UNCLE ELEPHANT
by Arnold Lobel
Themes: Families, Feelings, Loss
Grade Level: K - 5
Running Time: 28 minutes

SUMMARY
A sad and funny, musical and magical tale about a young elephant, Arnie. Based on the beloved book by Arnold Lobel, Arnie is a cheerful nine-year-old elephant whose constant joking usually falls flat. When his parents disappear in a sudden fog while sailing, Arnie’s wrinkled old Uncle Elephant comes to collect him. From a rollicking, sing-along train ride to early morning trumpeting (tootin’ elephant trunks!), Uncle does his best to cheer Arnie up. He also teaches his nephew the importance of being himself. In the end, Arnie’s parents are found, and the highlight of their homecoming party is a rousing uncle and nephew duet. Dimensionally animated by John Matthews.

OBJECTIVES
• To create enthusiasm for reading
• To enhance reading comprehension
• To provide a structure for written and oral language arts activities, as well as for music and basic counting.

NOTE:
Although this is a gentle, funny program, it does deal with a sad, sensitive subject – the loss of a child’s parents (though they are found in the end.) You might want to prepare the class for this through discussion and other appropriate activities.

BEFORE VIEWING ACTIVITIES
After the initial discussion (see NOTE above), read the first chapter from the book to introduce Arnie and Uncle Elephant.

AFTER VIEWING ACTIVITIES
Use these discussion topics, activities, and questions to review the program material.

• What does Arnie mean when he sings that he’s a clown but not funny? Why do you suppose that he goes on trying to be funny?
• Arnie wishes that time would reverse and his parents would be with him. What would you wish for? Draw a picture of it.
• How does Uncle Elephant make Arnie feel better? How does Arnie help Uncle Elephant?
• What do Arnie and Uncle mean when they say happy things can make you sad and sad things can make you happy?
• How did Arnie feel at the beginning of the story and at the end? How did Uncle feel? What happened to change them?
• Write a story about what Arnie and Uncle do the next time they visit together.
• Arnie and Uncle make music together. What parts of your body can you use to make music? (Hands, feet, mouth,...) Make some class music with your band.

• Read the book UNCLE ELEPHANT. How does it differ from the video? How is it the same?
• Read other books by Arnold Lobel. Draw a picture about a part you especially like, then tell the class about the book and show your picture.

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