

# the Little Big Kids

**ANIMATED PRE-SCHOOL SERIES  
26 x 24 MINUTE EPISODES**

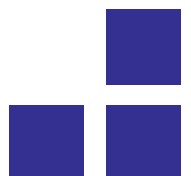
**Five little kids make their own TV show  
about the two things they are most interested in  
– food and play.**

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## Concept overview

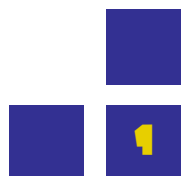
## THE LITTLE BIG KIDS

The Little Big Kids is a pre-school series about food and play featuring five animated kids making their own magazine type TV show, combining 3D animation, 2D Flash animation, actors' performances and real-life segments.

The five-featured characters running the show are created in **3D** and intended to look like 4-year-old kids even though their personalities and language are often more like slightly older kids. The 'ability' to present and produce their own 'show' gives them a bit of magic and added appeal for the pre-school audience.

They each have a distinctive personality and different cultural background but essentially they are like all pre-school children – in that they are progressively acquiring new skills, developing their own individual tastes in food and striving to be independent.

These five characters also appear in an imagined adventure-fantasy story within the program, where they are re-interpreted as **2D** Flash animation versions of themselves with added powers and abilities.



# Introduction to characters

THE LITTLE BIG KIDS



Meet Sandy, a slightly tubby four-year-old from a land-locked Melbourne suburb. He's got a terrific cubby-house in the backyard and with his next-door neighbour Rose, 5, has turned it into a mini TV studio. They've decided to make a TV show about two things they are really into – food and play.



Their show is a bit like the morning talk shows where two hosts sit there discussing things and presenting different stuff, but in this case it's a lot of funny stuff to do with food and play. Chatterbox Rose is doing most of the talking while Sandy sits there dreaming up all sorts of things.

But wait, I almost forgot, they've got three friends from the neighbourhood helping them out.



There's the skinny kid - Shane, the blonde topped surf-rat they call Snake. He's their fearless playground reporter and when he's not out filing a report on the latest adventure playground, he's operating camera.



And clever Prue - the producer, who's satchel-bag is really doing all the producing – a veritable delicatessen.



Doing his surprising animal imitation dance moves is little Jimmy, the nature boy who also does sound.



# What's the story?

THE LITTLE BIG KIDS

**So, it's just five little kids making a TV show about the things all kids are into – what's the story?**

Entertaining magazine-style segments mix animation, actors' performances and real-life footage & reportage. Plus one imaginative action-adventure in each episode - that takes place inside Sandy's not so little head.

This is where the fun turns to enchantment, where the reality line blurs and where the fantasyland begins.



Sandy dreams of an idyllic deserted beach and an endless summer of adventures with his favourite friends.

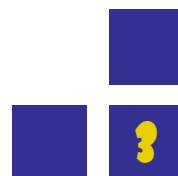
Hanging around his imagined shack on the beach isn't enough for these intrepid voyagers. They're off on another quest to retrieve the sunken treasure from the bottom of a rock-pool or they've discovered the secret of the rainbow - by rock hopping in behind the Rainbow Falls.

And they're discovering their own special talents and powers along the way.

When they get caught by the tide at The Bluff Jimmy summons a talking dolphin to carry them all to Safe Harbour Bridge. Snake finds an esky lid washed up on the beach and shows them all how to surf the sand dunes.

Prue meanwhile just keeps producing an endless supply of essential stuff from her magic satchel-bag. Sandy goes on to conquer all his fears and Rose learns she's a born leader even if just in Sandy's head.

This is but a taste of what's in store for TV fixated pre-schoolers when The Little Big Kids get their own show on air – stay tuned...





### **3D Sandy – 4 yrs.**

#### **Host**

Playful, imaginative and popular with his friends, it's his cubby-house where they all hangout. He loves food and it shows, as he's a little overweight. Likes to be active but needs motivating. Often mixes up his words or meanings, a bit of a daydreamer.

His full name is Sandy Shore and his parents' Rocky and Shelly are of Irish decent, which might be why he has such a nice voice and often breaks into a song.

Sandy has a fair complexion blue eyes and light-reddish-brown hair. He is slightly overweight with freckles and two dominant teeth. He wears an untucked blue T-shirt with a carrot emblazoned on the chest, checked shorts and sneakers without socks.

**2D Sandy** is more adventurous, inventive and a bit thinner.



### 3D Rose – 5yrs.

#### Host

She is a headstrong opinionated chatterbox who can talk the legs off a parrot. Speaking of which, her full name is Rose Ella. She is the driving force of their show, and as anchor girl she introduces the segments and does most of the talking.

