

Childs Play Touring Theater Timeline

(1978 - 1990)

- 1978** - Victor Podagrosi stages children's writings.
- 1979** - First performance as Child's Play Touring Theatre.
- 1980** - Child's Play Touring Theatre incorporates as a not-for-profit tax-exempt organization.
- 1981** - Broadcasts two 30-minute shows on local television and creates full-time touring season.
- 1982** - Begins touring full-time and moves to Chicago.
- 1983** - Represents the U.S. at The International Children's Festival at Wolftrap. In partnership with the Chicago Board of Education, regulars on WBEZ-FM's children's radio program, AudioJam.
- 1984** - Receives NEA Grant, is nominated for an award (cable TV's Emmy) and performs at Ravinia.
- 1985** - Awarded the Illinois Alliance of Arts in Education for a pilot five week Writing and Theatre Company-in-Residence in Springfield, Illinois.
- 1986** - Initiates the Chicago Young Writer's Project. First appearance on the Bozo Show. Commissioned by Field Museum to create an "alldinosaur" show.
- 1987** - Performs at the Producers Association of Children's Theatres Showcase in New York. Performs at the national conference of the American Association of Theatre for Youth.
- 1988** - Expands to two full-time touring companies. Produces "Kids for President!" at the Goodman Studio. Only American children's theatre invited to perform at the first New York International Festival of the Arts.
- 1989** - Return engagement at the Brooklyn Academy of Music and Broadway debut. Co-founds Chicago Alliance of Professional Performing Artists for Children (CAPPAC).
- 1990** - Child's Play spans the continent with performances from Florida to Alaska.



(1991 - 2000)

1991– Expands Chicago Young Writer's Project to include additional educational activities.

1992– Embarks on major tour of new election year production "Kids for President!"

1993- Reinforces commitment to Chicago by forming partnership with other not-for-profit organizations. Selected to the Western State Arts Federation 93-95 Touring Roster.
- Invited by John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation to participate in Strategic Planning Initiative. Undertakes first major tour of western states.

1994- A record breaking year reaching an audience of over 2.5 million children and adults! First theatre summer camp in cooperation with the Chicago Park District.

1995- "Kids for President!" kicks off nationwide tour in New Hampshire. Local Victor Award created in honor of founder, Victor Podagrosi. Child's Play performs at the Chicago Theatre for Hillary Clinton's book signing. Performs at Navy Pier.

1996– Receives Emmy Award for "Kids for President!" PSA co-produced with WPWR-TV. International Victor Award created. Microsoft sponsors first online story submission. Purdue University invites Child's Play to partner with them on "Bridging the Centuries" Millennium Project.

1997- Child's Play Youth Theatre opens doors for public programming. Invited to be an official host of the Kellogg Youth Development Seminar. Conducted residency through the Annenberg Project.

1998- Educational Activities boom. "Bridging the Centuries" Millennium Project continues. Program expands under the name "Writes of Passage" and finds new collaborators with Pritzker School and Field Museum, resulting in an intergenerational and multi-media program called "Changing Voices." Develops a violence prevention program for the Cook County State's Attorney's office. Develops a three-year program for Byrd Academy through a grant from Disney Foundation.

1990 - Child's Play spans the continent with performances from Florida to Alaska.

2000 – Performs stories from the Millennium Project on a nationwide tour. Creates a full-time local residence company. Works with two Chicago Arts Magnet Schools under a grant from Kraft to assist educators developing programs addressing newly released Fine Arts Standards in Illinois schools.



(2001 - 2010)

2001 – Develops “WOW! (Writing our World)” program in partnership with Poverty Fighters. First performance of “The Christmas That Almost Wasn’t” and summer camp at the Goodman.



2002- Premieres “WOW!” at the Goodman and returns with Christmas show in December. Begins after-school programming at the Menomonee Club. Co-founds Performing Artists Reaching Today’s Youth (PARTY).

2003– Completes fourth year of the violence prevention initiative “Do the Write Thing” with the Cook County State’s Attorney’s office. Launches new performance, “Dragons Don’t Sing Opera.”

2004– Partners with Kraft, FACETS Multimedia and Hubbard Street Dance to bring special themed initiatives to several Chicago Public Schools.

2005– Invited to Auditorium Theatre to create the “Hands Together, Heart to Art” summer camp for children who have experienced the death of one or both parents. Program became a finalist in the NCASS Creative and Innovative Awards Program. Premieres “The Creepy Crawly Show.”



2006– Develops “Kids in Charge” program and holds a “Kids in Charge” themed summer camp at DePaul. Returns to Auditorium Theatre with “Hands Together, Heart to Art.”

2007– Prepares “Kids for President!” 2008 tour. Performs at Ravinia’s Family Day. Develops after school program for the University of Chicago Lab School.

2008– Appears on stage at Ravinia with “Kids for President!” Invited by the Office of Education to participate in the planning process of “The Arts Blue Print” for Chicago Public Schools.

2009– Adds new show “The Great Green Adventures of R Man & Earth Kid” to repertory.

2010– Celebrates 30 years as a not-for-profit. Launches new website. Create Peace of the Puzzle.



(2011 - 2020)

2011- Premieres “Global Energy the Musical!”
Commissioned to create a Smoking Prevention Show.
Conducts No Child Left Behind CPS Summer camp.

2012- Recreates “Kids for President;” Mayor Rahm Emanuel was Honorary Chair of our benefit: Taproot project Jeff Richmond honored at benefit; 2 week summer camp in Irving Texas. Sandy super storm cancels our fall tour.

2013- The big move to new studio; Mississippi high school summer camp; “What me a Scientist” program; Anita Alvarez, States Attorney, receives the Victor award; two week national Christmas tour; the past booking sponsors return.

2014- Centralia, Il residency; Bushnell Theatre in Hartford, Ct for their Language Arts Festival; the big ugly flood in the studio that damaged costumes, props, letter and photos from the White House and many more historical records; Adam McKay, film director, was honored at the yearly benefit.

2015- Plans in progress to develop local Child’s Play Touring Theatres in various communities throughout the U.S. Creates new Peace of the Puzzle workshop and Peace by Piece show partnering with the Mann Theatre in inner city schools in Philadelphia. Moves to new professional studio spaces. Charles Petering receives Victor award at the 20th Anniversary of Victor’s passing.

2016- New touring team recreates a new version of Kids for President (KFP). New local work includes performing KFP at The By the Hand club. After school class at Lab school continues to grow. Bob Falls, Artistic Director of the Goodman Theatre honors us with a Victor Award. New booking agency-Siegel Arts Management takes us on their roster.



2017- Irish American Heritage Center in Chicago, where we the celebrated our 35th anniversary in Chicago and our Peace initiative. Honorees included Kevin Coval, creator of Louder than a Bomb; Nora Brooks Blakely; Jake Yaeger; Shari Schlachter and Jane Monzures-TV and radio host. First NYC team created for spring Our First single record of many released. Ben Vereen joins Board-as Honorary Chair!



2018- September 24, 2018 date to celebrate the 40th Anniversary of our Founding. We have released our first full album called “Child’s Play Greatest Hits, Vol. 1” with many of our hit songs throughout the years. The 40th Anniversary video was created by Gigi Faraci Harris, with sensational video footage spanning all the way back to the beginning of Child’s Play Touring Theatre.

2019- Created and launched a new program called “Kids In Charge” traveling 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. In the fall, Tina Faye and Jeff Richmond gave a generous donation.



2020– Anonymous donations of unrestricted funds for general operations to keep fill the gap while we dealt with Covid-19 pandemic.

2021- In the beginning of the year our website was updated and redesign to showcase our programs and productions.

