As part of DCT’s mission to integrate the arts into classroom academics, the *Behind the Curtain Resource Guide* is intended to provide helpful information for the teacher and student to use before and after attending a performance. The activities presented in this guide are suggested to stimulate lively responses and multi-sensory explorations of concepts in order to use the theatrical event as a vehicle for cross-cultural and language arts learning.

Please use our suggestions as springboards to lead your students into meaningful, dynamic learning; extending the dramatic experience of the play.
DALLAS CHILDREN’S THEATER, one of the top five family theaters in the nation, serves over 250,000 young people from 196 zip codes, 146 cities and 78 counties and 32 states each year through its main stage productions, touring, educational programming and outreach activities. Since its opening in 1984, this award-winning theater has existed to create challenging, inspiring and entertaining theater, which communicates vital messages to our youth and promotes an early appreciation for literature and the performing arts. As the only major organization in Dallas focusing on theater for youth and families, DCT produces literary classics, original scripts, folk tales, myths, fantasies and contemporary dramas that foster multicultural understanding, confront topical issues and celebrate the human spirit.

DCT is committed to the integration of creative arts into the teaching strategies of academic core curriculum and educating through the arts. Techniques utilized by DCT artists/teachers are based upon the approach developed in The Integration of Abilities and Making Sense with Five Senses, by Paul Baker, Ph.D.

DCT founder and Executive Artistic Director, Robyn Flatt defines the artistic mission and oversees the operations of the organization, consisting of twenty-five full time staff members and more than 200 actors, designers, theater artists and educators.

See pages 17 for the TEKS that your field trip to Dallas Children’s Theater satisfies!

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CURTAINS UP ON PUTTING A PERFORMANCE TOGETHER

Every DCT performance you see is the result of many people working together to create a play. You see the cast perform on stage, but there are people you do not see who help before, during, and after every production.

The DIRECTOR
Determines the overall look of the performance.
Guides the actors in stage movement and character interpretation.
Works with designers to plan the lights and sounds, scenery, costumes and make-up, and stage actions.

The DESIGNERS
Plan the lights, scenery, costumes, make-up, sound, and actions to help bring the director’s vision to life.
There are also designers who work to create the posters, advertisements, programs and other media for the performance.

The STAGE MANAGER
Before the performance, creates a cue sheet to guide the crew in getting things on and off the stage during the performances. During the performance, uses this cue sheet to direct people and things on and off the stage.

The CREW
Builds and operates the scenery, costumes, props, and light and sound during the performance.

The CAST
Performs and presents the story to the audience.

The AUDIENCE
That’s right! There can be no performance without you- the audience. The role of the audience is unique because you experience the entertainment with the performers and backstage crew. You are a collaborator in the performance, and it is important to learn your role so you can join all the people who work to create this Dallas Children’s Theater production.
CURTAINS UP ON THE ROLE OF THE AUDIENCE

Watching a play is different from watching television or a sporting event. When you watch T.V., you may leave the room or talk. At a sporting event you might cheer and shout and discuss what you’re seeing. Your role as a member of the audience in a play means you must watch and listen carefully because:

• You need to concentrate on what the actors are saying.
• The actors are affected by your behavior. Talking and moving around can make it difficult for them to concentrate on their roles.
• Extra noises and movement can distract other audience members.

Are you ready for your role in this performance?
Check the box next to the statements that describe proper etiquette for an audience member during the performance.

☐ Try your best to remain in your seat once the performance has begun.
☐ Share your thoughts out loud with those sitting near you.
☐ Wave and call out to the actors on stage.
☐ Sit on your knees or stand near your seat.
☐ Bring snacks and gum to enjoy during the show.
☐ Reward the cast and crew with applause when you like a song or dance and at the end of the show.
☐ Arrive on time so that you do not miss anything or disturb other audience members while you are being seated.
☐ Keep all hands and feet and items out of the aisles during the performance.
CURTAINS UP AFTER THE PERFORMANCE

Attending a play is an experience unlike any other. Because a play is presented live, it provides a unique opportunity to experience a story as it happens. Dallas Children's Theater brings stories to life through its performances. Many people are involved in the process. Playwrights adapt the stories you read in order to bring them off the page and onto the stage. Designers and technicians create lighting effects so that you can feel the mood of a scene. Carpenters build the scenery and make the place of the story become a real place, while costumers and make-up designers can turn actors into the characters you meet in the stories. Directors help actors bring the story to life before your very eyes. All of these things make seeing a play very different from television, videos, computer games, or CDs and audiobooks of stories.

