



## KIDS IN CHARGE

The Voice & Vision of America's  
Children

# KIDS IN CHARGE

## The Concept

- Child's Play is dedicated to adapting and performing stories and poems written by children.
- Under the banner, 'Kids in Charge', we will travel to schools across the country performing a show based on children's ideas about responsibility and civic duties, encouraging them to identify social issues, whether it be on their school playground or within their own community.
- Be it for Mayor, Governor, Senator, Alderman, or even their own School Principal, 'Kids in Charge' asks children to think about public affairs and participate actively in the democratic process.

## The Need

- Our fore bearers fought for the rights that Americans enjoy today. To preserve our civil rights, young Americans need to realize the part they must play and the characteristics they should embody; such as honesty, integrity and commitment.
- The preservation of civil rights and liberties is directly linked to performed responsibilities.
- Most students acknowledge the importance of voting and campaigning in public elections, but they also tend to express low levels of political interest and fail to see that their political actions make a difference.
- Young Americans clearly need to become more attuned to their responsibilities as citizens of a democratic society.
- Parents and teachers must in concert to strengthen the desire and capacity of children to fulfill civic obligations.
- Early education is a key element to the process.

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## The execution

- To support our belief that children are in charge of the creative process, we have developed our latest project, 'Kids in Charge.'
- This program is designed to give voice to children's feelings about the challenges America and politicians face, and will raise issues of leadership, responsibility and civic duties.
- Through presentations of speeches, campaigns and mock conferences, 'Kids in Charge' will address civic responsibility and how to deal with social problems in an informed, committed, positive and creative manner.
- By addressing neighborhood problems, young people can explore the role and structure of the governing body that applies to their own lives – local government.
- A letter-writing campaign to their leaders, senators, representatives will be a major part of this project, encouraging children to ask questions and say, "Educate Us!" as they look at social issues and problems within their own neighborhoods and communities.
- Writing is about self expression and individuality, and students through the 'Kids in Charge' program will be writing about their own issues and what matters to them as young Americans.



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## About Kids in Charge

- Kids in Charge is a classroom exercise, a creative writing experience and an imaginative stage presentation.
- It is a program designed to ignite children's interest in one of the most important aspects of our democratic society – local government.
- Kids in Charge is a multi-faceted theatrical and educational program developed by Child's Play Touring Theatre to propel American children into election debates and provide a stage for their ideas to be heard.

Designed for elementary school children, **Kids in Charge:**

- Encourages and enables students to express their own ideas about today's issues through writing exercises.
- Transforms selected writings into professional stage productions
- Performs the play nation-wide, encouraging young people to tackle the issues that challenge our nation.

# KIDS SAY “IF I WAS IN CHARGE .....

“I would make a law not to smoke.... Because I don’t want beautiful people to throw their life away.“

-Danielle Cranin (Freehold, NJ)

”Everybody says you have to be 16 to drive. If 16 year old’s can drive, why cant 6 year olds.”

-Scott Campana (LaGrange, IL)

“Everyone would live to age two-thousand four.”

-Jeff Zahos (Kansas City, MO)

”Instead of guns shooting bullets it would shoot roses.”

-Katie Kriendler (Chappaqua, NY)

“I would never change the flag because I think its beautiful with all those stars.”

-Omar Ceballos (Melrose Park, IL)

“I’d try to make people respect who they are even if the other people think they are different.”

-Kourtney Simons (Chappaqua, NY)

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## The History

- Since 1987, Child's Play has been working with young writers across the country to involve them in the election process. More than 50,000 children have submitted stories, poems, rap songs, campaign speeches and essays, and we scheduled our programming to run simultaneously alongside the '88, '92 and '96 Presidential elections.
- When Child's Play carries out it's programming, students commit their time and their creativity to the process, and are rewarded for their perseverance and discipline by a unique final performance.



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### The History contd.

- During our acting programs we also see the profound effects on many children who experience the complexities of being an ensemble member for the first time. They learn responsibility, to the group as well as to themselves, and they develop their communication skills when they are encouraged to share their ideas in a safe, supportive environment.
- The Young Actors find a new sense of self-esteem and develop a cooperative team spirit and respect for one another, which then crosses over into other areas of their lives, both in and out of school.

