The Theatre Arts project provides many opportunities for speakers and field trips. Brainstorm with children, youth and parents to find possible speakers and web sites. One place to start is www.n4hccs.org/projectsonline.

**Essential Elements of 4-H Youth Development**

Through 4-H, youth know they are cared about and feel a sense of BELONGING; they exercise INDEPENDENCE by using decision-making and action to influence people and events; they develop a sense of MASTERY by learning skills needed in making positive career and life choices; and they experience GENEROSITY by helping others through community service. These elements support the Army Youth Development Components of Belonging, Success, Service and Independence.

**Summary**

Everyone who participates in a Theatre Arts project will learn from it. The curriculum and additional resources provide plenty of information to develop both short-term and long-term activities. Share your experiences with family, friends, and the community - and don’t forget to use your imagination and have fun!
This project is designed to help nurture youthful imaginations. Youth practice and develop the life skills of self-expression, communication, leadership, decision-making, problem-solving, and creative thinking. Through Theatre Arts youth grow into confident, caring individuals while gaining an appreciation for formal and informal theatre.

**Four Fun Activities**

1. **Learning to communicate without words can be an amusing challenge.** Working in pairs, help youth focus on this activity. Practice the activity with a partner; then do it in front of a group to build confidence, teamwork, and have a few laughs. See Mirror, Mirror, Play the Role, page 10.

2. **What we wear can make us feel different? Provide a collection of hats, accessories, and costumes for children/youth to choose from as they create funny characters. See if different costumes make them feel different? Provide a collection of hats, accessories, and costumes for children/youth to choose from as they create funny characters. See if different costumes make them feel differently than when they are themselves. Creating a puppet character and performing a three-scene play is an enjoyable way to experience puppetry. See Bring Your Puppet to Life, Become a Puppeteer, page 22.

3. **If youth think Cranium is fun, then they’ll really like pantomime. Encourage youth to create something out of a big blob of air, then use it without making any sounds. See if others can guess what was made. Youth won’t be speaking, but they will be acting. See The Imaginary Blob Pantomime, Play the Role, page 8.

4. **If you think the activity is fun, then they’ll really like pantomime. Encourage youth to create something out of a big blob of air, then use it without making any sounds. See if others can guess what was made. Youth won’t be speaking, but they will be acting. See The Imaginary Blob Pantomime, Play the Role, page 8.

**Related 4-H Projects**

Youth and adults who enjoy Theatre Arts may consider related projects such as sewing, visual arts, public speaking, and woodworking.

**Life Skills**

“Skills that help an individual to be successful in living a productive and satisfying life” are identified as Life Skills (Hendricks, 1996). Life Skills in this project include decision-making, communicating, leading, and organizing. Although each activity specifically targets only one life skill, youth have the opportunity to practice several.

**Integrating Technology**

Sound and lighting are technical aspects of more complex theatre arts. Consider taping and editing activities, and then transfer them to CD or DVD. The Internet is a good resource for research and planning. Integrate technology through the use of digital and conventional photography to document the dramatic experience. Additional Theatre Arts resources such as fact sheets, games, tips, and links to more websites can be found at www.n4hccs.org.

**Community Service**

Service should be a part of all 4-H projects as well as Army activities. Demonstration of theatre skills provides a great opportunity for youth to entertain at hospitals, care homes, child development centers, and community festivals.

**Character Connection**

Being people of character is always important. Encourage youth to consider all of the roles involved in a successful performance and to be respectful of each one from lighting technician to actor.

Additional character resources can be found at www.4-hmilitarypartnerships.org.

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**Project Goals**

This project is designed to help nurture youthful imaginations. Youth practice and develop the life skills of self-expression, communication, leadership, decision-making, problem-solving, and creative thinking. Through Theatre Arts youth grow into confident, caring individuals while gaining an appreciation for formal and informal theatre.

There are three Activity Guides and a Group Activity Helper’s Guide. The project is designed for grades 4-12 but many of the activities can be adapted for use with children in grades 1-3.

**Project Activity Guides and Target Age Groups**

**Play the Role - Theatre Arts Acting Activities** - creative dramatics and informal drama activities encourage individual expression. Rehearsal and performance are not the goals of this project; the emphasis is on having a creative experience that is fun.

**Become a Puppeteer - Theatre Arts Puppetry Activities** - lets youth express ideas and feelings they may not be able to share otherwise. Spontaneous or scripted, puppetry combines skills learned in the other two guides.

**Set the Stage - Theatre Arts Stagecraft Activities** - participants learn about creating the magic of the stage with makeup, costumes, lighting and sound. Theatre is a lot more than acting.

Experience learning engages children and youth while they learn, share, and grow through their 4-H experiences. The focus is on them as learners with an adult as the coach. First comes the “doing” or exploring. Next, youth share what they did and discuss the experience with their peers. After they’ve identified the skills and knowledge gained, help them determine how to apply these to other situations in their lives.

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