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## Special points of interest:

- Information about Child's Play Touring Theatre
- An inside look at the Kids For President show.
- Write a letter to the next President of the U.S.A
- Build your own political platform.

## KIDS FOR PRESIDENT!!

### To the Teacher:

Child's Play Touring Theatre is celebrating the 2024 presidential election with a **Kids For President** show. This study guide will help to prepare your students to see the show and will provide a variety of follow-up materials which may be useful to you as story starters, activities for class discussion, or as ideas for class projects.

### About the show

Child's Play Touring Theatre has been working with young writers across the country to involve them in the 2024 election. Many children submitted stories, poems, songs, campaign speeches and essays. The show that you will see reflects the very best of the material we have collected. The performance runs ap-



Kids across the country weigh in on the issues facing our country!

proximately 55 minutes and is comprised of several short plays and songs adapted by the company from children's writings. It is an attempt to give voice to children's feelings about the challenges America

and our next president will face. The show combines whimsy and political thought, backed up by live music, colorful costumes and backdrops based on children's art work.

## CHILD'S PLAY TOURING THEATRE: WHAT'S THE STORY?

Child's Play Touring Theatre is a professional traveling theatre for young audiences that performs stories and poems written by children, transforming young writers works into plays, songs and dances. Every year, the company performs the works of hundreds of young poets, essayists, playwrights and short

story writers. To date, we have reached over 4 million students all over the world.

Child's Play Touring Theatre was founded in 1978 by Victor and June Podagrosi and is recognized as one of the outstanding touring theatres for young audiences in the U.S. Child's Play has performed at the Smithsonian Institution, Wolf Trap Performing Arts

Park, the Brooklyn Academy of Music, the Indianapolis Children's Museum, the Field Museum of Chicago, the Detroit Institute of Arts, Alaska Junior Theater, the Goodman Theatre, Ravinia, and in thousands of schools, libraries, museums and theatres in the United States and Canada.

## STUDENTS GET READY FOR THE SHOW

As you prepare your students to see **Kids For President**, begin by using the description on the previous page to tell the children about the show and the company. Then discuss with them what kind of topics they think will be presented in the performance.



Students prepare for the upcoming election.

Other activities include:

1. Discuss the current presidential election. Who do they think will win? Why? Discuss the role and responsibilities of the president.
2. In this guide you will find a form letter for children to write to the next president and express what they think the most important thing he can do for children. Make copies of the form and have your students bring their letters to the performance.

These letters will be collected and sent to the winning candidate as part of the **Kids For President** project.

3. Listed below are the story suggestions that were sent to children to encourage them to write for this project. Read and discuss with your students what kind of stories and poems they think might be in the show. Have your students write their own stories or poems using one or more of these ideas.

*"If Kids could be the president of the USA, you can bet that we would have a lot of things to say."*

*Anne Berry, 3rd grade*

## WRITING IS CHILD'S PLAY

### STORY SUGGESTIONS FOR KIDS FOR PRESIDENT

**"If I were the President, I would..."** Write about the issues that are most important to YOU. What is a day in the life of a President like? How would you change the world? How would kids run America differently?

**"What will the world be like when I am 35?..."** You must be at least 35 years old to be

President. What will America be like then? How will today's problems be solved and what new problems will we face? How can kids help shape America's future?

**"My advice to a new civilization..."** What if the citizens of another planet came to you for advice on how to run things? What advice would

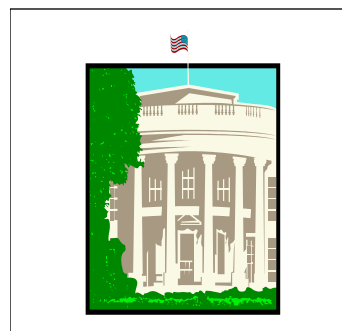
you give?

**"It's important to vote because..."** Why is it important to vote? What would happen if Americans didn't vote?

**"I'm proud to be President because..."** Why would you want to become the leader of our country? What made your family move to America?

## CANDIDATES BUILD THEIR PLATFORMS

**Kids For President** is all about students who are given the chance to assume the highest office in the land and make a real difference. However, they all quickly learn that there are a lot of issues facing our world that are a big and challenging part of being "in charge."



Kids talk about the issues important to them.

Students can use the included worksheets to build their own platforms. This can be done with a variety of themes including class elections and issues important to their school, mayoral elections involving issues in their own community, or a presidential election with issues that effect the entire world around us.

## EDUCATION A TOP ISSUE WITH KIDS TODAY

One of the major issues discussed in the show is education, as presented in the song **Educate Us** and the play **The Presidential Switch Up**. At Child's Play we have found that one of the most important issues to young people today is the schooling system that they grow up in.

The Kid Presidents tackle the issue of education when they realize what the consequences would be if they don't work together to make it better.

The Kid Presidents have

the help of Bigfoot, their parents and teachers, and past American Presidents like Thomas Jefferson and Abraham Lincoln to help them accomplish their goals. What, or who do your students think would make people stand up and improve the educational system?

Discuss how the issue of education was presented in the play. Have your students write their own issue oriented story and act it out in class.



## CANDIDATES SAY, "PROBLEM SOLVED."

The Kid Presidents find that they need a lot of help to solve some of the problems facing our country. We all face problems in our day to day life, some big and some small. It's how we react to those problems and set about solving them that can define who we are.

Here are a few games that are geared specifically toward

problem solution. **"What's Wrong Here?"** A student is given a random "problem" out of a hat (The sink is clogged, or you can't find your keys). The student then silently acts out the problem and solves it while the audience tries to guess what's going on. **"SitProbSol"** The first student, or pair of students, establishes a simple situation on stage (Playing at the park). The second set of students enters

and creates a problem (Bullies want the swings). The final set of students comes in and solves the problem (The parents call the bullies home). **"Build What?"** As a group students try to build a "fort" using a variety of objects in the class, a parachute or sheet, chairs and, etc. The trick is they can't talk to one another during the game. That can be a problem.

