



Helping children learn the Jay way

A PHONE conversation with *Play School* presenter and Hollywood blockbuster bit-part actor Jay Laga'aia can be about as colourful and diverse as his body of work of the past two decades.

At no point does he have a lack of things to say, whether passionately discussing the importance of parenting, or berating the increasingly commercial nature of children's entertainment.

"We've created an era and a genre in which in order for our children to appreciate children's performances, we have to buy the t-shirt or the DVD," he said.

"*Play School* has taught me I can empower parents to be the entertainer simply by

saying to them 'that's an ice-cream container, toilet paper roll, tissue and a straw. You've got all this at home, so go and take the kids, fill up the bath tub and the amount of fun will far outweigh having them sit in front of the television'."

The affable Polynesian, whose acting credits include *Star Wars* films, stage musicals and TV shows including *Water Rats* and *Mcleod's Daughters*, is himself a father of seven children and is set to join the West Australian Symphony Orchestra for WASO in the Park with Jay, at Kings Park and Botanic Garden, on March 2.

Designed for two to seven-year-olds, the show will be

based around songs from Laga'aia's recently released CD *Come Dance and Sing*, as well as nursery rhymes.

Emilia Vranjes



Jay Laga'aia