

2022 – 2023



Carmela Full of Wishes

EDUCATOR GUIDE

children's
theatre
company



October 25-December 2, 2022

¡Feliz cumpleaños! It's Carmela's birthday, and she's finally old enough to tag along with her big brother while he runs errands. Join them as they pass by the fenced-off repair shop, the busy bus stop, and Miss Maria's verdulería. Outside the laundromat, Carmela picks a dandelion and makes several birthday wishes: that she gets a candy machine, a big fancy bed for Mamí like the ones at the hotel where she works, and most importantly, that Papí will be able to come back home soon. When a sudden accident crushes her dandelion before she can make her biggest wish, can her brother help Carmela believe in the power of wishes once again?

adapted by **ALVARO SAAR RIOS**

from the book by **MATT DE LA PEÑA**, illustrated by **CHRISTIAN ROBINSON**

Published by **G.P. PUTNAM'S SONS BOOKS FOR YOUNG READERS**

Directed by **TATYANA-MARIE CARLO**



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For virtual activities, videos, and more, join the creativity on the

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Mixed Status Families and Separation

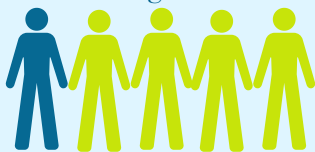
Carmela and her brother are awaiting the arrival of their father to the United States. Around 9 million people living in America today are part of mixed-status families just like Carmela. Mixed status means that while one parent is a United States citizen or legal immigrant, another parent or family member is not and is therefore at risk for deportation. Carmela's dad is not allowed to immigrate to the United States to be with his family until his immigration papers are fixed. It is estimated that immigration paperwork for entry into the United States takes an average of 14 months which means that this birthday may not be the only one that Carmela's dad has to miss.

"In a time when we openly speak of building walls," de la Peña says, "I was moved to tell the story of one young Dreamer, Carmela, who is filled with hope and heart and just a little dash of sass – like any other girl her age." ~ Matt de la Pena

6% of immigrants to the United States are children.

8% of Minnesota's population is made up of immigrants.

1 in 5 Minnesota children are the child of an immigrant.



1/2 Million

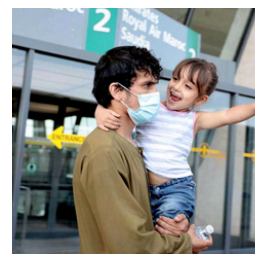
kids in the United States experienced the deportation of at least 1 parent.

77%

of immigrant parents have been in the US for at least 10 years.

4.4 Million

U.S. citizen kids under 18 live with at least 1 parent who is undocumented.



Springboard

Ideas of what to talk about, write about, or explore while connecting *Carmela Full of Wishes* to your classroom curriculum



Write a review of the performance or a letter to the actors.

Rewrite or retell the story from the perspective of Big Brother. How does the story change?

Create a map of your community featuring the places that are important to you.

Draw a picture or write about what you imagined happened in the story after Carmela's dad came home. What did they do together?

Compare and contrast the book and play.

Explore other stories by Matt de la Peña.

What would you wish for on a dandelion?

Who are the people who live in your neighborhood?

Compare and contrast your neighborhood with Carmela's neighborhood.

How does Carmela change throughout the story? How does Big Brother change?

Discuss other ways people make wishes.

What is the lesson or message of *Carmela Full of Wishes*?

What does community mean to you? How does your community look, sound, smell, and feel?

Carmela misses her dad who lives far away. Have you ever been far away from someone you love? What helped you feel better?

Research immigration and mixed status families as a class. What are some ways you can help?

Carmela and her brother don't always get along. Do you have siblings? Do you get along with your sibling? Brainstorm nice things you can do for your sibling.

Show kindness in your community by making cards or baked goods for important members of your community.

Make birthday cards for Carmela and bring them to your performance!



Class Act: Actor's Tools

Actors use many tools to help them tell a story – three we focus on at CTC are body, voice, and imagination.

Explain that projecting means using a loud voice and enunciating means speaking clearly. Have students practice projecting and enunciating by saying the title of the play, *Carmela Full of Wishes*, as a group, and then individually.

