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## **N e w s   R e l e a s e**

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### **Childsplay Awarded Prestigious Grant by U.S. Department of Education**

Tempe, Arizona ..... Childsplay, Arizona's premier theatre for young audiences, has been officially notified that the company has been successful in their application to the **Arts in Education Model Development and Dissemination Grants Program** at the U.S. Department of Education. Through this grant Childsplay has received first-year funding of \$141,088. A total of \$933,628 is possible over the four-year grant period. 100% of program costs will be financed with federal money. Childsplay is the only organization from Arizona to receive this grant.

Childsplay's Arts in Education Model focuses on training teachers to use both drama skills and theatre attendance as teaching tools for other areas of the curriculum. The program will develop a core group of educators who possess the knowledge, skills and motivation to implement Standards-based theatre activities across the curriculum, thereby strengthening integrated arts instruction and improving the academic achievement of their students. These core teachers, in turn, will serve as a sustainable base of knowledge within the school and a resource to their colleagues in future years.

For this grant, Childsplay will partner with the Washington Elementary School District. Washington Elementary School District is the state's largest elementary school district, serving more than 25,300 students at 32 schools. The project will serve 4<sup>th</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> grade classrooms at nine elementary schools during the 2007/08, 2008/09, and 2009/10 school years. "For many years, the students in the Washington Elementary School District have benefited from Childsplay activities and performances. They provide an unparalleled opportunity for our students to engage with the arts in fun, interactive ways. Beyond enjoying the performances, our students

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have shown increased academic achievement as a result of their participation," said Susan J. Cook, Ed.D., Washington School District superintendent. "We are delighted to partner with Childsplay on this grant and look forward to this expanded opportunity to study the benefits of theater integration in the elementary school classroom."

Over the past two school years, Childsplay has implemented this model on a smaller scale in the Washington and Alhambra School Districts through a grant from the Phoenix Office of Arts and Culture. Andalucia Middle School, Orangewood and Roadrunner Elementary Schools have each participated in a teaching residency with a Childsplay actor-teacher.

Presently, Childsplay has contracted with the Arizona Prevention Resource Center at Arizona State University to conduct a scientific evaluation of the program's effect on student and teacher achievement. The U.S. Department of Education grant will fund documentation, evaluation, and dissemination of this model.

"Childsplay has a mission-critical interest in making the arts an essential part of the school curriculum," said Steve Martin, managing director of Childsplay. "Childsplay's staff relies upon the schools as partners in introducing young people to the theatre, and the organization believes that a key component of its commitment to 'instilling in young people an enduring awe, love and respect for the medium' is ensuring their ongoing access to theatre education. Childsplay has discovered over the years that, to truly make the arts a fundamental part of the curriculum, it is essential to provide teachers with the knowledge and skills necessary to carry the arts into every part of the curriculum."

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Childsplay, Inc. is a nonprofit theatre company of professional, adult artists who perform for and teach young audiences and their families. The mission of Childsplay is "to create theatre so strikingly original in form, content or both, that it instills in young people an enduring awe, love and respect for the medium, thus preserving imagination and wonder, the hallmarks of childhood which are keys to the future." For information on Childsplay performances, classes or educational presentations please call 480.350.8101.

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