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Nick Jr.'s *Dora the Explorer* Shines in "Little Star," Number-One Pre-School Hit's First Prime-Time Special

Dora the Explorer: Little Star, Airing Monday, May 21, from 8-8:30 p.m. (ET/PT) on Nickelodeon, to Feature *Little Star* Online-Exclusive Prequel on NickJr.com

Dora the Explorer, the Number-One Pre-School Program on Commercial Television, to Release First Home Video Series June 2001

New York, NY – April 11, 2001 – Nick Jr.'s *Dora the Explorer*, which in less than a year since its launch has become the top-rated pre-school program on commercial television, will premiere its first prime-time special, "Little Star," on Monday, May 21, at 8 p.m. (ET/PT), exclusively on Nickelodeon. In "Little Star," Dora and her best friend Boots help a fallen star find her way back home to the Moon, so that everybody can make their wishes before bedtime. To get Little Star home, Dora and Boots will need help from viewers to overcome obstacles and outsmart Swiper the Fox.

"Dora has quickly captured the imagination and attention of the pre-school audience and has become the number-one show on commercial television for kids this age just since its August debut," said Cyma Zarghami, executive vice president and general manager, Nickelodeon. "The 'Little Star' episode will give the series a special prime-time platform for kids to have a pre-bedtime adventure while teaching basic deductive reasoning, problem solving and counting skills."

In "Little Star," Dora and Boots search for the brightest star in the sky so they can make a wish before they go to bed. While looking through a telescope, they notice that a comet zips by and accidentally knocks Little Star down to Earth. When Dora and Boots find Little Star in the nearby woods, she is crying; so viewers are asked to join in and sing "Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star" to make her feel better. Later, Dora and Boots ask viewers to help them get across Troll Bridge, past Tico the Squirrel's Tree and up Tall Mountain in order to put Little Star back in the sky with the Moon, so that everybody can make their bedtime wishes.

To complement the *Dora the Explorer: Little Star* on-air event, NickJr.com will feature an exclusive online prequel to the program. Similar to how Dora was introduced online, Little Star can be seen first in a special prequel storybook available only on www.nickjr.com, where viewers will have the opportunity to meet Little Star and learn the story behind her friendship with Dora. *Dora the Explorer* online games and activities, including printable coloring books and a "Little Star" screensaver, also will be available.

Additionally, *Dora the Explorer* will make its home video debut on June 5 with two titles, "Wish on a Star" and "Swing into Action." In August, *Dora* will mark its debut in apparel and accessories. The line, for both boys and girls, will be available exclusively at May Co. stores nationwide. A toy line, featuring playsets, finger puppets and plush, will be available for Holiday 2001 at specialty retailers.

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Dora the Explorer, which airs at 9 a.m. and 11 a.m. (ET/PT) weekdays on Nick Jr. and Saturdays on CBS (check local listings), is a play-along, animated adventure series starring Dora, a seven-year-old Latina heroine who lives inside a computer, where her adventures take place in an imaginative, tropical world filled with jungles, beaches and rainforests. Dora explores her world just as pre-schoolers do everyday, and the show is designed to actively engage its audience in an interactive, CD-ROM-style quest using a variety of learning techniques.

In every episode, Dora and Boots invite the audience to participate in an exciting adventure, where each step of their journey consists of a problem or puzzle in which Dora and the audience must think their way through in order to solve the next problem. Dora also is bilingual and uses her knowledge of English and Spanish to communicate with her friends, overcome obstacles and reach her goals. In each episode, Dora teaches a Spanish word or phrase to the viewers and then asks them to use it to solve a problem and forge ahead. Ultimately, Dora and her best friend, Boots, triumph, and the story always ends with a "We Did It!" anthem.

Dora is the first Nick Jr. character to have appeared online prior to her on-air debut. *Dora the Explorer's* Web site continues to be one of the most popular areas of nickjr.com and features several interactive bilingual games and an English-Spanish play-along translator for pre-schoolers. Nickjr.com is further extending Dora's role online with plans to launch a fully interactive Spanish site, and expand the bilingual parental area.