Brainstorm emotions that actors might portray. Try saying, “*Carmela Full of Wishes*” using those emotions. Students will naturally begin to use their body to portray the emotion as they say the line. Brainstorm how your body looks or feels different when you are feeling these emotions. Allow a few students to showcase their work as a solo.

Class Act: Frozen Pictures

Objective: This activity challenges students to create original dialogue and examine the emotions of characters. Students will use observation skills and defend their observations using evidence from the scene.

Directions: Brainstorm with students important moments from the story or play. Choose a specific moment to build a tableau. Tableau is an acting word for frozen image. Choose five students to be actors. Have the first student come to the front of the class and say “This scene needs...” For example, if the scene is *Carmela* at the Bodega, a student might say, “this scene needs a candy bar.” The student will then use their body to become that character or object. The remaining 4 students add into the scene, one at a time, until all five students are working together to create the objects/characters in the scene.

Once all the students are frozen in the scene, allow each to make up a line of dialogue their character or object would say. Challenge the students to connect to what the other actors are saying to create a conversation. Ask the rest of the class to make observations about the scene and defend their analysis with evidence from the scene (facial expressions, levels, etc).

With the actors still frozen in tableau, allow each to say what their character might be thinking or feeling in the scene. Reflect on how what we say and what we think are different. How do you decide what to say out loud and what to keep to yourself?

Class Act: Two Line Scenes

Objective: Prior to seeing the show, this activity explores short snippets of the script. This allows students to start anticipating themes and plot while using their body, voice and imagination.

Directions: Write the provided lines below on the board or hand them out physical slips of paper.

Partner A	Open Your Eyes!
Partner B	The sky is full of wishes!

Instruct students to find partners or assign partner groups. One student will be Partner A and one student will be Partner B. Partners should start by simply saying the lines then becoming silent. The leader will know all groups are done and ready for the next instruction when the room is silent.

Begin to give students prompts for how to say the lines. Give groups time to try the prompt with the lines. Again, when the room becomes silent, you will know they are ready for the next prompt.

Example prompts:

- High/low volume
- High/low pitch
- High/low tempo
- Excited
- Sad
- Concerned
- Other emotions

After you have experimented with different prompts, allow groups time to discuss which they felt were the most successful. Partners should rehearse how they would choose to perform the lines.

Invite volunteers to showcase their lines for the class. Ask the audience what they observed about the scene. How did their decisions impact the meaning of the scene?

Challenge partners to hypothesize what happened right before and right after these lines. Allow each group to create a short scene showcasing their hypothesis.





Class Act: Narrative Picture

Objective: This activity challenges students to compare and contrast characters, infer meaning in a picture, and practice creative problem solving skills. Students will use their imagination to create imagined situations within a sequence of events.

Directions: Show the class the illustration below from the book *Carmela Full of Wishes* by Matt de la Peña. Give each student an opportunity to share with the class what they observe about this picture.

Divide students into small groups and have them re-create the picture with their bodies. Once all the students are frozen in the scene, allow each to make up a line of dialogue their character/object would say. Allow each student in the scene to say what their character/object is thinking in the scene. Reflect on how what we say and what we think are different. How do you decide what to say out loud and what to keep to yourself?

Dismiss students back to their small groups to brainstorm what might have happened right before this photo was taken. Create a tableau of this situation.

As a large group, analyze the conflict of this scene and brainstorm how this conflict might be solved. Dismiss students back to their small group to create a tableau of a potential solution to the conflict. Allow each group to showcase all three tableaux (beginning, middle, and end) in front of the class.

Ask the audience to make observations about the created scenes. How was the conflict solved?



Team Builder: Stand Up If...

Objective: This exercise activates prior knowledge around concepts or topics in life, reading, and writing. The exercise also builds community as participants share and observe common experiences and celebrate differences.

Directions: Ask students to stay seated at their desks. Tell students they will hear a series of prompts starting with “Stand up if...” If the statement applies to them, they should stand. Choose a couple of students to ask follow-up questions related to the statement. All students sit again before being prompted with another “stand up if” statement.

