



The Kids on the Block Program on Aging

Featuring: Pete Whetstone, Mary Margaret Riley and Michael Riley

The Kids on the Block Program on Aging features Mary Margaret Riley, an active woman of 73 years who is recovering from a stroke. Her grandson, Michael, is curious and upset about some of the changes in his grandmother's life, including her slurred speech and use of a walker. Michael is also surprised to learn that Mary Margaret and his scout leader, 75 year-old Pete Whetstone, are good friends who enjoy a variety of activities together. Through Pete, Michael sees his grandmother in a new light and begins to let go of his misconceptions about growing older.

The Kids on the Block Program on Aging was developed under the guidance of the University of Maryland's Center on Aging, Washington Hospital Center, the National Council on the Aging, and the National Council on Senior Citizens. Script materials cover information about strokes, myths about aging, and how stereotypes can create distance between older and younger people.

The complete curriculum consists of large hand-crafted puppets, five scripts, follow-up activities, and resources.



**CALL OR WRITE TODAY
THE KIDS ON THE BLOCK, INC.**

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Script Summaries

Learning About Stroke

Mike returns from camp to find his grandmother, whom he calls "Nata," using a walker. Mike had feared his grandmother would die when he first learned of the stroke. Nata explains that not all people who have strokes die, but her stroke means she will not be able to participate in some activities until she has had a chance to recuperate. **(Mary Margaret, Michael)**

Age as a Matter of Individual Perception

Pete and Mike meet at the bus stop. Pete is going to visit his friend, Polly, and Mike is going to visit Nata. As the ride together, they compare the older people each is going to visit: one (Polly) an active, lively individualist and the other (Nata) a woman who just "sits around getting old." **(Pete, Michael)**

The Eye of the Beholder -- Myths About Aging

Mike doesn't believe it when he finds his grandmother is planning to visit Puerto Rico. Mike thinks most older people are sad, sick, and inactive but Nata and Pete show him that each older person is a unique individual. **(Michael, Pete, Mary Margaret)**

The Way it Was -- Myths About Youth

Mike is given an assignment to write a story about a person who has an interesting life. He settles down in Nata's apartment to work on his assignment. Unaware that Mike is nearby, Pete and Nata talk about their lives. They also talk about young people and realize that although they are upset when they hear stereotypes about older persons, they themselves have stereotyped young people as well. **(Michael, Mary Margaret, Pete)**

Facing Up to Coming Back -- Building a Bridge Between Young People and Older People

It is Mary Margaret's first day back to work, and she is having trouble getting ready. Mike comes in as Mary Margaret is showing her frustration over the fact she has not totally recovered from her stroke. Mike has brought Nata a present for her first day back, but she decides not to go since she cannot walk and talk as she did before. Mike reminds her of the positive, active grandmother she has worked so hard to show him **(Mary Margaret, Michael)**

NOTE: After scripts 1, 3, and 4, the children in the audience are given the opportunity to ask their own questions directly to the puppet characters.

The Kids on the Block, created in 1977, features life-sized puppets who, through the magic of live puppet theatre, teach children and adults about disabilities, medical and educational differences, and social concerns. Through the hard work and dedication of many community-based groups, **The Kids on the Block** puppets are able to touch the lives of people all over the world.