From a Greek family who live next door to Sandy, she loves TV and Mediterranean style food.

Rose has olive skin, big light-brown eyes and dark-brown hair tied in a loose ponytail. She is of normal weight, has a gap in her front teeth and wears a yellow smock-dress with an apple on the front and bright coloured gumboots.

**2D Rose** is caring and cautious, a leader and problem solver.



### **3D Shane – aka “Snake” – 4yrs.**

#### **Camera operator**

A skinny yet energetic practical joker who loves skateboarding, surfing, running fast or just being active. Hates haircuts but loves junk food. As a member of the ‘crew’ he operates the camera and presents the Playground Report.

Snake has a tanned complexion, blue eyes and golden locks of hair. He is skinny (but thinks he has superhero muscles), has freckles across his cheeks and a great smile (which helps him get away with anything). He wears a dark blue T-shirt with a yellow running figure on the front, surf-shorts and thongs.

**2D Shane - aka “Snake”** is cheeky, fearless and athletic.



### 3D Prue – 4yrs.

#### Producer

A focused Vietnamese girl and Asian food expert, always with something to munch in her satchel bag. Although a bit quiet and shy is the smartest of the crew. As producer of the show, occasionally corrects Sandy or Rose if they get their facts wrong. Generally has an earnest expression that can break into a knowingly wry smile.

Prue is of East Asian appearance with straight black hair - cut into a sharp bob. Wears a red dress with a slice-of-bread image on the front; black shoes with white socks and carries a satchel bag.

**2D Prue** is clever and cautious, her magic bag produces endlessly.



### 3D Jimmy – 4 yrs.

#### Boom Operator

An indigenous nature boy and animal lover who calls them “aminals” - he can't say animal. Father is a famous aboriginal football player and he wants to follow in his footsteps. Sound recordist in the cubby-house crew and presents the Animal Antics dance class where he shows off his inventive dance moves and animal imitations.

Jimmy has dark-skin and beaming smile. His hair is a bit of a mess. He wears a red and black footy jumper with a yellow football on the chest, blue footy-shorts and boots.

**2D Jimmy** predicts the weather, talks to animals and always finds stuff.



### **OK, they look like cute characters, but how will they translate to the screen?**

These little kids putting on the show are all created in 3D and in the hands of animation director Mike Hollands – one of Australia's leading 3D animators – we can expect an outstanding and magical interpretation.

### **Hmm, 3D animation, 24 minutes x 26 episodes, sounds expensive?**

Actually the 3D part of their show only makes up around 8 minutes of the total, and as the characters actions are controlled by trained actors in real-time - using motion capture technology – it's very economical.

### **So the characters in this series never grow up?**

Never.

### **What about the other, what is it, 16 minutes and where does the story part come in?**

Sandy's daydreams and adventure fantasies make up another 8 minutes in total and Sandy dreams in 2D.

This is where Melbourne based – and world leading - Flash animators – Studio Moshi come in. The 3D characters making the TV show from their backyard cubby-house get to be reinterpreted as cartoon versions of themselves.

### **Like a show within a show, and the other 8 minutes?**

It includes real-life filming of kids at play and giving their thoughtful opinions about food. There are a couple of funny actors performing and a more serious bit about food and where it comes from.

### **OK, it combines animation, actors' performance and real-life segments, but why are kids going to like it?**

Apart from the fact that it's about the two things kids are most interested in – food and play – it's the characters kids will love.

Firstly they're cute and little just like them, but they're also smart and independent just like all pre-school kids want to be.

Secondly, they may all come from an average Melbourne suburb but they each have a different cultural background - just like a cross-section of modern Australian society.

And thirdly, they each have unique personalities that compliment one another and form an even more appealing group identity.

### **Sounds good, but tell me more about the segments and structure. And is there any music?**

Some segments are musically driven, while others are humour based. Like grandpa's monologue about the good old days, it's a crack up, and when Mrs. Sterical takes over the day care it's an absolute riot. And there's a real life reportage segment where kids learn about the joys of growing food in a kitchen garden.

Each episode also includes a few animated jingles - or interstitials - simple, 2D Flash animations of between 15 and 30 seconds set to catchy tunes with lyrics kids can easily learn and sing along with.

Following is an episode running order with timings based on the included script to give an idea of structure.