Begin with non-content-related prompts to establish the pattern and get everyone moving and listening. Then move to content-related statements that will gradually get more sensitive and/or detailed as the exercise progresses.

Sample Dialogue:

“Stand up if...”:

General Statements:

- You like pizza.
- You like to read.
- You play an instrument.
- You have seen a play before.
- You have been in a play before.

Statements related to *Carmela Full of Wishes*:

- I like to make wishes.
- I have celebrated a birthday.
- Smells remind me of certain people or places.
- I have been away from a parent or loved one.

Team Builder: Sensory Mindfulness

Objective: This activity uses the five senses to help ground students and to release stress. This activity is useful to help calm students after a high energy activity to prepare them for a low energy activity. This activity can be used in a large group setting or one-on-one.

Directions: Gather students in the calm environment. Wiggle all of the fingers on one hand and encourage students to do the same. Keep wiggling until all students are focused on you and mimicking your actions. You will then wiggle each finger individually while doing the prompts below. You can instruct students to identify those things aloud, point to them, or simply think about them. Take a deep breath between each of the prompts. By the time you finish, students should feel calmer and focused.

- **Pinky finger:** identify five things in the room you can SEE.
- **Ring finger:** identify four things in the room you can FEEL.
- **Middle Finger:** identify three sounds in the room you can HEAR.
- **Pointer finger:** identify two things in the room you can SMELL.
- **Thumb:** identify one thing you can TASTE in your mouth.

Team Builder: Neighborhood Map

Objective: This activity challenges students to think critically about their community and build special awareness. This activity works best in a large open space such as a gymnasium, classroom with desks to the side, or outside.

Directions: Tell the students that we are going to map the neighborhood in this open area using our bodies. Decide collectively where the school should be located on this map. Ask students to identify other locations in the neighborhood (post office, park, home, store, etc.) and stand where those are located on your map. You can mark these locations using cones or assign students to play the roles of those locations.

Once your map is established, ask students to step to a place that feels like home. This could be their physical home or it could be a place of home or comfort in the neighborhood. If students are comfortable, you can ask them to identify for the class where they choose and why they choose that location.

Next, ask students to step to a place they wish they could spend more time. Again, if students are comfortable, you can ask further questions to help them think deeper.

If you would like to explore deeper, you can ask students to step to a place where they have felt like an outsider. This is a prompt where students might not be comfortable sharing but allow space for any that would like to share.

Discuss as a class what you learned in this activity. Did the students learn anything about their fellow classmates?



Story Sequence

So much happens in the plays we see and the books we read! See if you can remember the order of events in *Carmela Full of Wishes* by numbering the pictures below from 1st – 8th.



Costume Design

A costume designer is someone who decides what characters will wear. Sometimes their job is to create costumes for larger than life character such as the Grinch but sometimes their job is designing for regular people such as those in *Carmela Full of Wishes*. Design an outfit that Carmela or Big Brother would wear on their first day of school.