Dora the Explorer was created by Chris Gifford, Valerie Walsh and Eric Weiner. Gifford serves as executive producer, with Walsh as producer and Weiner as producer and head writer. Teri Weiss is executive in charge of production.

Nick Jr. is a specially designed programming block from 9 a.m.-2 p.m. (ET/PT) weekdays on Nickelodeon and Saturday mornings on CBS (check local listings). Completely dedicated to preschoolers ages 2-5, and hosted by the lovable, animated character Face, Nick Jr. shows are safe, reliable and fun. At Nick Jr., kids play to learn with innovative and original shows created just for them. Nick Jr. activities based on all its shows are available at the Web site, nickjr.com.

Nickelodeon, the number-one entertainment brand for kids, has built a diverse, global business by putting kids first in everything it does. The company includes television programming and production in the United States and around the world, plus consumer products, online, recreation, books, magazines and feature films. Nickelodeon's U.S. television network is seen in more than 80 million households and has been the number-one-rated basic cable network for more than five consecutive years. Nickelodeon and all related titles, characters and logos are trademarks of Viacom International Inc.

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Dora the Explorer: "Little Star" on NickJr.com

Dora the Explorer not only lives inside of a computer, but she is also the first Nick Jr. character to make her world debut online. Now, Dora will introduce her new friend, Little Star, online on www.NickJr.com. Dora and Little Star will have adventures both online and on-air and give visitors to NickJr.com a very special opportunity to learn the story behind their friendship.

The Story Behind "Little Star" – Beginning May 7, 2001
Online Prequel Storybook
Fans of *Dora the Explorer* will have an opportunity to meet her friend, Little Star, before she is seen on television. Visitors who log onto www.nickjr.com beginning May 7th will be able to learn the story of Little Star and Dora's first meeting– a "prequel" to the "Little Star" program. In the online storybook, we learn that Little Star used to be a lonely star in the sky until Dora and Boots help her find her best friend, the Moon. Now that she has found the Moon, Little Star is inspired to make others' wishes come true!

Help Dora & Little Star – May 21-25, 2001
Little Star Question of the Day
Dora and Little Star need help, and each day, from May 21-25, viewers of Dora's "Little Star" episode will be asked a question and the answer can be found within the program. Fans will then be directed to nickjr.com to answer the Question of the Day and those with the correct answer will be able to celebrate with Dora and her friends as they sing the "We Did It" song.

Little Star for Grown-Ups – May 18, 2001
Fun for Parents & Their Kids
NickJr.com also has *Dora the Explorer* games and activities for parents and their children to play together. Activities will include:

- "Little Star" Printable coloring book
- Dora's Connect the Stars printable
- Stargazing With Your Kids: Activity/ Fact Sheet
- Song sheets, including *Star Light Star Bright* and *Twinkle Twinkle Little Star*
- "Little Star" Screensaver

NickJr.com is a premier online destination for families and parents, featuring a variety of popular resources offering advice, helpful ideas, and creative activities for parents to maximize the time with their children both online and off. In addition to learning more about their child's favorite Nick Jr. characters such as *Dora the Explorer, Blue's Clues,* and *Bob the Builder,* NickJr.com also offers parents resources on numerous topics including party planning tips, food ideas, and clever "Do-Together" activities to share with their children.

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Featuring fun sounds and flash animation, NickJr.com is also designed to give preschoolers an introduction to the Web that is entertaining and rewarding. In addition to learning how to navigate with the help of the site's animated guide "Face," preschoolers can listen to music, play games, read stories, color pictures and, of course, interact with all of their favorite Nick Jr. characters.

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Dora the Explorer

Character Descriptions

DORA

Dora is a seven-year-old Latina who is proud of her heritage and speaks Spanish. She is a true heroine for the pre-school audience. A born explorer, Dora is always ready for the next adventure. She's determined, positive, helpful and smart, making her a great role model for her young viewers.