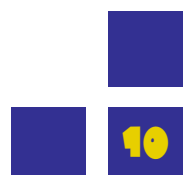


# Episode 1 running order

THE LITTLE BIG KIDS

Intro & Titles – 3D animation	20 sec
Cubby House – 3D animation	2 min
Sandy's Fantasy – 2D animation	5 sec
Cubby House – 3D animation	15 sec
Animated Jingle – 2D animation	30 sec
Cubby House – 3D animation	15 sec
Mrs. Sterical – Actor & real kids	2 min
Cubby House – 3D animation	10 sec
Animated Jingles – 2D animation	1 min
Cubby House – 3D animation	20 sec
Playground Report – 3D + real kids	2 min
Taste Test – real kids	1 min
Cubby House – 3D animation	15 sec
Sandy's Fantasy – 2D animation	5 sec
Cubby House – 3D animation	15 sec
Kitchen Garden – Actor + real kids	2 min
Cubby House – 3D animation	30 sec
Animal Antics – 3D animation	2 min
Cubby House – 3D animation	1 min
Great Grandpa – Actor	1 min
Cubby House – 3D animation	30 sec
Sandy's Beach Shack – 2D animation	5 min
Cubby House – 3D animation	1 min
End Credits – 2D animation	30 sec

Total - 24 min



# Synopsis – Detailed version

THE LITTLE BIG KIDS

For most kids life is all about **food** and **play** and that's what a new children's television series called The Little Big Kids is all about. It aims to entertain, inform and actively engage pre-schoolers through the creative use of movement, music and humour. The initial intention is to create a 24-minute program with 26 episodes, each revolving around different themes relating to food and play and supported by an Internet website, computer game, DVD and print material.

The series features five animated characters that are designed to look like little four-year-old kids even though their abilities and vocabulary are more like what you might expect of a slightly older age group. These five-featured characters and their environment are created in 3D.

As if inspired by all the morning talk shows they have seen these kids have decided to make their own TV show about the two things they are most interested in – food and play - giving the program an intentionally homemade feel, like a show made by kids – for kids.

The lead characters are **Sandy** and **Rose**. Sandy is a slightly overweight but lovable four-year-old boy from a Melbourne suburb with a great back-yard cubby-house that they use for a studio. The five-year-old girl next-door Rose is a bit of a chatterbox and these two host the show, doing their best to imitate a couple of morning TV presenters as they introduce a range of different segments.

Their best friends from the local neighbourhood make up the other three animated characters, they are more behind the scenes, helping them with production, 'reporting live' or featuring in their own part of the show.

They include the skinny kid Shane, who they call **Snake**, a blonde headed Aussie who apart from being the cameraman files his reports on playgrounds. There's also a smarter-than-her-age Asian girl called **Prue** who acts like the producer and an indigenous boy **Jimmy**, who not only does some great animal inspired dance moves but is also their sound man.

Along with the segments featuring these five 3D characters there is also a five-minute adventure fantasy story - where they appear as 2D cartoon versions of themselves and some funny and informative parts involving real-life kids and actors

The two hosts – Sandy and Rose – are as different as chalk and cheese. Rose has the gift of the gab and likes to talk about all sorts of things relating to food and play. She is like an anchor girl and Sandy her offsider. Rose is also a bit of a know-it-all who drives the show along, while slightly chubby Sandy is an enthusiastic contributor – he is also a dreamer.

**Sandy's daydreams** form the fantasy aspect of the program. Triggered perhaps by Rose's banter, Sandy begins to glaze-over and a wonky-blurry visual transition takes us off into his imaginary world where everything appears in a naive 2D Flash animation style. We visit this fantasy world several times during each episode, each time for just a few seconds. These short trips into the wacky world of Sandy's imagination always revolve around his twisted interpretation of something just said, but he also has a longer regular daydream each episode.

In this regular fantasy segment the five characters appear as two-dimensional cartoon versions of themselves and along with their cubby-house are transported to an idyllic deserted beach. This is all occurring in Sandy's head and because of his fertile imagination - anything can happen. Their cubby is now an elaborate converted boatshed with a slide down to the sand and here, around **Sandy's Beach Shack**, our friends get up to all sorts of exploits; like a secret-treasure hunt or a race with the wind, a meeting with a talking dolphin or a trip to the bottom of a rock-pool. These adventure stories develop over consecutive episodes and always wind up when Rose rouses Sandy back to 'reality'.

One of the regular short segments features Jimmy as he encourages kids to get up off the couch and into some **Animal Antics**. Starting with his one-minute-warm-up – a basic yoga sun-salute that links a different animal to each posture in the routine – and leading to an animal imitation dance session. One day it's a kangaroo, next an emu a monkey or a lizard and each episode there's a new animal imitation and a special tune to get kids moving.