*"If you want to stop the wars, eliminate drugs, end the violence, and reduce unemployment, you must do one thing: Educate Us!"*

*Maria Duffy, 6th grade*

## CRITICS CORNER: AFTER THE SHOW

After the show is over have your students talk about their favorite parts of the performance. Why were they their favorites? What made them special?

What issues were not addressed in the show that your students thought should be there? How would they handle those issues if they were president?

At several points during the show the "candidates" present their ideas and campaign speeches. Have your students write their own campaign speeches. What issues would they want to discuss? What would people need to know about them?



What would you do if you were President?

What are some of the presidential privileges students might enjoy if they were president? A limo all the time, as much candy as they want? Have your students write their own fantasy about the finer side of being president.



## Child's Play Touring Theatre

Performing stories and poems written by children.

Phone number: 773 235-8911  
Email: [cptt@cptt.org](mailto:cptt@cptt.org)

*"I think the President of the United States has to be aware of America's children. We are the next generation and the future is in our hands."*

*Mary St. Jean, 6th grade*

Visit us at  
[www.cptt.org](http://www.cptt.org)  
Facebook and Twitter

## The Child's Play Touring Theatre Mission:

*"To share, encourage and validate the creativity of children by presenting original works of theatre, music and dance adapted from their literature and artwork."*

Special thanks to our contributing authors for Kids For President. These stories and poems have been included in our repertory shows.. Not all stories appear in all versions of the show.

*The Presidential Switch Up* by Stephanie Salerno, Adien Kupka and Jamie Gamonez, 6th graders from Woodridge IL.

*Educate Us* by Maria Duffy, a 6th grader from Manchester NH.

*Rush, Rush, Rush* by Anne Berry, a 5th grader from Chadds Ford, PA

*President Andrew Meets Bigfoot* by Andrew Gaffey, a 2nd grader from Bridgewater, NJ

*If I Were President* by Roxanne Amaro, a 4th grader from Des Moines, IA.

*Cougars Diary* by Renee Bieldwa, a 6th grader from Woodridge IL.

*The Presidents* by Mrs. Toland and Ms. Zito's 4th grade classes.

*Kids For President Rap* by Emma Duque, a 7th grader from Chicago, IL.

## CAMPAIGN GETS UNDERWAY

### Kids For President: A Class Simulation Game

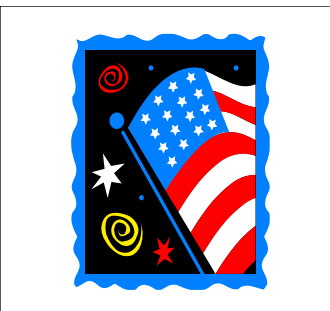
This game is designed to give students in the third through sixth grade experience in creative problem solving and decision making with a group, persuasive writing, public speaking and dramatization. Feel free to adapt any or all of the lesson play for your classroom.

#### Day 1—Identify the issues

Brainstorm with the class to find out what they feel are the most important issues affecting them in their own lives. They might discuss issues which impact upon their neighborhoods, school, the environment, or the larger community. List problems or situations that the class feels candidates for public office should do something about. Write "Dear Candidate" or "Dear President" letters. The class may share these ideas.

#### Day 2—Establishing Parties

Divide the class into four political parties, with each party choosing its own name and mascot. Each party holds a "primary" to elect a candi-



The children are our future.

date. (A vote can be done most tactfully by drawing a name from a hat. The selected person may then choose a running mate.) Ask the kids to think about the issues and problems discussed the previous day. Suggest that each party select a priority issue. The party then needs to determine ways of addressing this issue in a positive way. Party members can suggest various methods of solving the problem or improving the situation. Ideas can be practical or outrageous, serious or whimsical.

#### Day 3—Political Commercial

Ask each party to create a skit or "political commercial" to

illustrate the issue or situation decided upon yesterday. Skits should include all members of the party in some way.

#### Day 4—Position Papers

Students now write a "position paper" explaining how their candidate will address that issue if elected. Students take turns reading the position papers to their party members and listening to suggestions for revising and expanding. The group's papers become the Official Party Platform. All students have a vested interest in its effectiveness.

#### Day 5—Election Day

##### *Holding a Press Conference*

On this final day, each candidate will read her/his platform to the class who, as "members of the press", are invited to ask questions at the end of each presentation.

After closing statements by the candidates and their running mates, an election by secret ballot takes place. All class members then can write an Exit Slip describing what they had learned from this campaign week.



Dear President,

My name is \_\_\_\_\_. I am \_\_\_\_\_ years old.

I think the most important thing the President can do for American children is:

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SIGNED \_\_\_\_\_

Name of School \_\_\_\_\_

School Address \_\_\_\_\_ City \_\_\_\_\_

State/Zip code \_\_\_\_\_



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## Build a Platform

If you were to run for President, it would be important to be able to say what you believe in. It's important to be able to tell what you think would be good for people, for our country, for our world.

What are some things that you believe are important? Write a few of your ideas down.

I think \_\_\_\_\_

I think \_\_\_\_\_

I think \_\_\_\_\_

I think \_\_\_\_\_

I think \_\_\_\_\_

If you were running for president, each of these beliefs would be called a “plank”, just like a plank of wood. And when you put all of your ideas, or planks, together, you have a “platform”.

Just like a platform made of wooden planks supports you, a platform of ideas supports who you are!



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