Dora lives inside a computer, but her adventures take place in an imaginative, tropical world of jungles, beaches and rainforests. Dora's world is a safe environment filled with friendly bilingual animals that range from talking monkeys to a chicken as big as a house. Dora is filled with love and wonder for the animals, plants and much of what she encounters along her journeys.

BOOTS

Boots is a furry, fuzzy monkey who is Dora's best friend. Being only five years old, he's like a younger brother who looks up to Dora. He's very playful and enjoys playing peek-a-boo with Dora when he first sees her at the beginning of every show.

Unlike Dora, Boots sometimes gets discouraged or makes wrong choices, but he always bounces back as he does one of his signature triple flips. No one can make Dora laugh quite like Boots. In addition to providing comic relief, Boots also serves as a model for the viewer. Like the audience, he plays along with Dora, follows her instructions and calls out answers to her questions.

BACKPACK

Dora's special helper, Backpack can always be found on her back when Dora and Boots find themselves in need of supplies. From binoculars to sticky tape, Backpack is loaded with everything Dora might need, though it's up to the viewer to pick out the right item that will solve the problem at hand. As Backpack likes to sing in signature song, "Anything that you might need, I've got inside for you!"

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MAP

A funny, bouncy rolled-up map that lives inside Backpack's side pocket and peeks out whenever Dora and the viewers call for "Map!" Map is an incredibly useful helper for young explorers. If they're searching for something, he always knows where it is and how to get there.

Whenever Dora needs Map's help with directions, he plots out the journey with a simple graphic to show the route. "If there's a place you need to get, I can get you there I bet," sings Map confidently in his signature song.

SWIPER THE FOX

Swiper has one goal in life -- to sneak through Dora's world trying to swipe things. From cookies to signs and landmarks, if it's valuable, then Swiper wants it. And then he hides it. The viewer can always see Swiper coming and therefore is a step ahead of Dora. However, neither Dora nor the viewer can see where Swiper hides his conquests. Often, Dora and the audience must use observation and labeling skills to find the lost items.

Swiper is quick and sneaky, and it isn't easy to catch him. In fact, the only way to stop Swiper before he swipes something is for Dora, Boots and the audience to call out "Swiper, no swiping!"

TICO

Tico is a four-year-old Spanish-speaking squirrel. Tico and Boots have a special bond, and Dora translates for both of them so they can understand each other. While Tico is young and playful, he can also be brave, heroic and quite dashing. In a crisis, he has been known to "leap and dive" to save the day.

BENNY

Benny is a funny six-year-old bull. He has a big heart, lots of physical strength and plenty of prowess. When it comes to solving a puzzle, Benny is eager to help which can often lead to guessing randomly or choosing ineffective strategies. But he is a loyal friend to all.

# # #

DORA THE EXPLORER
INTERNATIONAL

The premiere of *Dora the Explorer* in August 2000 marked the first time that Nickelodeon has launched a new show simultaneously in multiple regions of the world and targeted to multiple markets within the United States. Dora made her on-screen debut simultaneously on Nickelodeon's channels in the United States and Latin America. Nickelodeon Latin America reaches more the 10 million multichannel households in 23 Latin American countries. In addition, *Dora the Explorer* is seen on the Nickelodeon block on the Telemundo network in the United States, aimed at providing the growing United States Hispanic population with high quality Spanish-language kids' programming. Since her debut, Dora has also found a home on Nickelodeon Australia and in Singapore and Portugal via programme sale to third party broadcasters.

Nickelodeon, the world's only multi-media entertainment brand dedicated exclusively to kids, is seen in more than 110 million households and 129 countries, with channels in Africa, Asia and the Pacific Rim, Latin America, Europe, CIS/Baltic Republics and the United States

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CHRIS GIFFORD

Co-Creator and Executive Producer, *Dora the Explorer*

Chris Gifford is executive producer and co-creator of the popular pre-school series, *Dora the Explorer*. Gifford joined Nickelodeon in 1989 as unit manager. He was soon promoted to production manager, Nickelodeon/Nick at Nite, where he worked on a number of productions including *Family Double Dare, Think Fast, Total Panic, Hi Honey, I'm Home,* and *Outahere*. In 1991, he was named associate producer, and then producer of the hit series *Clarissa Explains It All,* where he oversaw the production of 52 episodes.