In another segment Snake delivers his - **Playground Report** - where in each episode he visits a different community playground to show us how the local kids are making the best of their facilities and open space. In reality, this animated 'roving-reporter' appears, microphone in hand, just at the beginning and end of the segment - superimposed over the edited footage - while keeping up a running commentary as we see some snippets of real-life kids at play.

These pre-organised playground shoots will also provide the opportunity to film another segment of the program where real children try healthy snacks in - **The Taste Test**. After they have partly exhausted themselves from an hour or so of filmed play, they will be offered water, fresh fruit or other healthy snacks and their attitudes and reactions will be captured on camera. These close-up shots of the kids will be edited into a quick cutting series of vox-pop testimonials.

Prue, the producer, also files a report on the wonderful kitchen garden at the Collingwood College, where she introduces us to Stephanie Alexander who is particularly interested in connecting children with the pleasures of growing, preparing and appreciating food. Although Stephanie hasn't been signed up as yet, it is hoped that her passion for food and her interest in children's health will compel her to appear in this regular short segment, tentatively called – **Stephanie's Kitchen Garden**.

These kids might get serious about food sometimes but they are always serious about having fun and that also means having a good laugh. Two segments are designed to add some wacky humour and outright hysterics. In one of these **Great Grandpa** sits in his comfy recliner telling some very silly stories about the good old days when life wasn't so easy.

In another, viewers are invited to join **Mrs. Sterical's - Funny-bones laughter class**, where they are taken through a range of steps that lead to a bout of infectious laughter. Starting off by making some funny faces and pretending to laugh, pretty soon the giggles set in and after seeing some quick cuts of kids having a good laugh they are soon rolling around on the floor cracking up. Laughter clubs have become popular worldwide and have developed a range of inducement techniques as well as defining several different styles of laughter.

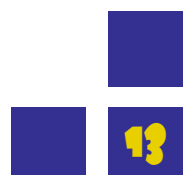
Occasionally, when things get a little rowdy in the cubby, they hear **Mum's voice** calling - "Sandy, Rose, what's going on in there?" or near the end of the show Mum calls out - "Come on you little big kids, your lunch is ready". Mum's voice is a reminder that The Little Big Kids are just like other little kids after all, and in the end, if all that pretending hasn't motivated their young audience to get active - Rose finishes the show by suggesting - "that's enough TV for one day so come on, let's all go out and play".

Each episode will include several Animated Jingles. These will be simple, 2D Flash animations of between 15 and 30 seconds set to catchy tunes or rhymes with lyrics kids can easily learn and sing along with. Each one will be about either a specific activity such as walking, skipping or jumping or an individual fruit or vegetable. They may feature a singing carrot, marching footprints or kaleidoscopic patterns. 12 to 16 of these animated jingles - or interstitials - will be created and 3 or 4 of them presented each episode, randomly repeating throughout the series.

One thing that sets this program apart from other children's television shows is that the actions, facial expressions and dialogue of the animated 3D characters will be controlled and performed by professional actors using the latest motion-capture and voice treatment technology. This has been a traditionally expensive technique used mainly on feature films but is now applicable to lower budget television programs due to advances in computer processing power and improvements in motion capture hardware systems.

As apposed to normal animation, real-time motion capture allows for improvisation and nuance, giving the program its live-to-air feel, which is then intentionally heightened when we reveal our 'crew' operating camera and sound or our hosts get caught goofing off as we cut back from a segment.

These technological advances have helped to shape some of the creative ideas behind this proposal. Although there is the initial expense of creating the 3D characters, once established, they can be recorded in real-time at a fraction of the cost or time associated with traditional animation. There are two other important advantages - child actors are spared the demands of an ongoing series and the stars of the show never grow up.



# Planning for Ongoing Episodes and Storylines

THE LITTLE BIG KIDS

Other than the Sandy's Beach Shack fantasy segment, the subject matter and stories that follow on for the remaining segments of this series are fairly self-evident.

Playgrounds are many and varied, some suburbs seem to compete with one another to create the most innovative children's play facilities, then there are adventure playgrounds, indoor play-parks, swimming pools etc.

Kids vox-pop testimonials? Children are endlessly fascinated in what other children think about food.

The Collingwood College kitchen garden offers a multitude of interest in what can be grown, how things grow and how to care for your garden. This segment could extend to encompass some farmed produce.

