

## **EXERCISE: THE PICKER-UPPER/CHAOS MACHINE**

**GRADES:** K and up

**TIME:** 10 minutes

**SET-UP:** This exercise works either at a table or in open space.

**SUPPLIES:** None

When the Cat in the Hat visits Sally and her brother on a rainy day, he creates quite the mess inside their house. Just as their mother is about to arrive home to discover the mess, the Cat in the Hat cleans up everything with the help of his picker-upper machine.

### **INSTRUCTIONS:**

Announce that there is a big mess that must be cleaned up before mother arrives! You see a cup, cake, a toy ship, a kite, a fan, a rake, an umbrella and more, on the floor. As each object is named, a child becomes that piece of chaotic wreckage, scattered about the room. We need something to help us clean up this mess. What if we build a machine? But not any ordinary machine: a super-deluxe, multipart, picker-upper machine!

Explain that each part of the machine will have a repetitive motion and sound, and that the machine must also be able to move about the room. Demonstrate an example of patting your head and saying “beep, boop, beep, boop, beep, boop” while taking small steps. Ask for a volunteer to start the machine.

#### **Sample Dialogue**

*This picker-upper machine will have many parts. Each part will be unique because you will make it with the repetitive motion and sound of your choice. One idea I have for a part is this—“beep, boop, beep, boop.” It is important that you can keep doing the motion and sound over and over again because this picker-upper machine has a lot of work to do. Rub your hands together if you are ready to come up to the front of the room and show us your machine part.*

As the machine travels about the room, each part of the wreckage becomes part of the machine, with its own sound and movement. Remind students to stick to the original sound and movement choice they made and to keep doing it repetitively, as everyone needs to join to make the picker-upper machine.

Once all students have joined the machine, point out a lever that will speed up the machine. As you speed up the machine to the point of breakdown, signal children individually to fly off the machine, and re-create the chaos until the machine has completely broken down. Then rebuild a different machine to pick it all up again. Repeat as desired.

**VARIATION:** An alternate option is to create three smaller machines with a third of the class participating at a time. This can be an opportunity to outline good audience behavior. The observing students can also have a role in helping you turn on and off, and change the speed of the machine.