

New 'World' lets children befriend words

By Celeste Busk, Kid Zone

"If a picture is worth a thousand words, imagine what a picture of a word is worth."

That's the philosophy behind the new educational program "WordWorld," which encourages 3 to 5-year-old children to become friends with words.

"WordWorld" will debut at 11:30 a.m. Monday on WTTW-Channel 11. Twenty-six half-hour "WordWorld" episodes will air in the first season.

In each episode, children will see Dog, Sheep, Frog, Duck, Pig and Ant exploring their world of words. Each character has a distinct personality that kids can relate to and learn from.

The program's format includes humorous story lines, which focus on a variety of age-appropriate social-emotional lessons while introducing preschoolers to key literacy-based skills, such as letter recognition and phonological awareness.

Each unique storyline that involves the WordFriends helps young learners develop skills in print awareness, phonological sensitivity and letter knowledge, comprehension, self-awareness and socio-emotional skills.

"The novelty of the show is that when a word is formed correctly, it morphs into the character or thing it

represents, which makes learning to read a totally new experience," said Don Moody, founder and CEO of Word World. The company is part of the Ready to Learn Partnership, a public-private consortium awarded a five-year, multimillion-dollar grant by the U.S. Department of Education.

"It's an idea so simple yet powerful that parents can't help but ask: 'Why didn't I think of that?'" Moody said.



Wonder of words

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Aimed toward preschoolers, "WordWorld" debuts on Labor Day and airs at 11:30 a.m. weekdays on WTTW-Channel 11. The 3-D animated series is designed to get 3- to 5-year-olds ready to read, and to make it a fun activity.