Grandpa has an endless number of stories from his childhood days; in fact it's hard to shut him up sometimes. We hope that his humour and the funny way he says things will make him an endearing favourite.

Animal imitation dances may be getting stretched by episode twenty-one, but certain favourites will demand repeating perhaps by an alternative character.

The laughter class aims to engage kids early in the program, to get them up off the couch, release any anxiety they may harbour and help them relax so they may properly enjoy and absorb what follows. By its nature it will be repetitive.

Sandy's Beach Shack segment is the vehicle for the presentation of imaginative, engrossing and relatively complex storylines. The first six or so episodes revolve around a series of quests and gripping adventures that gradually reveal the environment and geographic features surrounding the shack along with the magical or special powers of the characters.

The imagined environment of Sandy's Beach Shack is like a small peninsular with an ocean beach on one side and a sheltered inlet beach on the other. At one end is the rocky headland, at the other is a row of suburban backyards that we might imagine the kids come from, but never reveal. In the middle is a maze of sandy trails weaving through the sand dunes and tea-trees. In adult terms we might picture the ocean and sheltered inlet beach as one kilometre long with the headland also being one kilometre to round - creating a 3 km circumference, but in the mind of a Little Big Kid it's a vast land to explore.

Geographically, the shack sits at one end of the ocean beach closer to the suburban backyards, the ocean beach has sand dunes and of course - great surf. At the far end of the ocean beach is the rock-pool and the head-shaped - Headland, and just beyond is the Rainbow Falls, where a waterfall lands right on the sand.

The Bluff falls scarily straight into the deep ocean and just beyond this is a giant natural arch that the kids name – Safe-harbour Bridge. Around the corner from these landmarks is The Cove, a corner of the sheltered inlet beach with a little maze of big smooth rocks in the sand. The sheltered inlet beach is called Rose Bay and there is a small jetty right in the middle of it. Above the Headland in the bush is The Spring, a fresh-water pool that attracts lots of wildlife – wallabies, koalas, possums, birds and reptiles.

In terms of the planned episode storylines, as mentioned, they will gradually reveal the geographic features mentioned above. In one of these Jimmy finds an esky lid that's washed up on the beach and the friends find that among other things it makes a great sand dune slide. Unfortunately their enthusiasm to slide down again and again wears a groove in the dune that brings their fun to an end.

In another they take a journey to Rainbow Falls and discover the secret of the rainbow by climbing in behind the waterfall. They also find that the multi coloured sand at the bottom of the falls has captured all the colours of the rainbow. In a follow up journey they get stuck at the Bluff when the tide comes in, only to be helped by a friendly talking dolphin that carries them to Safe-harbour Bridge and safety.

On another morning adventure they all loose their fear of the water and go jumping and swimming off the end of the jetty in Rose Bay. And in another they play hide and seek amongst the big smooth rocks of The Cove before getting lost in the maze of sandy trails amongst the tea-tree. Luckily Prue thought to leave a little trail of orange-peel.

When they finally make it up to a fresh-water pool above the headland they are all hot and can't resist a dip in the beautiful fresh water. They weren't wrong about that feeling of being watched either, but after a while they make a whole lot of new friends amongst the animals of The Spring. Of course Jimmy breaks the ice and does all the introductions.

Life around Sandy's Beach Shack is not always a bed of roses. In another episode Sandy gets chased by two viscous dogs near the suburban backyards, luckily they were tied to a long rope. But then Jimmy finds that they are just very unhappy about being tied-up all day with no-one to play with, Sandy is still not sure.

Later in the series, episodes will involve weather events, like a wild storm, a heat wave or just a rainy day. Their joy in finding or collecting things that wash-up on the beach will be explored and the friends they have made amongst the animals that live above The Headland will play a role.

As each episode progresses we will learn more about each of their special powers – Prue's magic bag, Jimmy's connection with nature and Snake's death-defying feats in the surf, rock pool or up on the sand dunes. Sandy goes on to conquer all his fears and Rose learns that she is a born leader.

# Episode titles and themes

THE LITTLE BIG KIDS

**Slippery-dips and Slides:** Concentrates on the more unusual playground activities – trampolines, flying foxes and adventure playgrounds but in particular – crazy slides.

**Fruit-salad Days:** Everything is going right for the Little Big Kids – The sun is out and the nectarines, apricots and plums are all dropping off the trees – it must be summer time.

**Walk, Walk, Walk the Block:** If you're not allowed to cross the road... You can always walk around the block. Walking is your number one activity - let's all walk the block.

