

Updated January 2025

POSITION ANNOUNCEMENT

Summer Theater Academy Teaching Artist

FIRST STAGE is committed to dismantling structures that may prevent ALL people from applying for employment with us. FIRST STAGE celebrates the richness of our world by cultivating Equity, Diversity, and Inclusivity as they inspire the creativity that nurtures great art, artists, and audiences. FIRST STAGE acknowledges we have been party to supporting oppressive systems in the past and are committed to continuing to prioritize our journey in becoming an anti-racist and fully inclusive organization, and we strongly encourage candidates from historically underrepresented groups to apply.

FIRST STAGE is an equal-opportunity employer. As such, we consider individuals for employment according to their abilities and performance. Employment decisions are made without regard to race, age, religion, color, gender, sexual orientation, national origin, physical or mental disability, marital or veteran status, or any other classification protected by law.

Position: Summer Theater Academy Teaching Artist

Status: Contract, Seasonal

Reports to: Academy Director

Dates: June 16–August 8, 2025

Compensation: \$16.25-17.50/hr

Overview:

First Stage seeks Summer Theater Academy Teaching Artists to facilitate enriching, engaging, and interactive programming for young people of all ages and experience levels. Teaching Artists must believe in First Stage's mission to transform lives through theater and work to create a safe, welcoming, and motivating environment for students, teachers, and parents. Teaching Artists with expertise in disciplines such as Musical Theater, Acting Theory, Shakespeare, Improvisation, Playwriting, Design, Movement, Voice, and Speech are encouraged to apply for 5th-12th grade programs. For K-4 programs, expertise in Story Drama, Playmakers, Voice/Speech, Scene Study, and Musical Theater is desired.

This position requires weekday hours and local travel to one or more of First Stage's Academy locations, including the Milwaukee Youth Arts Center (Milwaukee), Sharon Lynne Wilson Center (Brookfield), Performing Arts and Education Center (Oak Creek), and Concordia University of Wisconsin (Mequon).

RESPONSIBILITIES:

- Develop, document, and submit age- and contextually-appropriate lesson plans based on Academy guideposts.
- Work with the Academy Director, K-4 Grade Manager, and other Teaching Artists to facilitate theater curriculum for students in K5-12th grade.
- Maintain a safe learning environment that supports student well-being, confidence, and personal growth.
- Manage classroom behavior, procedures, and assessments.
- Attend all required meetings and training sessions.
- Facilitate presentations as needed.

QUALIFICATIONS:

- A bachelor's degree in education, theater arts, or a related field is preferred.
- Prior teaching experience and experience creating curriculum, managing a classroom, and writing lesson plans is required.
- Excellent communication skills, along with the ability to adapt communication styles to diverse youth, parent/guardian, and professional populations.
- Ability to pass a background check.
- A commitment to First Stage's philosophy of teaching life skills through stage skills and transforming lives through theater.
- Local travel to First Stage's main campus and satellite locations is required.

To Apply:

Please send a cover letter, resume with your experience, a sample lesson plan, availability between June 16–August 8, 2025, curriculum interests, and location preferences via email to Academy Director, J.T. Backes: jtbackes@firststage.org. No phone calls, please.

ABOUT FIRST STAGE:

First Stage is Milwaukee's premiere non-profit theater for young people and families, annually drawing audiences of more than 135,000 people. First Stage's season includes six Family Series plays and one First Steps show, totaling more than 300 performances annually. The Theater Academy, one of the largest and finest programs of its kind in the nation, teaches "life skills through stage skills" to over 3,000 young people each year. For more information about First Stage, visit www.firststage.org.

Summer Class Descriptions:

Story Drama (K4-1 grade)- Bring exciting tales to life through dramatic play! Young people begin to develop their actor tools of body, voice, and imagination by actively engaging in creative play, all while strengthening their ability to focus, cooperate with others, and solve problems. Themes: *Marvelous Mo Willems, Bluey's Big Adventure, Adventures in the 100 Acre Woods, All Aboard the Magic School Bus, Dragons Love Tacos and Parties, Friends from Every Habitat, Enchanted Ever After, Outer Space and the Stars!*

Playmakers (1-2 grade)- Young actors will go on a new adventure each week as they utilize creative thinking as a group to further develop their beginning acting skills. Students will work as a group to pull inspiration from popular themes, create their own stories, and act them out together! *Villains in Disguise, Mysteries of the Smurf Forest, Dog Man: Bark of the Beast, Chief Bogo's Recruits, Galactic Guardians, Marvel Multiverse Madness, Dinosaur Park: The Lost World, Heihei and Pua's Island Antics.*

Scene Study (3-4 grade)- Dive into a script while you put your acting skills to work bringing the characters on the page to life on the stage.

Movement/Voice (3-12 grade)-Use of speaking techniques increases relaxation, resonance, articulation and projection. Use of movement techniques—including mime, dance, circus and combat—enhances balance, agility, stage presence, awareness and focus.

Musical Theater (3-12 grade)- Increase versatility and work on new vocal and dance techniques while exploring the art of telling stories through words, music, and movement.

Acting Theory (5-12 grade)- Explore characters, relationships, action and text while developing overall acting skills and confidence.

Improvisation (5-12 grade)- Use of character and scene improvisational exercises develop expressiveness, spontaneity, effective partnering and honesty on stage.

Shakespeare (5-12 grade)- Students explore text, character and styles in scenes and monologues from Shakespeare.