Hold a class discussion when you return from the performance. Ask students the following questions and allow them to write or draw pictures of their experience at DCT.

1. What was the first thing you noticed when you entered the theater? What did you notice first on the stage?
2. What about the set? Draw or tell about things you remember. Did the set change during the play? How was it moved or changed? Was there any space besides the stage where the action took place?
3. How did the lights set the mood of the play? How did they change throughout? What do you think “house lights” are? How do they differ from stage lights? Did you notice different areas of lighting?
4. What did you think about the costumes? Do you think they fit the story? What things do you think the costume designers had to consider before creating the costumes?
5. Was there music in the play? How did it add to the performance?
6. What about the actors? Do you think they were able to bring the characters to life? Did you feel caught up in the story? What things do you think the actors had to work on in order to make you believe they were the characters?

- Draw a picture of what the audience might look like from the stage. Consider your work from the viewpoint of the actors on stage. How might things look from where they stand?
- Write a letter to a cast member telling them what you liked about their character.
- Write how you think it might feel to be one of the actors. Are the actors aware of the audience? How might they feel about the reactions of the audience today? How would you feel before the play began? What about after the show ends?
- Which job would you like to try? Actor, Director, Lighting or Sound Crew Member, Stage Manager, Set Designer, Costume Designer, or another role? What skills might you need to complete your job?
- Choose a favorite story and draw or use the computer to create a program cover design for a theatrical adaptation of your story.
Puppets exist in a wide variety of types, and may be two- or three-dimensional. They vary in size from finger puppets to larger than life-size, and range from simplest shapes to elaborately articulated figures.

The origins of puppetry are veiled in antiquity, but it is known that primitive peoples made puppets long before the invention of writing. Puppets probably served a function in the ritual magic practices by early man. Extensive use of puppetry for religious purposes is recorded in every subsequent civilization.

For centuries puppetry was effectively utilized in the church, but gradually some of the comic characters and scenes, originally introduced to lighten the miracle plays, got out of hand and became offensively boisterous and vulgar. Eventually puppets were totally expelled from the church. Henceforth, the art of puppetry was practiced in the streets, fairgrounds, inns, and later, when it had gained status again, in theaters of its own. In the present day it has returned to some churches. Whatever the setting, audiences have always responded wholeheartedly to those qualities unique to the art.

When operated with skill and artistry, puppets can convey with great intensity every emotion known to humankind, distilling the essence of feelings common to everyone. Puppets eloquently express the gamut of dramatic styles, from slapstick and riotous comedy to heart rending pathos and soul wrenching drama.
CURTAINS UP ON KATHY BURKS THEATRE OF PUPPETRY ARTS

Kathy Burks Theatre of Puppetry Arts, a professional company, is the oldest resident puppet theatre in the southwest. Established in 1973 as Kathy Burks Marionettes, and performing continuously since that time, the troupe has provided family entertainment for audiences in the Dallas/Ft. Worth Metroplex and throughout the United States.

At its inception the company performed exclusively with the antique marionettes which belong to Kathy Burks. Formerly owned and toured throughout the world by The Sue Hastings Company, of New York City, this is one of the largest collections of antique marionettes in the country, consisting of approximately 1,000 unique figures from the 1920’s and ’30’s. These antiques proved too fragile, however, to withstand the rigors of continual performance. They currently make their home at Dallas Children’s Theater, where they appear in various exhibits celebrating the power of Drama, past and present. Now the public may enjoy both the beauty and the history of these incredible puppets.

With the retirement of the Hastings collection, Kathy Burks Marionettes began to design and construct new marionettes for performance, and to incorporate other styles of puppetry into its presentations. At last the company name seemed a misnomer, and in 1992 Kathy Burks Marionettes became Kathy Burks Theatre of Puppetry Arts, one of the few puppet theatres in the country to perform using all styles of puppetry, including traditional bridge and cabaret marionettes, hand puppets, shadow puppets, and Black Theatre rod puppets. Performance material ranges from adaptations of classic stories and fairy tales, to scripts based on original themes, and to puppet theatre interpretations of musical masterpieces such as The Nutcracker, Til Eulenspiegel, and Carnival Of The Animals. The company has also collaborated with Dallas Children’s Theater in live productions.