**Munching and Crunching:** It's the crunch that packs the punch. The Little Big Kids discover the joys of carrot sticks, celery and snappy-apples and how much noise you can make while snacking-out.

**Hop, Skip, Jump and Run:** Everyone has a favourite method of getting around and our friends each have their own unique take on these everyday activities.

**Watermelon Mad:** Orange-slice smiles, cucumber eyes and watermelon-shell hats – who said you shouldn't play with your food?

**Get Wet and Go Wild:** When Snake visits a water-slide theme park everyone gets a bit over excited. I can't imagine why?

**Prue's Magic Bag:** It's a regular delicatessen! Olives, walnuts, dried apricots or even lychees! Everyone finds a new favourite taste or flavour from Prue's magic bag.

**Chase the Wind:** Our little friends invent some new games – like racing a balloon as it blows with the wind and Snake discovers the fun things you can do on a rainy day with a bit of indoor play.

**Snap Fresh:** Pull up a carrot, wash it under the tap and take a bite! How good things taste when they come straight from the kitchen garden. Some foods taste just great in a raw state.

**There's No Place Like An Open Space:** I just want to run around and have fun. You don't always need things to play on when there are some friends around – what about a game of tag, skip-rope or leapfrog, or we could go fly a kite!

**Growing Season:** It might be mandarins or cherries, sultana grapes or strawberries, blueberries or figs – hang on – FIGS? Our friends find that some of their favourite delicacies only come round in season.



### Format

We are aware that the trend internationally is for pre-school programs of 11 minutes duration, so should the planned 24 minute duration of this proposal be inappropriate for local or international programming requirements then the magazine format of this concept does allow for flexibility.

### Scripts

For the considerable task of writing storylines and dialogue for 26 episodes we intend to enlist several established and successful children's writers. They will need to be of the calibre of writers such as Paul Jennings, Mark Shirrefs & John Thomson or Andy Griffiths. To affectively connect with our target audience the storylines and dialogue of the program will need to tap the deep roots of children's culture, their daydreams, hero worship, wacky humour and sense of group identity.

To improve our understanding of children's current attitudes and reactions to the core topics of the program, we intend to conduct research focus groups with a wide range of children in our target age group. Individual video interviews will be recorded with a large number of these children using a questionnaire devised in consultation with a child psychologist. Through the analysis of these outcomes we hope to gain valuable insights that will help to further develop the storylines and language of the scripts. These focus groups will also present an opportunity to cast for talented children who can voice or sing the songs and jingles, along with forming a database of families who are willing to participate in the filming of certain segments.

Character dialogue will be further developed in consultation with a children's educational specialist while additional research and advice on content will be sought from a dedicated group of children's health professionals. We have received an indication of support from the Murdoch Children's Research Institute at the Royal Children's Hospital in Melbourne to fulfil this role.

### Animation

Technically, the creative concept centres on the use of real-time performance based animation. This animation technique involves the real-time capture of an actors performance, utilising a gyroscopic or optical motion capture system, facial tracker, data glove and an automated lip-sync software program. Although there are significant initial costs in creating the highly detailed 3D characters, their environment is relatively simple and once both are established ongoing programs can be created very economically. As the host characters are also part of the 2D animated fantasy segment and proposed computer game, examples of these will be adapted from the work already done in 3D. Discussions with our intended animation company indicate a highly suitable application of this technology across the various components of the concept.



# Integrated Media and Multi-Platform Applications

THE LITTLE BIG KIDS

## Internet

An interactive website is an integral and important part of our marketing strategy, not just to appeal to children, but also to communicate with parents. The website will incorporate an interactive kids section as well as a parents section with helpful advice, downloadable information and relevant links. A children's educator with a record for improving children's health and wellbeing will be sought as a trusted and welcoming face to front the parents section of the site.

The animated jingles will be a feature of the children's section and will be further developed into simple interactive games with user-friendly control over the various musical instruments, objects or characters. Of course the kids part of the site will feature all the favourite characters from the program with plenty of background information on their personalities, wardrobe and exploits along with free downloads, like screensavers, posters and colouring sheets.

## Computer Game

The Sandy's Beach Shack segment forms the basis for a PC based computer game that utilises the computer models already created for the 3D part of the program. Extensive discussions and planning with an established game developer have confirmed the suitability of transforming these 3D characters and the 2D cubbyhouse/shack and surrounds into a real-time game environment - delivering excellent production value.