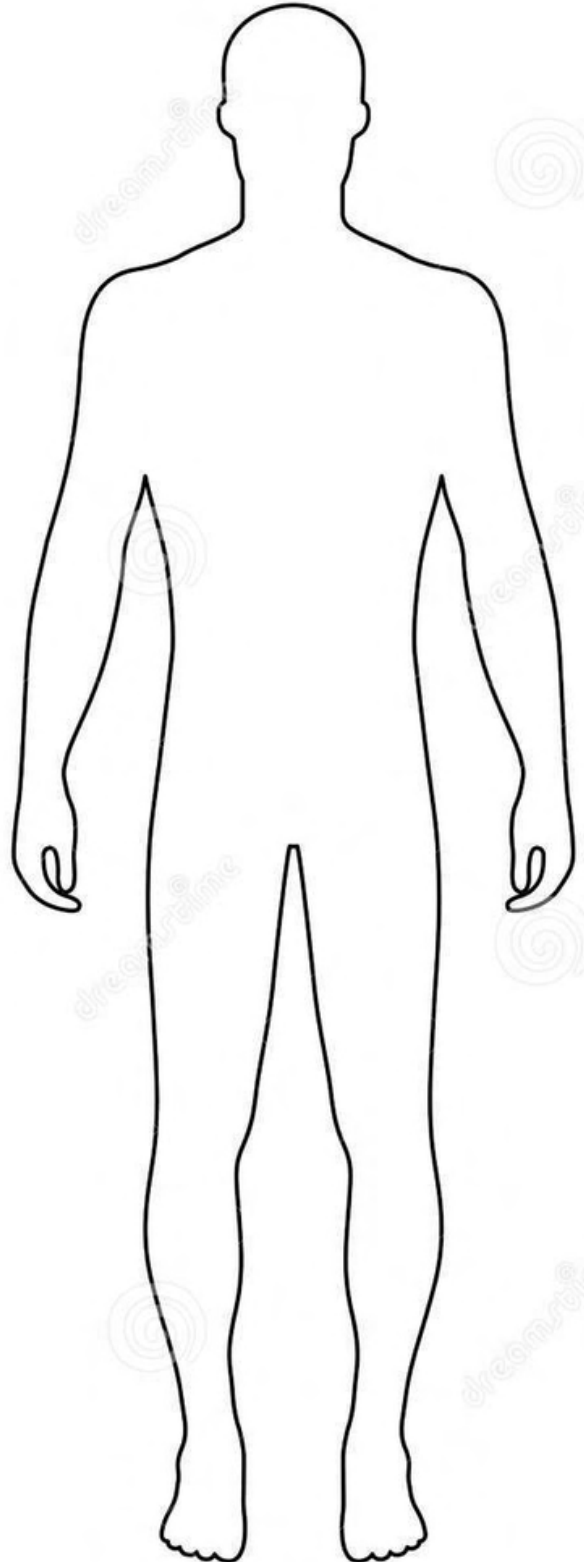
Character's Name:

Three adjectives that describe them are:

