

# Theater Workshops

## Introducing Theater

Upstage, downstage, face front. You have decided to include formal acting, blocking, rehearsing, and stage etiquette into your work with youth – but where to begin? This workshop shows how to introduce movement, body positions, use of space, and rehearsal techniques for young actors. Participants will explore how levels, body shapes, placement of furniture and set pieces, and use of props can reveal character relationships, mood, and story elements. Not a director but you want to direct? This workshop sets you off on the right foot.

## Improvisation for Student Performance

*\*Recommended for teachers of students sixth grade and up*

A great bridge between drama and theater is Improvisational Theater where students create their own characters, lines, and often humorous scenes. This 3 hour workshop (or longer course) introduces participants to the world of Chicago Improvisational Theater. Begin by building a character, learn how to link activities into dramatic action, and work with conflict and story elements to create a short 2-3 minute improvisational scene with a partner or team. These simple activities can be used immediately in the classroom to help students create performance ready work they write themselves. Perfect for integrating with areas of the curriculum, applying teamwork skills, or improving concentration and listening skills. When the work is ready, it can be shared in public performances. A great way to initiate theater before the written script is introduced.

## Working with Scripts

Moving from improvised drama into scripted theater can be challenging and calls for a new set of skills. Memorization techniques, working with subtext, improving actors' listening and observing skills, addressing monologue, dialogue, and internal monologue are all introduced. Text analysis focusing on how to uncover character traits and dramatic action is woven throughout the session. Come away with techniques to improve young actors' comfort with learning lines and building character.

## Playwrights in the Making

Do you have young actors ready to write their own scripts? This workshop presents some basic script elements and a step-by-step process for playwriting. Participants begin with a review of dramatic elements, determine a simple idea for a script, review the considerations for honing that idea, and participate in an "age appropriate" activity for creating dialogue and scene work. Participants discuss the process and how to transfer that experience to young playwrights. When requesting this workshop, it is best to target a specific age range (e.g. elementary, middle school, or high school) for maximum effectiveness.

## Devising Theater

This workshop teaches you how to build a student created production through improvisation – no script necessary! Devising theater is a method by which students and teacher collaborate to create an original play. Through this workshop, you will explore the I.F. (Improvisational Framework) process as one way to build a student production. Learn effective blocking techniques for staging your productions, review setting rehearsal agendas, and discuss ways to manage time and run efficient rehearsals with young people.

**Note:** Creative Directions is available to conduct workshops for students (sixth grade and up) in the methods outlined above. Longer residencies can be arranged.