The storylines, characters and environment of the Sandy's Beach Shack segment lend themselves to a quest-style application and interface that is applicable to several existing game engines. For example with each quest achieved the cubby-house/shack or characters will acquire new assets or powers. Quests will involve themes drawn from episodes of the television show - such as retrieving the goggles from the bottom of a rock-pool. The child- player can start with a very simple set of tasks or actions, which will then grow in complexity with each completed quest.

## DVD titles and Books

Jimmy's Animal Antics segment has great potential in terms of entertaining and instructive DVDs or children's books. His animal-imitation one-minute-warm-up could easily be extended and developed into a safe and popular children's exercise routine. And hopefully his impeccable animal-imitation dance moves will inspire a million imitators. His affinity with animals and his strong connection with nature or the weather make him an appealing character for pre-schooler picture and story-books, but then again all five of the Little Big Kids characters compliment each other so well, it will be hard to separate them.

## Music CDs

It is a lateral thought to imagine the tunes and lyrics of the animated jingles being extended into a popular children's music CD. These little songs sung by children about things like a walk to the playground or store, or "I can hear my tummy rumble... like a lion in the jungle" will hopefully be learnt, memorised and sung by children all over Australia.

# Itemised description of content and segment durations

## 3D Animation Component

**Intro: (20 seconds)** Set to a catchy theme tune the program always begins with a short animation involving a cat and a bird. In one instance the bird (a magpie lark) is flying over an ordinary suburb when it looks down upon a certain backyard cubby-house. It circles down and lands on the window of the cubby. Cut to a wider shot that reveals a black cat climbing the limb of a tree and preparing to pounce on the bird. The bird flies off as the cat springs. The camera cuts to an interior shot of the cubby as we hear a thud. Sandy and Rose are sitting at their old cable-core table looking towards the window with slightly concerned expressions when a voice off camera yells – “Your on!”

**Sandy and Rose: (6 minutes in total)** Introduce the regular segments from their backyard cubby-house-studio helped by three neighbourhood friends, acting as crew. Set in an average backyard, in an ordinary suburb, the cubbyhouse sits up on stilts amongst the trees and is decked out with improvised furniture – old paint tins as chairs and a wooden cable-core as a table. The use of real-time performance based 3D animation and trained actors controlling the characters allows for ad-lib and spontaneous interaction, giving their performance a live-to-air feel.

**Animal Antics: (2 minutes)** Set against a simple grass and sky background Jimmy encourages kids at home to get up off the couch and join in with a different dance-move each episode. After his regular call to action, they are coaxed through the ‘one minute warm-up’ – a yoga inspired routine referencing a different animal for each progressive posture. Then with a catchy tune they are encouraged to join in with an animal inspired dance routine. It could be a kangaroo, a monkey, penguin or elephant.

## 2D Flash Animation Component

**Sandy's daydreams: (10 to 20 seconds)** It might be something Rose says about a slippery-dip or the results of Snake's chip-eating binge, whatever, it doesn't take much for Sandy to slip off into another wacky flight of fantasy. They might last for only a few seconds, but kids will know that one is coming whenever they detect that glazed-over expression and the beginnings of a wonky-blurry transition to take them into another of Sandy's daydream fantasies. In Sandy's head everything appears in a simple 2D form and of course because it's his imagination - anything is possible.

**Sandy's Beach Shack: (5 minutes)** Sandy dreams of an endless summer of fun with his friends on an ideal deserted beach. The mere mention of sun, sand or sea will transport him to this imaginary place where he and his friends now appear as cartoon-like versions of themselves. The cubbyhouse is now a converted boatshed with a slide down to the sand. Just like his daydreams, a wonky-blurry transition takes the viewers along with him into one of these imaginary adventures. Here, the five friends get up to all sorts of exploits - secret treasure hunts, a race with the wind, a meeting with a talking dolphin or a trip to the bottom of a rock-pool. As the adventure winds up Rose is always there to rouse Sandy back to his cubby-house ‘reality’.

**Animated Jingles: (2 minutes in total per episode)** The intention is to create 12 to 16 of these animated jingles with durations of around 15 to 30 seconds and then alternately present 3 or 4 of them in each episode. Sung by children, each one will be about a different food or activity. They will repeat regularly across the 26 episodes so that the kids at home can learn to sing along with them. Featuring bright colourful patterns or an individual fruit or vegetable that dances and sings and created in a simple 2D graphic style.

## Filmed Real-Life Segments

**Playground Report: (2 minutes)** Intended to appear as if one of the 3D characters is 'reporting live on location' from a different playground each episode, describing the facilities or creative play ideas the local kids are getting into. In reality, the animated character is superimposed over the footage and gives a running commentary as a series of quick cutting and mainly close-up shots reveal the energetic fun being had. These scenes will involve pre-organised and approved candid filming at adventure playgrounds, indoor children's gymnasiums, fun-parks or swimming pools.