1. _____

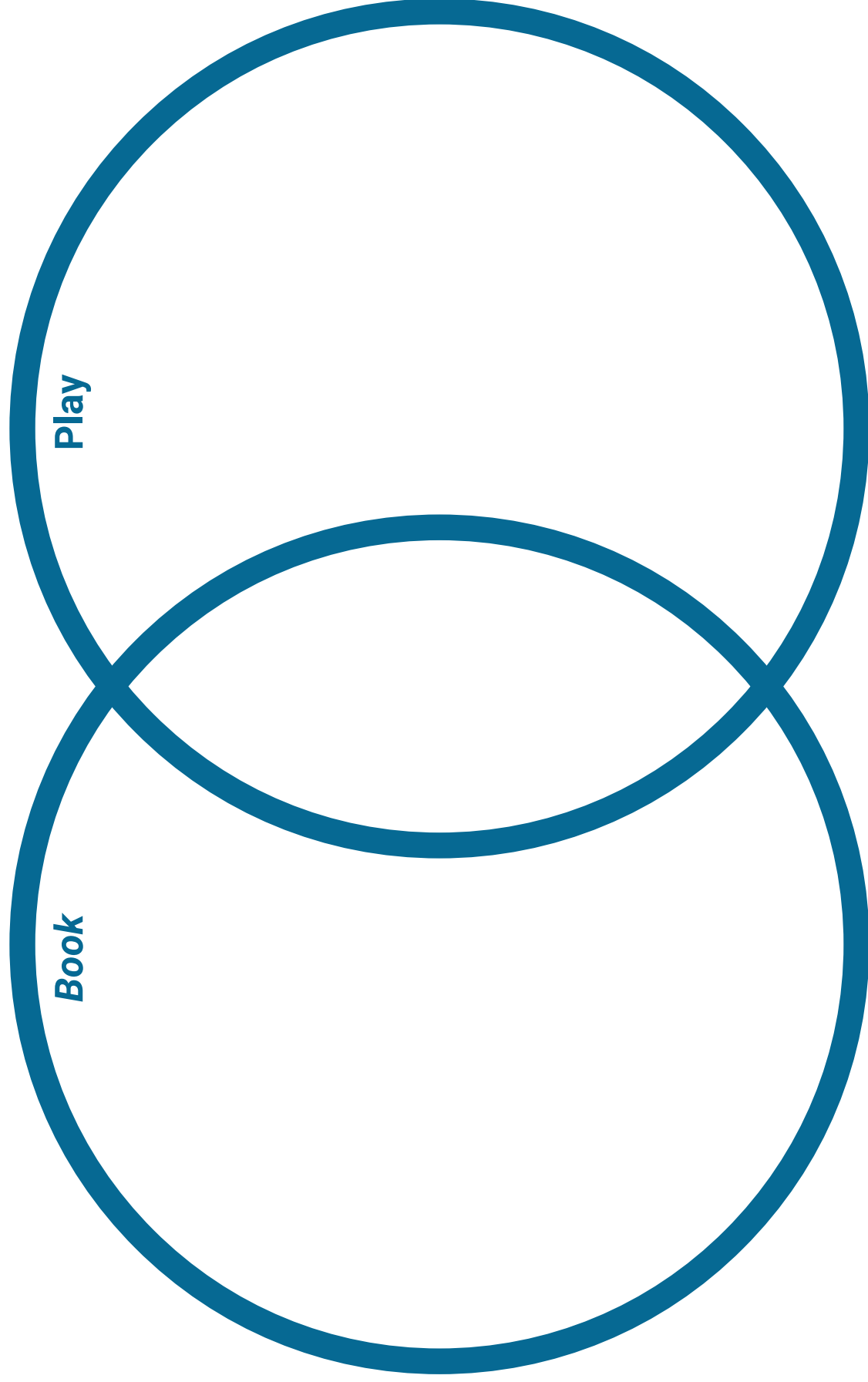
2. _____

3. _____



Carmela Full of Wishes Venn Diagram

Use the Venn Diagram below to compare and contrast the book by Matt de la Peña and the show *Carmela Full of Wishes*.



Corkboard Conversations

Use the sticky notes below to think critically about *Carmela Full of Wishes*

Three adjectives that describe this play are...

- 1
- 2
- 3

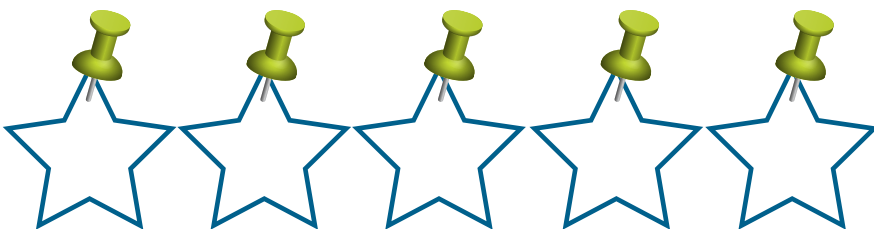
This play made me feel...

This play made me think about...

A status I would post on my social media after seeing this show is...

A question I still have is...

This play taught me...



My Rating of *Carmela Full of Wishes* at Children's Theatre Company

FURTHER RESOURCES

More About Matt de la Pena

Matt de la Pena on Writing
'Carmela Full of Wishes'

[Watch](#)

Matt de la Pena and
Christian Robinson on
Carmela Full of Wishes

[Watch](#)

Why We Shouldn't Shield
Children from Darkness

[Read More](#)

Matt de la Pena on
Diversity in Children's
Literature

[Read More](#)

Matt de la Pena on
publishing in multiple
languages

[Watch](#)

Matt de la Pena and
Christian Robinson
Teacher Guide

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From Reluctant Reader
to Best-Selling Author

[Read More](#)

Matt de la Pena
Newberry Medal
Speech

[Watch](#)

More About Family & Immigration

Immigrants Belong Here
Book Resources

[Learn More](#)

Home is Here Educator
Guide

[Learn More](#)

Learning for Justice |
What is a Family?

[Learn More](#)

Mixed Status Family by
Cities for Action

[Watch](#)

Mail Letters to:

Children's Theatre Company
2400 Third Avenue South
Minneapolis, MN 55404

Submit Student Questions at:

www.childrenstheatre.org/offbookquestions

Check out more activities on:



Questions? Email:

schools@childrenstheatre.org