Although entertainment is the troupe’s primary goal, educational aims are inextricably interwoven. Both the founder of the company and the playwright/composer possess degrees in education.

Each member of the company is a dedicated artist with an extensive background in various theatre arts. Skills in set and costume design, acting, directing, dance, lighting design, playwrighting, and musical composition all combine with expertise in puppet manipulation to produce a complete theatrical company which specializes in elaborate puppet productions.
CURTAINS UP ON THE ADAPTATION

An adaptation is a change made in something so that it can fit a new use. This performance of The Tale of Peter Rabbit, is an adaptation of the book written by Beatrix Potter, which is meant to be read, into a play, which is meant to be performed and viewed.

Consider these questions for discussion before you attend the DCT production:

- What kinds of things did the authors have to consider in writing a script of the story?
- Do you think the performance will be shorter or longer than a book version of the tale?
- What will the characters look like? Will they match illustrations you might have seen? What differences can you expect?
- What about the story? What changes might you expect in adapting it for the stage? Why would these changes be necessary?

After the performance, consider these questions:

- Were there any characters or events that were in the book but not in the play? Why do you think these choices were made?
- Did the changes make the story stronger or was it weaker because of them?
- What do you think the set and costume designers need to consider when bringing the book to the stage?
  - What things helped to tell the story on stage?

Give it a try:
- Use the compare and contrast template on the next page to illustrate the similarities and differences between the book and DCT’s performance of The Tale of Peter Rabbit

CURTAINS UP ON BEATRIX POTTER

BEATRIX POTTER was born in South Kensington, London, England in 1866. She was educated at home by a governess and as an only child had very little contact with other people. However, she did have many animals which she kept as pets to study and draw. Beatrix visited Scotland on holiday with her parents in an area known as the Lake District. It is here that her love for nature and it’s beauty became ingrained. One of her parents’ visitors during this time later became one of the founders of the National Trust, and his views on preserving nature had a strong impact on Beatrix. She later left fourteen farms and 4000 acres of land to the National Trust along with her flocks of sheep. Beatrix made many sketches and drawings of the landscape and the animals she saw and made them into greeting cards when she was back in London. It was in 1902 that her first book, The Tale of Peter Rabbit was published. Beatrix Potter went on to write many more books for children and her stories and illustrations have become much beloved by many generations.
CURTAINS UP ON ART

PETER RABBIT POP-UP PUPPET

Make your own Flopsy, Mopsy, Cottontail or Peter puppet that can pop in and out of the rabbit hole.

You will need:
Scissors
Brown or green cardboard or sturdy cardstock
Fabric or paper
Glue (Strong craft or fabric glue is recommended)
Dowel
Styrofoam egg or ball
Knee-high stocking
Rubber band
Paint
Felt
Cotton balls
Ribbon or rick rack
Cone template (page 11)
Puppet body template (page 11)

Here’s how:
• Use the cone template to trace the pattern on to sturdy cardstock.
  You can use green or brown to signify the rabbit hole.

• Cut out the cardstock cone with scissors. Younger children may need help.

• Match A to B and tape the cone along the straight edges.

• Carefully push one end of a dowel into a Styrofoam egg or ball that fits easily inside the cone.

• Cover the egg with a knee-high stocking. Use a rubber band to secure the stocking under the egg and against the dowel.

• Use felt or paper shapes and glue them on to the ball to create facial features. Be creative! Try yarn or string for whiskers and buttons for eyes or a nose. Cut ears from felt, craft foam, or construction paper and attach them with glue or straight pins.

• Use the puppet body template to cut two from light felt or medium weight fabric. Glue the pieces together with tacky glue or fabric glue. Allow time for drying.

• Attach the bottom edge of the puppet body to the top of the cone with tacky glue.

• Push the dowel down through the hole in the bottom of the cone.

