

Energy Education Case Story

Southern California Edison's *Agents of Safety*

Everything
Connects with



Where did the program originate?

Forty elementary schools in low- to moderate-income areas of California received a novel educational programming module, with a focus on electrical safety. The program was presented by Southern California Edison (SCE), completely free for the schools engaged. Kindergarten through sixth grade students experienced a live educational theatre performance at their school called *Agents of Safety*, produced and performed by The National Theatre for Children (NTC).

Southern California Edison is dedicated to keeping their customers and communities safe from hazardous situations involving electricity. NTC's program for SCE was an exciting and creative way to convey safety information and affect behavior change through enrichment education. It is crucial that everyone, children especially, be careful around electricity. Avoiding downed power lines, keeping an eye out for high voltage and other warning signs, and practicing safe habits in the home are all lessons that should be taught from an early age. This NTC case story offers highlights of *Agents of Safety*, a program that did just that.

What approach was used in implementing this program?

Through Southern California Edison's program, students and their teachers were provided in-school education in the form of a live theatrical performance. The program also included supporting classroom instruction focusing on the importance of electrical safety and identifying safety hazards. The 30-minute live performance engaged elementary school students through a comedic play that included opportunities for audience participation and student volunteers. This interactive program conveyed important safety information to entire school populations as well as families at home.

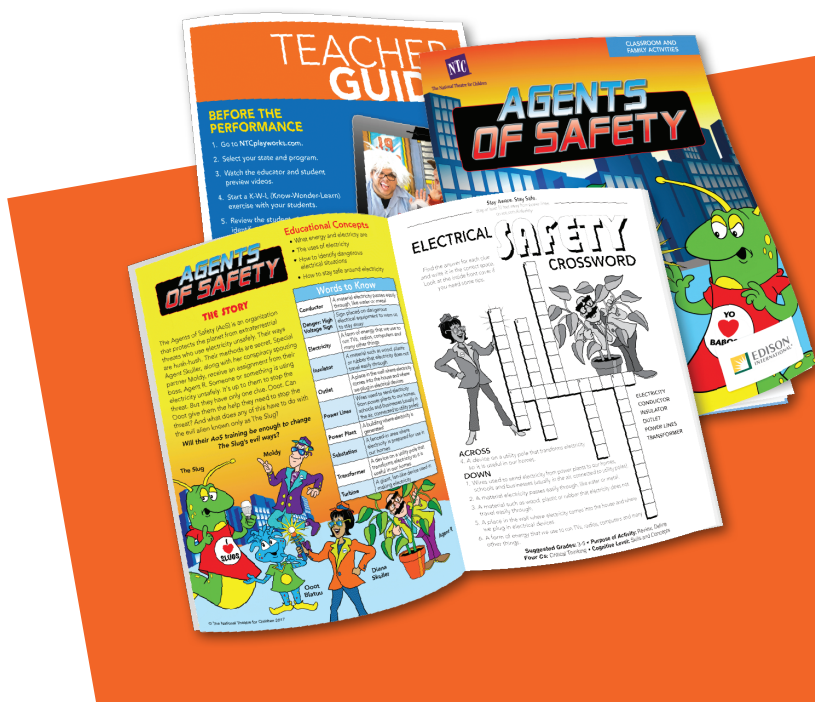


The *Agents of Safety* curriculum featured bilingual student playbooks, teacher guides, classroom posters, and digital games and activities that aligned with the show's messaging. The program armed students with valuable information, encouraging them to consider their choices around electricity carefully. English/Spanish take-home materials were developed to help engage Spanish-speaking parents and bilingual families, and NTC was asked to specifically target schools with high Hispanic/Latino populations. Also, the teacher guides provided educators with innovative solutions for delivering energy education and safety instruction in stimulating ways.

What distinguishes this program from others?

Exciting live events delivered directly into schools impact students in ways that traditional methods cannot. These theatrical assemblies, with engaging characters portrayed by professional actors, spark the imagination and present safety and energy-related education in an appealing way. Adding a dynamic arts element helps to create a robust and memorable program. *Agents of Safety*, customized to demonstrate Southern California Edison's support of safety education, is measured both qualitatively and quantitatively through teacher evaluations and detailed metrics.

No two children learn in the exact same way, and NTC programs like *Agents of Safety* address a variety of learning styles. The theatre component excites, engages and stimulates discussion, in many cases introducing young students to live theatre for the first time. By including audience participation in the program, the students are directly involved and become a part of not only the learning process, but the creative process as well. In this way, the "Four Cs" of 21st century learning skills – collaboration, communication, critical thinking and creativity – are incorporated. All programs from NTC are designed to align with the appropriate educational standards for the schools engaged by each specific campaign. For *Agents of Safety*, the educational content was tied to the Next Generation Science Standards.



