

Pitch Proposal: *Critters Creek*

Title: *Critters Creek*

Created by: *Jessi Cassullo*

Concept

Critters Creek is an animated children's series set in a whimsical woodland community where animals live "human-type" lives. Each 25-minute episode balances engaging imaginative play with meaningful lessons rooted in the experiences of its diverse characters. Designed for children aged 3-7, the show celebrates neurodiversity, creativity, and the importance of friendship.

The World of *Critters Creek*

Nestled deep in the woods, *Critters Creek* is a vibrant, close-knit community where every critter has unique talents and challenges. After school, the characters come together to play, using their vivid imaginations to "enter" new worlds. Whether they're pirates on the high seas, astronauts exploring distant planets, or explorers in a magical jungle, their adventures bring excitement and discovery to every day.

Structure of an Episode

1. **Real-World Challenges**

Each episode begins with one of the characters facing a challenge or experience, such as Xavier (who is on the Autism Spectrum) struggling with a change in plans or Lilly expressing herself through painting. These moments ground the story in real-world emotions and teach valuable life lessons.

2. **Imaginative Play**

As the characters work together, they use their imaginations to "enter" another world, transforming their backyard play into epic adventures. This imaginative sequence, which takes up about half of the episode, allows kids to see problem-solving and teamwork in action while keeping the show fun and engaging.

3. **Resolution**

The episode concludes back in the real world, where the characters apply what they've learned, showing growth, empathy, and a deeper understanding of themselves and each other.

4. **Fun Fact Segment**

Every episode ends with a short "fun fact" segment where one of the characters shares knowledge related to their passions:

- **Xavier** might talk about stars, planets, or the universe.
- **Carter** could explain how engines work or share cool car trivia.
- **Lilly**, with Tory translating her signs, might discuss a famous painting or give tips about art.

This segment inspires kids to learn more about the world while celebrating the diverse interests of the characters.

Characters

1. **Xavier (4 years old)** – *Raccoon, ASD*

Xavier is a space enthusiast who can name all the planets in order and loves learning about the stars. When he feels overstimulated, he often chooses quiet playtime by himself. While he thrives on routine, bedtime is his least favorite part of the day, and he struggles when things don't go as planned.

2. **Hailey (7 years old)** – *Raccoon, NT*

As Xavier's caring older sister, Hailey is a bookworm with dreams of owning her own library someday. She's patient and understanding, often stepping in to support Xavier when he feels overwhelmed or overstimulated. Her love of learning inspires her friends to be curious too.

3. **Carter (4 years old)** – *Fox, ADHD*

Full of boundless energy, Carter is passionate about cars and trucks, always imagining new adventures involving wheels and engines. He can be a little rough during playtime and sometimes loses focus when listening to directions, but his enthusiasm and creativity are infectious.

4. **Riley (7 years old)** – *Rabbit, ADHD & Anxiety*

Riley is a social butterfly who cherishes time with her friends. She loves music, movies, and TV, though she has a habit of procrastinating and can be a bit messy. Meeting new people makes her nervous, but her kind heart and lively spirit shine through once she feels comfortable.

5. **Lilly (5 years old)** – *Possum, NT, Deaf*

Lilly is an outdoor-loving artist with a fantastic sense of humor. She expresses herself beautifully through her paintings and relies on her twin sister, Tory, to help translate her signs to others. Lilly's creativity and playful nature brighten everyone's day.

6. **Tory (5 years old)** – *Possum, NT, Paraplegic*

After an accident left her paralyzed from the waist down, Tory has embraced life with resilience and humor. A big fan of cars and trucks, she's also her sister Lilly's biggest supporter, acting as her translator and teaching others sign language to help them communicate. Together, the twins share an unbreakable bond and bring laughter to the group.

7. **Lindsay (4 years old) – Squirrel, ASD & Misophonia**
Lindsay is a graceful dancer who expresses herself best through movement. Because of her Misophonia, she often wears headphones to block out overwhelming sounds. Her gentle spirit and love of rhythm bring a sense of calm and beauty to the group.
 8. **Rudy (6 years old) – Turtle, OCD**
Rudy is a focused and determined soccer fan who loves the structure and strategy of the game. His OCD means he values order and routine, which sometimes creates challenges, but his diligence and teamwork make him an integral part of the Critters Creek crew.
-

Themes and Educational Value

1. **Neurodiversity and Inclusion:**
Each character has unique traits, and their challenges are handled with empathy and care. Xavier's journey with Autism, for example, provides children and parents with tools to understand and embrace neurodiversity.
 2. **Imagination and Teamwork:**
The imaginative sequences demonstrate the power of creativity and collaboration, encouraging kids to dream big and work together.
 3. **Real-World Problem Solving:**
Whether it's managing emotions, expressing themselves, or supporting friends, the show emphasizes social and emotional growth, equipping children with skills they can use in their own lives.
 4. **Inspiring Curiosity:**
The "fun fact" segment at the end of each episode leaves kids with something new to think about, encouraging them to explore their own interests and share them with others.
-

Tone and Style

Critters Creek blends a warm, cozy aesthetic with vibrant, detailed animation. The tone is light-hearted yet meaningful, balancing humor and fun with emotionally rich moments. The imaginative play sequences are visually dynamic, transporting viewers into magical worlds where anything is possible.

Why *Critters Creek*?

Critters Creek stands out by combining imaginative storytelling with real-world challenges that resonate with children and their parents. By celebrating neurodiversity and promoting empathy, the show creates a space where kids can see themselves and others reflected in the

characters. It's not just a show—it's a toolkit for life, teaching kids (and parents) how to navigate challenges with curiosity, kindness, and creativity.