

# Far out, kids ... 'hippy' BBC series teaches children to get in touch with their feelings

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PARENTS, toddlers and students shirking morning lectures should prepare: the Piplings are coming and children's TV will never be the same again.

Based on distinctly hippyish principles, Waybuloo, the BBC's flagship series, encourages toddlers to try yoga and hug each other in pursuit of ultimate happiness.

The show's four Piplings – Lau Lau, De Li, Nok Tok and Yojojo – travel through the verdant and vaguely Eastern countryside of Nara, helping the young learn how to handle emotions.

When a Pipling is truly happy, or makes another feel better, they achieve the Zen-like condition of "Buloo", and begin spontaneously to float.

Programme makers believe the computer-generated characters will be just as appealing to adults, and hope the show will replicate the success of hits such as Teletubbies.

The decision to focus on emotional intelligence represents a departure for mainstream children's TV in Britain. Sarah Colclough, executive producer for CBeebies, said: "We were looking

for a concept that would bring

together that elusive notion of children's emotions. It is an extremely distinctive programme in that way.

"In each show you learn about friendship, co-operation and citizenship. The heart of the programme is about encouraging children to be happy.

"At the launch the children watching were utterly mesmerised."

Each character embodies a particular quality or emotion, from love to imagination. The designers wanted to find a way to spread their own "hippy" parenting philosophy to other families, added Ms Colclough.

Another distinctive feature is that the Piplings interact with real children – known as "Cheebies" – and directly address toddlers and parents at home.

The audience is encouraged to join in with "yogo" exercises – essentially simple yoga moves developed for two to five-year-olds.

The show comes at a time when increasing numbers of children are exhibiting emotional and behavioural problems at school and nursery. Educationalists believe too much TV and computer games has been detri-

mental to behaviour.

Waybuloo was created with the help of education specialists to foster emotional development. In one episode,

Piplings and Cheebies search for strawberries but there are not enough for everyone. They resolve to share their harvest so all can taste the fruit. Nigel Pickard, director of family entertainment at programme maker RDF, said Waybuloo would show children how they can "work together to become positive and content".





**Big hit:** the new show follows the Teletubbies





**Seeking enlightenment:** the characters of new CBeebies show Waybuloo. It aims to develop emotional intelligence. Young viewers are encouraged to join in with simple yoga exercises



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