• Attach the neck edge of the puppet body to the dowel near the ball with a strong rubber band.

• Glue on a cotton ball for a tail and some ribbon or rick rack around the cone where the fabric meets it and VOILA!

  Hold the cylinder in one hand, and hold the dowel (below the cylinder) in the other to make your rabbit pop in and out of his hole!
CURTAINS UP ON RYTHMN AND MOVEMENT

“BUNNY HOP” HOPPING

You will need:
“Bunny Hop” music-most children’s movement CDs have some version of it
A large space for hopping

Teach the students the “Bunny Hop” rhythm of hop- hop- hop, hop, hop and give them opportunity to practice hopping with the beat.

Play the music and let your children hop to their heart’s desire.

Try varying the game by:
Stopping and starting the music in a freeze game manner
Encouraging students to hop as bunnies who are afraid of Mr. Macgregor, tired bunnies, happy bunnies or use any manner of other emotions
Providing spots or numbers on the floor to and from which the students must hop

CURTAINS UP ON READING

For further reading try these:

The Complete Adventures of Peter Rabbit by Beatrix Potter
Ultimate Peter Rabbit by Camilla Hallinan
At Home with Beatrix Potter: The Creator of Peter Rabbit by Susan Denyer

For more information about Beatrix Potter, try these:

http://www.visitcumbria.com/bpotter.htm
http://www.beatrixpottersociety.org.uk/
http://www.ortakales.com/illustrators/Potter.html
CURTAINS UP ON SCIENCE

A TABLE TOP GARDEN

You will need:
Gallon plastic milk containers with the top cut off
Butcher paper or newspaper to cover your work space
Colored pencils
Gravel
Plain index cards
Seed packets with seeds- radish, basil, parsley, carrot, and turnips grow easily
Soil
Craft sticks
Watering can

• Provide each student with a container. Fill the bottom with about 2 inches of gravel and the fill the remainder with soil. Make sure students don't fill too high or the soil will run off when watered.
• Read the seed packets together and allow students to choose the seeds he or she would like to plant. You may need parent volunteers to help students plant the seeds according to the instructions on the particular seed pack. This is a good time to allow students to make their own plant stakes using the index cards and colored pencils.
• Begin each day by placing the “gardens” outside in a sunny area and watering them if needed. Allow each student to tend his own garden.
• Encourage older students to keep a journal of growth and development. Students should be able to watch roots, stems, and leaves develop until their vegetables are ready to harvest.
• Have a garden party and enjoy the fruits of your labors.
CURTAINS UP ON MATH

A “RABBIT FOOD” GRAPH

You will need:
A variety of “rabbit food” for tasting- carrots, tomatoes, pea pods, lettuce, blackberries, currants (or currant jam), and other fresh vegetables. Don’t forget to include some chamomile tea!
A copy of the rabbit food graph template (page 16)

Allow students to taste a variety of “rabbit food” and place tally marks on the graph. Use the information to create bar graphs, scatter graphs, or line graphs telling what foods student’s most liked, which foods were least liked, how the boys’ and girls’ taste varied or ideas your students provide.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Food Tested</th>
<th>Like it</th>
<th>It's o.k.</th>
<th>Dislike it</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

RABBIT FOOD GRAPH

16
117.4 - Theatre, Kindergarten.
   K.5 - Response/evaluation. The student responds to and evaluates theatre and theatrical performances.
   A - Begin to identify appropriate audience behavior.
   D - Observe the performance of artists and identify theatrical vocations.

117.7 - Theatre, Grade 1.
   1.5 - Response/evaluation. The student responds to and evaluates theatre and theatrical performances.
   A - Identify appropriate audience behavior.
   D - Observe the performance of artists and identify theatrical vocations.

117.10 - Theatre, Grade 2.
   2.5 - Response/evaluation. The student responds to and evaluates theatre and theatrical performances.
   A - Identify and apply appropriate audience behavior.
   D - Observe the performance of artists and identify theatrical vocations.

117.13 - Theatre, Grade 3.
   3.5 - Response/evaluation. The student responds to and evaluates theatre and theatrical performances.
   A - Evaluate and apply appropriate audience behavior consistently.
   D - Observe the performance of amateur and professional artists and begin to compare vocations in theatre.