What were the significant and measurable impacts of this program?

Agents of Safety reached a reported 22,079 students, teachers and parents through engagement with 40 California schools, receiving positive reviews from everyone involved. The program was able to achieve consistency at scale by delivering educational messages to the largest possible audience while retaining a high level of quality. Teacher evaluations allowed NTC to quantitatively measure the value of the program. Based on a scale of 1 (lowest) to 7 (highest), teachers and educators rated *Agents of Safety* an average of 6.44 on overall educational value, and 99% reported they would like to see the program return to their school.

TABLE 1 AGENTS OF SAFETY TEACHER EVALUATIONS*	
QUESTION	FALL 2017
Overall educational value?	6.44
Likelihood students will retain the material covered?	5.88
Ability to stimulate classroom discussion?	6.43
Ability of live theatre to increase capacity for retaining information?	6.6
Overall value of printed materials?	6.15

*Ratings are on a scale of 1 to 7 (1 lowest, 7 highest)

In addition, educator comments proved that *Agents of Safety* successfully engaged elementary school students and increased their awareness of electrical safety.



This was absolutely wonderful! The actors were fabulous. My students loved it. My students went home and did a safety check on their homes. They came back sharing how they had told their parents about too many plugs in outlets and leaving lights on in rooms that nobody was in. Thanks, SCE for a wonderful presentation. We would LOVE to have this program back next year.

– Kathlene Rose, 1st grade teacher
George Washington Elementary School,
Hanford, CA

Can this model be replicated and scaled by other organizations?

NTC has 40 years of experience creating and deploying successful in-school educational theatre programs. They are replicable and scalable for use by many different organizations using varying models. Our unique and proven engagement programs have delivered notable results for utilities across the country that are involved in safety education.

Any school-based education program can be successful when it:

- Offers something to schools that they can't get elsewhere (like live theatre)
- Aligns program materials with the appropriate educational standards
- Adds proper motivation for schools, teachers and students to influence parents

What lessons did we learn from the implementation of this program?

With the right approach, it really is possible to reach K-6 students, raise their awareness of vital subjects like electrical safety and measure the results. *Agents of Safety* provided an opportunity for California students to experience learning through professional theatre. Teacher evaluations, photos and videos of the performances, and social media postings by the schools illustrated that dynamic and innovative teaching methods can stimulate young minds with subjects in which they might otherwise express little interest.



With NTC's approach to education, a consistent barrier is convincing schools to accept and pursue this type of enrichment programming. Schools have oftentimes already embraced the curriculum that's been set in place, so NTC is challenged with enlightening teachers and administrators on the benefits of educating students in a new form, such as live in-school theatre. These types of issues may be reflected in the students' home lives as well. It can often be a challenge to motivate elementary school-aged children to talk openly with their parents. NTC's programs give students and their parents a topic and



activities to engage with one another in a productive way. The unique structure of this "trickle up" system is what makes it so effective, as it grants students the opportunity to share knowledge with their families and inspire real change in their communities.

What NTC refers to as "the School Channel" is an invaluable tool when providing community outreach and education. The School Channel is made up of 111,465 schools in the United States, totaling 53,727,000 students and 3,219,400 teachers. Utilities and other organizations with a focus on safety education, through programs such as *Agents of Safety*, have the opportunity to connect with the students, their teachers and their families.

NTC is a premium provider of educational programming with operations in the U.S., Australia and New Zealand. We work directly between schools and clients to promote beneficial behaviors and life skills to students in grades K-12 on a local, regional and national level.

Since 1978, we have formed connections and helped develop relationships between thousands of schools and corporations, nonprofits and governmental organizations. Our value is not just in the impact we create; our turnkey services also change the lives and trajectories of students, mobilize parents and entire families with beneficial messages, and cultivate community-wide goodwill for clients.

Our award-winning educational programs are provided free for schools and are customizable to accommodate specific messages and goals for clients. Through formats including live performance, in-class discussion, graphic novels, print curriculum, and digital games and activities, we present topics such as energy conservation, safety, financial literacy, STEM, water and environmental stewardship, and health and social responsibility in ways that engage and empower students. In doing so, we are helping our clients to be forces of change for students, parents and communities.

Everything
Connects with

NTC[®]

6305 Sandburg Road, Suite 100
Minneapolis, MN 55427
www.ntccorporate.com