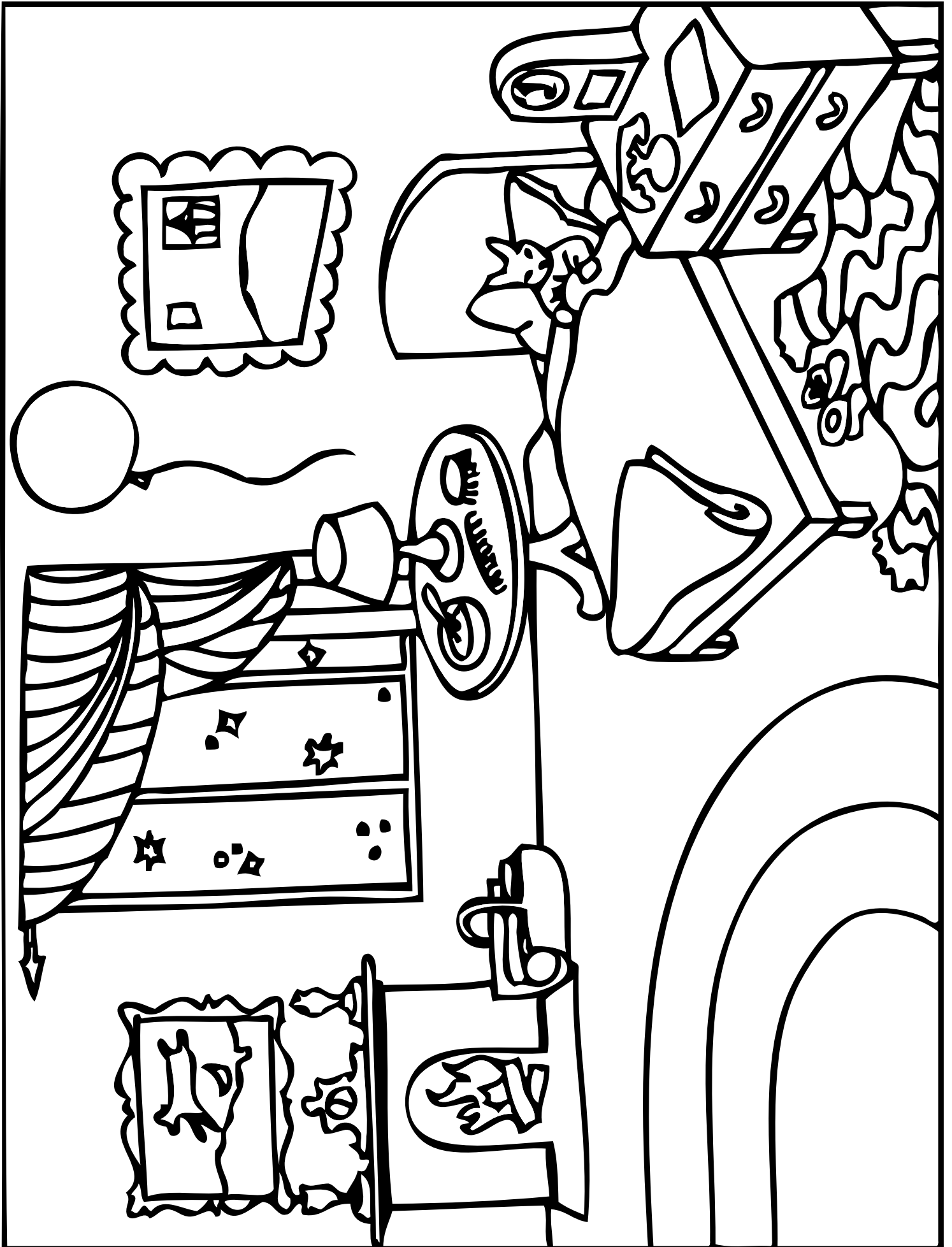
### **Explore with mathematics**

The simple storyline in *Goodnight Moon* lends itself well to developing mathematical ability. After having found the mouse in each full-page color spread of *Goodnight Moon*, ask your child to count how many times she or he has seen the mouse (including when the bunny says “Goodnight mouse” and move to other counting patterns. Can your child count the mittens in twos?

This can be extended out into your own home- how many combs and brushes can you find in your house? How about red balloons? Pairs of mittens? And how many are in each room? Learning to count, group, and divide into subgroups is an integral step in learning development for your child, so be sure to provide a great deal of feedback and praise as they succeed.

### **Memorable Moments**

Ask your child to draw, paint or color a picture of their favorite moment in *Goodnight Moon & The Runaway Bunny* and send it to us (or even to a specific performer from the show) at Iowa State Center, Suite 4 Scheman, Ames, IA 50011-1113



# THEATER ETIQUETTE

We are delighted to have you as our guest and want your experience to be an enjoyable one. Attending a live performance is very different from watching television or going to the movies. You are not simply watching what is happening on the stage; you play an active role. The artists have worked very hard to prepare this performance for you, so please remember the golden rule:

***Treat others the way you would like to be treated.***

**Here are a few guidelines to help you—and your fellow audience members—enjoy the performance:**

## Be Prepared

- Arrive early. Please plan to arrive at the theater at least 15 minutes before curtain time. Be generous in your estimation of travel and parking time.
- Plan ahead to meet anyone in your group who travels separately. Once inside the theater, 'saving seats' for friends will only prove frustrating to all involved.
- Remember to turn off all beepers, cell phones, and watch alarms before entering the theater (And then double check!) and leave all laser pointers, cameras, etc. at home.

## Be Courteous

- Walk, don't run, when entering or leaving the theater. The term "break a leg" means good luck to the performers not the audience!
- Do not take food or drink into the theater, and please – NO GUM!
- Please take children out of the theater if they become restless and disrupt other's ability to listen.
- Actors love to hear applause—it shows how much you enjoyed the performance. If you like something, applaud— if not, don't. It's rude to boo or whistle.

## Be Aware

- It's ok to talk *quietly* with those sitting next to you before the performance; however, when the lights dim, it's time to be quiet and direct your attention to the stage.
- Practice the International Sign of "Quiet Please!" by **silently** raising your finger to your lips to politely remind a neighbor or friend. You communicate your wish for quiet without adding to the distraction. Excessive noise or motion can disturb not only other audience members, but the performers as well.
- Take everything you brought with you when you leave. Once the cast has taken their bows and the house lights come up, check under your seat for any items (coats, backpacks, etc) you might have placed there.

## Be Open

- A good audience member is open to new sights and sounds. Enjoy!



# GETTING TO AMES

Stephens Auditorium is part of the Iowa State Center located at the corner of University Boulevard (formerly Elwood Drive) and Lincoln Way in Ames, Iowa. Plentiful parking is available on all sides of the building. Please follow traffic directors' instructions if you are asked to park in a specific location. Handicapped-accessible and limited-mobility parking is available on the west side of the auditorium.