In 1995, Gifford served as executive in charge of development and production at Nick Jr., where he oversaw the development and production of *Allegra's Window, The Wubbulous World of Dr. Seuss, The Busy World of Richard Scarry* and the first season of *Gullah Gullah Island*. In 1998, he created, wrote, and produced the interstitial series *Abby's Friends*.

Prior to joining Nickelodeon, Gifford worked at the Children's Television Workshop as the unit manager for *3-2-1 Contact*. He began his television career in 1980 playing the character "Danny" on the Peabody Award-winning children's show *The Great Space Coaster*.

Gifford was a former educator with experience teaching both speech and drama to elementary and high school students. He holds a degree in theatre from Connecticut College.

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ERIC WEINER

Creator, Producer and Head Writer, *Dora the Explorer*

Eric Weiner is producer, head writer and co-creator of *Dora the Explorer*. Weiner first joined Nickelodeon as a writer for *Eureeka's Castle*. He continued with the network writing for *Allegra's Window, The Mystery Files of Shelby Woo, Are You Afraid of the Dark?, Little Bill* and *Gullah, Gullah Island*, for which he also served as a head writer and co-producer.

In addition to writing for Nickelodeon shows, Weiner worked for Children's Television Workshop as co-head writer of *Ghostwriter* and creator of *Problem #13*. His numerous other credits include Disney Channel's *Out of the Box* (writer), *PB&J* (story editor) and the HBO special *Kids are Punny*.

Weiner has published more than 50 fiction and non-fiction children's books. He is the creator of *Cliffhangers*, a middle grade action-adventure series from Berkely Books; *Nursery Crimes*, a young adult horror series from HarperCollins; and *Clue*, a series of mini-mysteries from Scholastic. He has also published several stories for adults in publications such as *The New York Times, Premiere* and *Redbook*.

A graduate of Yale University, Weiner earned a bachelor's degree in English and Drama.

# # #

VALERIE WALSH

Co-Creator and Producer, *Dora the Explorer*

Valerie Walsh is producer and co-creator of the popular pre-school series, *Dora the Explorer*. Walsh joined Nickelodeon in 1995 in Production and Development at Nick Jr.

Since moving to New York, Walsh has worked in independent film and theater. She has produced numerous short films, directed both theater and independent features, and has even written several screenplays.

A graduate of New York University, Walsh earned a master's degree in Film and Dramatic Writing, and a master's degree in Education. While at NYU, Walsh was a member of the Creative Arts Team, an educational theater company dedicated to creating and performing issue-based dramas in New York City schools.

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TERI WEISS

Executive in Charge of Production, *Dora the Explorer* and *Bob the Builder*

Teri Weiss serves as the executive in charge of production for two popular Nick Jr. programs, *Dora the Explorer* and *Bob the Builder*. Weiss joined Nick Jr. in 1999 as the executive in charge of production, overseeing the production of *Dora the Explorer* and the scripting of *Bob the Builder*, which premiered in January 2001.

Before coming to Nickelodeon, Weiss served as a producer for *Sesame Street* for which she earned two Daytime Emmy Awards for "Best Preschool Children's Series." During her tenure at the Children's Television Workshop, she also produced three Home Videos: *Slimey's Worm Games*, *Alphabet Jungle Game* and *Great Numbers Game*, two of which earned Parents' Choice Awards.

Prior to her five years with *Sesame Street*, Weiss worked on *Where in the World is Carmen Sandiego?* and *Square One TV* as well as a number of series for HBO's Comedy Channel, including *Women Aloud*, *The Alan Havey Show*, *Sports Monster* and *Rich Hall's Onion World*.

Weiss has a bachelor's degree in International Studies from Johns Hopkins University.

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