

# First Kids

## Enrichment Works

### Our Mission

Enrichment Works creates and presents theater to inspire learning.

## Classroom Connections

### Synopsis

Lost in the White House, a student tries to reconnect with her group, while her tour guide tries desperately to find her. In a series of weird near misses, each encounters presidential offspring, including Quentin and Alice Roosevelt, Tad Lincoln, Amy Carter, Charles Francis Adams and Linda Bird Johnson. What began as a boring school assignment becomes a magical journey into American history, exploring the lives of children thrust into the public spotlight, and proving that “first kids are kids first.”



Diana Spieller and  
Doug Harvey

### About the Artists

**Diana Spieller** (actor) Diana's recent credits include "Angie" in *Orange is the New Musical* at the Los Angeles Theatre Center and featured performances in short films such as *Mack and Beth*, *Baked*, and *Special Delivery*. Diana has a BA in musical theatre from Point Park University.

**Doug Harvey** (actor) Doug trained at NYU's Tisch School of the Arts, at the Stella Adler Studio, and RADA in London. Southern California theater roles include: Tom Canty in *The Prince & the Pauper* at Mainstreet Theater Company and Sal from *Wing on Wing* at the Walt Disney Concert Hall with the LA Philharmonic. Other productions: *The Musical Adventures of Flat Stanley* (Mainstreet), *Andronicus* (Coourage Theatre Company), and *Pericles, Prince of Tyre* (A Noise Within).

**Paul Kreppel** (director) is a 2007 Tony Award winner best know for his television acting work. He is an honored Alum of Emerson College an began his career in 1968 with the Boston Improvisational theatre group, "The Proposition." TV audiences remember him best as Sonny Mann, the piano player on the 80s comedy *It's A Living*. Mr. Kreppel with Ms. Murphy Cross, produced, created and directed the Tony winning *Jay Johnson: The Two & Only!* In the musical *Wicked*, he played the Wizard of Oz on the 2nd National Tour.

**Abraham Tetenbaum** (playwright, lyricist) holds a BS from the Medill School of Journalism at Northwestern University and an MFA in Playwriting from the University of Minnesota. Mr. Tetenbaum has written for Broadway (“Crazy He Calls Me”) and network television (“Sisters”).

**Norman Berman** (composer) is a former resident composer of A Noise Within Theater in Glendale. He composed *Strider* on Broadway and conceived and directed *Unsung Cole*, a musical revue. Previous Enrichment Works scores include *Food for Thought*, *A Doggone Musical* and *The Money Mon\$ter*.

## Discussion and Writing Questions

- Imagine that one of your parents has become President of the United States. What would it be like for you to live in the White House? How would your life change and how would it be the same?
- What were some of the different feelings that the first kids – Quentin Roosevelt, Amy Carter, Charles Francis Adams, Alice Roosevelt, Tad Lincoln, and Linda Bird Johnson – experienced? Why do you think they felt that way?
- Pretend you are on a field trip in the White House. If you could sneak away from the tour group, where would you want to go? The Oval Office, someone's bedroom, the president's bathroom?
- What advice would you give to future first kids, having "met" a few kids in this play?

## Vocabulary Words

Constitution  
Coronation  
Generation  
Legacy  
Pentagon  
Pranks  
Revolution  
Scandalous

## Project Ideas

- Write a letter to the first children of today: Malia and Sasha Obama. What would you like to ask them about their lives, and what would you share with them?
- Create and draw a cartoon story about a day in the life of the first children in the White House – starring you and your siblings, classmates or best friends.
- Design and fill out a graphic organizer of the different experiences as told by the first children that Madison met in the play. Compare and contrast their stories.
- Research other notable first children. Choose one of your favorites and prepare a small skit to share with the class about their life.

## Resources

### Websites

- <http://www.whitehousehistory.org/teacher-resources/first-kids> - White House Historical Association Teacher's Resource about First Kids
- <https://www.whitehouse.gov/1600/presidents> - Information about each President
- <http://www.americanhistory.si.edu/presidency/home.html> - The American Presidency for kids, includes Teacher Materials and lesson plans
- <http://www.nationalgeographic.com/whitehouse/whhome.html> - National Geographic's Inside the White House interactive website
- <http://kids.nationalgeographic.com/explore/history/presidential-pets/#bo-white-house.jpg> – National Geographic's Presidential Pets

### Booklist

- [The White House Kids: The Perks, Pleasures, Problems and Pratfalls of the Presidents' Children](#) by Joe Rhatigan (grades 3-7)
- [First Kids](#) by Noah McCullough
- [First Kids \(Step into Reading\)](#) by Gibbs Davis
- [What's It Like to Be the President's Kid?](#) By Kathleen Connors (grades 2-5)

## Contact Us

### Enrichment Works

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## Standards and Learning

Enrichment Works is a theater company whose productions are designed to inspire children to learn by creating an emotional connection to educational subjects. “First Kids” uses the Theater Content Standards of California to provide a positive theatrical experience. The performers interact with students in musical ways using a variety of characters. The actors ask them questions about the topic of the play, inviting students to join in with specific dance moves and vocalizations.

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## Visual and Performing Arts Connections

### 1.0 Artistic Perception

Students process, analyze and respond to sensory information through language and skills unique to theatre. They learn theatrical vocabulary such as playwright, conflict, setting, script, etc. They analyze the elements of First Kids by identifying the who, what, when, where and why of the story. Students are engaged through direct address by the actor, scenery, costumes, and stylized movement.

### 2.0 Creative Expression

In First Kids, students learn about the children of the presidents who lived in the White House and hear different stories from each. Their creativity is engaged as they encounter myriad children who have individual ideas about life in the spotlight. Students help create, perform and participate in the performance through interaction with the actor. The entire audience participates at key points during the play to create different moods.

### 3.0 Historical and Cultural Context

First Kids helps students understand the role of theater. They take part as both spectator and participant as the story unfolds. They learn about different United States Presidents and their families, and develop an understanding of different time periods throughout White House history. The theatre tradition of improvisation is utilized, allowing students to witness and respond to the actor’s guidance as he directs them to participate in the play with dialogue and action.

### 4.0 Aesthetic Valuing

Valuing Audience interaction throughout the play allows students to maintain a high level of emotional connection to the first children. Following the play, students participate in a Question and Answer session where they can criticize and query the actors/characters about the content of the play or the artistic choices made in this production. Students are given the opportunity to express how they felt as a participating impromptu actor during the performance. Post-performance activities provided through study guides are available to help students understand the character’s journey and events in the play.

### 5.0 Connections, Relationship, Applications

Activities will be provided through Classroom Connection guides in order to help them encourage students to connect what is learned in First Kids to other subject areas. Through hands-on approaches, including improvisation and dramatization, students can explore concepts in other subject areas (e.g. United States history and political structure, family values) to learn how theatre can communicate content from other sources. Activities encourage students to learn more about the role of an actor, director and writer, and to use their imaginations and creativity to create their own tales.