



Classroom Guide

Title: **Mama Don't Allow**

Author: **Thacher Hurd**

Illustrator: **Thacher Hurd**

Theme: Success is often dependent on the amount of time and effort we invest in pursuing a chosen interest.

Program Summary: When Miles gets a saxophone for his birthday, neither his parents nor his neighborhood can stand the racket. However, when his Swamp Band receives an invitation to play at the Alligator Ball, no one guesses what's in store. LeVar goes into the Louisiana swamps to visit an alligator farm, journeys down the Mississippi on a riverboat, learns about creating sounds from a mouth sound performer, and meets one of New Orleans' hottest jazz saxophonists.

Topics for Discussion:

Before viewing the program, see how many different kinds of music the students can think of. List their ideas on the board. Discuss what each type of music they mention sounds like and whether it is usually played loudly or softly. After they watch the program, ask if they want to add other types of music to their list.

Have the class brainstorm lists of things they are not allowed to do, either at home or at school. Discuss reasons why these items are on "don't allow" lists.

Discuss the importance of practice in learning how to play a musical instrument. Extend the discussion to include any skill one might be trying to master (e.g., a sport, dancing, reading, drawing, cooking, etc.)

Curriculum Extension Activities:

The characters in the book, *Mama Don't Allow*, speak in word balloons. Obtain a copy of the book and show the students how the word balloons are incorporated into the illustrations. Provide students with strips of construction paper (6 x 18 inches) and have them make a four-frame cartoon strip, featuring the characters from the story.

Have students do some research on alligators. In what kind of habitat do they live? What do they eat? To what animal group do they belong? How are their young born? What do they look like? What are their enemies?

With the help of the library media specialist, have students gather some resources that show pictures of swamps. Ask them to pay special attention to the animals and plants that live and grow in a swamp. Have students make a mural of a swamp, using the



Classroom Guide

Title: **Mama Don't Allow**

Author: **Thacher Hurd**

Illustrator: **Thacher Hurd**

pictures they found as models. Provide construction paper and other materials and encourage them to think of ways they might make the mural three-dimensional.

Locate the Mississippi River on a map of the United States. Have a group of volunteers find information about the Mississippi, such as how long it is, why it is an important river in history and the present, etc.

In small groups, have students use manipulatives to demonstrate the mathematical concept of doubling. Pinto beans or dried peas work well. Provide containers of varying sizes, such as nut cups, margarine tubs, or other containers that come in 8-ounce and 16-ounce sizes, plastic quarts, half-gallon, and gallon containers. Designate the number of times to double the items. (For example, doubling beans ten times is 512 beans.) Students will need to estimate the size of the container they need to hold the items they are doubling. At some point, they may decide to double the containers rather than individual beans. Read *One Grain of Rice* by Demi or *The King's Chessboard* by David Birch to accompany this activity.

“Mama Don't Allow” is an old traditional song. Obtain a recording and sing the song in the classroom. It is also ideal for having students make up additional verses. They might use the list of “don't allows” they generated above.

Invite someone who plays a saxophone into the classroom to demonstrate how to play the instrument and play some tunes for the students.

Enlist the aid of the music teacher in helping the students understand various rhythms. Have them snap, clap, or tap out the rhythms of different types of music.

Have a class talent show. Students who play musical instruments or dance can perform. Others can sing, tell jokes, read poetry, do puppet shows, do magic tricks, and a variety of other talent acts. Have students make posters and invitations advertising the show. Invite parents, school personnel, and other classes to see the show (more than one performance may be necessary). In planning the show, stress that all of us have talent.

Book Reviews:

Apt. 3 by Ezra Jack Keats



Classroom Guide

Title: **Mama Don't Allow**
Author: **Thacher Hurd**
Illustrator: **Thacher Hurd**

Alligator Shoes by Arthur Dorros

Supplementary Booklist:

Never Kiss an Alligator! by Colleen Stanley Bare

Ben's Trumpet by Rachel Isadora

Gertie and Gumbo by Matt Novak

If I Only Had a Horn: Young Louis Armstrong by Roxane Orgill, illustrated by Leonard Jenkins

Charlie Parker Played Bebop by Chris Raschka

Related Themes:

- musical instruments
- reptiles
- different types of boats

Related Reading Rainbow Programs:

- Program #127 — Hip Cat
- Program #82 — The Wall
- Program #15 — Ty's One-Man Band

About the Author & Illustrator: The son of well-known children's book author and illustrator Edith Thacher Hurd and Clement Hurd, Thacher Hurd believes his parents influenced his art by "osmosis" because he was always around while they worked. He began his career doing "classical" types of art, such as still lifes and landscapes, but found more fulfillment in the fanciful drawings that are the basis of his children's books. An intense interest in music motivated *Mama Don't Allow*. Thacher and his wife Olivia are the founders of Peaceable Kingdom Press, a distributor of posters and greeting cards from children's books. Thacher is also the author/illustrator of the *Reading Rainbow* feature book, *Mystery on the Docks*.