

To Volunteer Call: (256) 236-2857

The Mission

The purpose of the Kids on the Block is to provide an educational puppet program, which enlightens all children about disability awareness, medical/ educational differences and social concerns. By extensively researching and developing relevant and timely topics, KOB addresses the issues that affect today's children. This type of education will create positive attitudinal and behavioral changes for present and future generations.

The Method

The Kids on the Block puppetry is based on a Japanese puppetry style known as *Bunraku*. In Bunraku puppetry, the puppeteer can clearly be seen operating the puppet. But, she is quickly forgotten as the puppet's personality and issues become the central focus. This type of puppetry allows the audience to directly interact with the puppets during the question and answer sessions that follow each sketch. This unique form of communication provides young people with an opportunity to learn smart decision-making skills, sensitivity and understanding.

The Means

As a non-profit, United Way Agency, The Arc of Calhoun and Cleburne Counties relies heavily on the support of volunteers to take The Kids on the Block to all school systems in our two-county service area. Puppeteers are needed. Want to volunteer? Call us at 256-236-2857 and see how fun and rewarding being Kid can be.

The Kids on the Block

Hosted and sponsored

locally by

The Arc
of Calhoun and Cleburne Counties

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The Arc
of Calhoun and Cleburne Counties'

The Kids on the Block



A troupe of educational puppets

Telephone: (256) 236-2857

Who We Are

The Kids on the Block is a special troupe of educational puppets. They dress and act like real children. They are nearly life-size. Like children, each one has definite likes and dislikes, hopes, fears, talents and limitations. And, like real children, some have differences such as mental, physical and/or emotional disabilities. Others have been touched by divorce, prejudice, violence or bullying.

The Kids on the Block puppets were first developed in 1977, as a result of the move to “mainstream” children with disabilities into the regular education population. Based in Columbia, Maryland, the program has today grown to educate children and adults on a variety of issues all over the world.

Puppeteers from The Arc of Calhoun and Cleburne Counties first began taking the Kids to local schools in the 1991-92 school year. We now offer programs on intellectual disabilities (formerly known as mental retardation), learning disabilities, cerebral palsy, emotional disturbance, visual impairment, hearing impairment, divorce, safety on wheels, sibling rivalry, alternative to gangs and violence, prejudice and stereotyping, counseling, self-esteem and bullying.

All Kids on the Block programs are offered **free** of charge to audiences in Calhoun and Cleburne Counties. We currently perform for Kindergarten — Sixth grades in area schools as well as community groups of all ages! Please see the chart on this page for programs now being offered.

See Our Programs, Meet Our Kids . . .

<p style="text-align: center;">Bullying</p> <p>He’s got a red Halloween cape, but Eddie Franklin is no superhero when it comes to solving his problems with the school bully. He learns to turn to his friends for help.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Cerebral Palsy</p> <p>11-year-old Mark Riley turns questions about his helmet, wheelchair and speech impediment into opportunities to explain how his CP is just a part of being Mark</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Deafness</p> <p>Mandy, 17, can’t hear her new friend’s call but she uses her voice, fingers and brains to help Penny solve her problem and shows her a new way to communicate!</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Divorce</p> <p>It’s Brenda Dubrowski’s parents who got a divorce, not her, so why do they keep putting her in the middle of things? The 11-year-old learns to tell them how she feels</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Emotional Disturbance</p> <p>Jimmy Randolph and his classmates must continue to find new ways to get the 11-year-old noise making Jimmy to adjust to his first year in a “regular”-ed classroom.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Learning Disabilities</p> <p>She’s a whiz at math, but 11-year-old Jennifer Hauser still has trouble reading. Yet Jennifer knows it’s not because she can’t learn, she just has to be taught in a different way.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Mental Health</p> <p>Teenager Shaun James explains to his little sister how he realized he needed counseling to help him over his depression after the death of their brother.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Intellectual Disabilities</p> <p>Through her job at the local vet, 17-year-old Ellen Jane shows that a person with Down Syndrome can do lots of things – sometimes it just takes a little while longer to learn how</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Prejudice and Stereotyping</p> <p>Fifteen-year-old Joanne relies on bad habits when it comes to getting to know people. Her best friend Clare helps set her straight.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Problem Solving</p> <p>Best friends Melody James and Brenda Dubrowski call upon Mel’s older brother Shaun and the audience to help them settle a fight over who keeps the video they just purchased.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Safety on Wheels</p> <p>As tempting as trying out a new scooter can be, 11-year-old Melody helps her friend Brenda avoid injury when she explains the rules for safety on all types of wheels.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Self-Esteem</p> <p>John Sanchez, 17, uses spilled pizza and a mirror to help Joanne Spinoza, 15, learn she’s a good person, even when she sometimes makes a mistake.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Sibling Rivalry</p> <p>Michael doesn’t want to have his twin’s cerebral palsy. but he’d really like the time and attention their parents give to his twin!</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Visual Impairment</p> <p>Renaldo Rodriguez, 11, uses humor and a cane to prove he might be blind, but he’s not left in the dark when it comes to living a great life!</p>

Autism Awareness and Obesity Prevention programs available by request.