**The Taste Test: (1 minute)** Filmed in conjunction with the Playground Reports. After an hour or so of energetic play, kids are offered fresh fruit and other healthy snacks and then invited to 'tell the camera' their likes, dislikes and individual preferences.

**The Kitchen Garden: (2 minutes)** Prue this time takes us to the Collingwood Children's Farm where we see kids tending the garden or feeding the animals and introduces Stephanie Alexander. Although Stephanie has not as yet been signed up to present this segment, it is hoped that her passion for food and her interest in children's health will compel her to join in. Alternatively another children's food expert will be sought to host this segment.

## Actors' Performance Segments

**Great Grandpa's good advice: (1 minutes)** Dithering, doddering Grandpa has some funny stories about the good old days when life was a lot harder, along with some good advice on simple exercise and healthy living. Generally he delivers these short monologues from his Jason 'Lazy-Boy' recliner but occasionally he gets up to demonstrate his surprising dexterity.

**Mrs. Sterical's - Funny bones laughter class: (2 minutes)** Each week we visit a laughter class where the teacher shows you how to have a good laugh. Starting off with a few simple exercises like clenching and releasing or making a funny face, pretty soon the chuckles set in, followed by the giggles and before long - kids, adults and even animals are caught up in a wave of infectious laughter. The intention is to film this segment in a studio with a small group of children on a set specially created to look like a colourful, yet slightly distorted, school classroom.

# Key Creative Personnel

THE LITTLE BIG KIDS

**Creator:** James Widdowson

**Consultant Producer:** Ann Darrouzet

**Animation Director:** Mike Hollands

**Writers:** Matt Zurbo, Mark Bell

**3D Animation:** ACT3Animation

**2D Animation:** Studio Moshi

**Music Director:** Geoffrey Hales

## James Widdowson – Creator

James' is an ideas-man and story teller with a strong visual sense. His experience as a director is extensive. He has directed television promos and commercials as well music and corporate videos. But that's not all. James is also a photographer and photo-digital illustrator, and an animation and post-production supervisor, a writer and producer. In other words, James is a man of many talents. His creativity, energy and passion are just what are needed to drive such a project.

## Mike Hollands – Director of Animation

Mike began his animation career in the Melbourne studios of the ABC. He joined the CG pioneer, Video Paintbrush Company as its first designer / director in 1985 and subsequently became its creative director. Mike is currently CEO of Act3animation, the company he formed in 1992. Act3animation specialises in CG Character animation. His short animated CG film Piñata won 'Best Animation' at Vancouver and is nominated for the 2005 AFI Awards.

## Matt Zurbo – Writer

Matt is a successful children's author who has published books such as Blow Kid, Blow, I Got A Rocket and Fred The Croc. As part of the writing team, Matt brings a real understanding of the language and concepts that appeal to pre-schoolers. His imagination is boundless, and his ability to develop stories that fascinate children is quite remarkable. Just ask all the kids who have read his books.

## Mark Bell – Writer

Mark has been a writer for some 20 years. Importantly, Mark developed, wrote and performed in "The Nutrition Circus" – an innovative entertainment programme for pre-school children about the benefits and enjoyment that can be gained from healthy eating. This toured to kindergartens throughout Victoria with the support of the Victorian Government, Deakin University and the Baker Research Institute, and was received positively by children, parents and teachers alike.

**Geoffrey Hales – Music director**

Geoffrey has been in the music industry since the early 1970s where he performed and recorded with the iconic Australian band Captain Matchbox. Working as a session percussionist in Los Angeles from 1975 to 1988, Geoffrey played on films such as Shogun and The Year of Living Dangerously. After returning to Australia he has continued his heavy work schedule recording with Crowded House, The Cruel Sea and Ollie Olson, and contributing to Peter Weir's film The Truman Show. Geoffrey now has his own studio where he collaborates with Aria winning sound engineer Simon Polinski.

**GrowFit Media Managing Director – David Dickeson**

David has worked in the advertising industry for nearly 35 years. During that time his main area of interest has been the medical field where he has been actively involved in promoting the benefits of life-enhancing and life-saving medications. David is passionate about issues relating to children's health and wellbeing. This has inspired him to initiate this program, which he has supported from its inception. Nothing would give David more satisfaction than seeing his idea come to life on television screens both here and overseas.

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