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Dear Reader,

Thank you for your interest in The Marilyn Bianchi Kids’ Playwriting Festival (MBKPF)! Since 1979 the Festival has been an integral part of Dobama Theatre’s mission to provide educational outreach programming. Our goal is to provide a platform for children to express their thoughts, hopes, dreams and creativity through the writing of original plays. This guide will provide you with all you need to know to help your young artist(s) get started, including:

* Festival Rules and Dates
* Suggestions for Getting Started
* Application Checklist
* Festival Entry Form

If you have any questions, please contact me at [youngplaywrights@dobama.org](mailto:youngplaywrights@dobama.org).

Sincerely,

Carrie Williams

Education Associate

Dobama Theatre

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**IMPORTANT DATES**

* Play submissions are due on **March 1, 2019**.
* Winners will be announced on **April 8, 2019**.
* The 41th Annual Marilyn Bianchi Kids’ Playwriting Festival performances will take place **June 7-9, 2019**.

**HOW DOES IT WORK?**

The MBKPF is the oldest children’s playwriting festival in the United States and the only event of its kind in Northeast Ohio. Hundreds of plays are submitted by students of all ages every year. Here are some of the details…

* Any Northeast Ohio student in grades 1-12 is eligible to write and submit a play, whether home-schooled or attending a public, private or charter school.
* Plays must be the original work of the student who is submitting it. **No collaborations, adaptations, or copying situations or characters from movies, TV, books, video games or other plays.**
* The play may be any genre: comedy, drama, mystery, fantasy – wherever your imagination leads!
* Every play is read and scored by at least three judges, all of whom have experience in some form of theatre, education, and/or writing.
* Between 8-12 high scoring plays are selected for production on Dobama’s stage for the Festival performances in June. While there is no set number of total winners, there will be winners at the elementary, junior high, and high school levels. Not all winning plays will be produced as part of the Festival, but all winning playwrights receive the same prize package.
* Submitted plays should be **no longer than 10 minutes when read aloud**.
* Reader judges award points on the basis of imagination and human values as much as playwriting skills. The age and grade of each playwright will be taken into consideration by the judges.

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**TIPS FOR GETTING STARTED**

Plays must be the original work of the individual student submitting it, but parents/teachers can offer advice, such as “This play doesn’t have an ending,” or “How is your character going to overcome this obstacle?” Storylines, characters, and dialogue should be the student’s unique creation.

Sometimes writers find it helpful to begin with a prompt.

* Examples of Writing Prompts
  + You come home and discover that one of your parents/guardians has a new job…on Mars. What happens next?
  + You wake up with a brand new superpower. What do you do?
  + You’re walking through the forest and you ﬁnd a hidden cave with something unexpected inside. What happens next?
  + Your best friend suddenly turns into a turtle. What do you do?
  + What is the kindest thing that someone has ever done for you/you’ve done for someone else?
  + What do you wish you could do to make the world a better place?

The number of winning plays produced each year varies and depends on play length, casting considerations, and other production concerns. Enough plays will be selected for a 70-100 minute Festival Performance in June.

Below are some suggestions for students on creating a producible script.

* 1. Keep your play around 10-15 pages long. Get some friends or family to read it out loud with you to hear how it sounds.
  2. Have anywhere from 2-10 characters in your play. Characters can be people, animals, monsters, robots, plants – you name it.
  3. What is the play about? Is there a conflict that has to be solved? How do the characters try to get what they want? Do they succeed?
  4. Remember: A play is different than a movie. If your play has a character jumping out of a plane, landing on top of a giant bull who throws him into a lake that he then swims across... this would be a challenge to put on a stage. Ask yourself “Is this something that actors could perform on a stage? Will the audience understand what is happening?”
  5. These are just suggestions and not rules!

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**APPLICATION PROCESS**

* Plays typed in Word Documents are strongly encouraged, however we will accept handwritten or PDF copies if necessary.
* Plays must include a Title Page with the following:
* The Title of the Play
* Applicant’s Name (Note: Applicant’s name should NOT appear anywhere else on the play, ONLY the title page.)
* Applicant’s Address
* Applicant’s Phone Number
* Applicant’s School
* Applicant’s Grade Level
* Each page of the play should be numbered and contain the Title of the Play.
* Plays should be emailed to [youngplaywrights@dobama.org](mailto:youngplaywrights@dobama.org) with the subject heading **MBKPF Submission**. While we strongly encourage typed, electronic submissions, hard copies of plays may be mailed to The Marilyn Bianchi Kids’ Playwriting Festival, Dobama Theatre, 2340 Lee Rd, Cleveland Heights, OH 44118. No matter the format, make sure all sent copies of the play include the Entry Form, Title Page, and that the student’s name does not appear anywhere EXCEPT on the above two sheets.
* Entry Forms, as well as examples of a correctly formatted play and Title Page are available at dobama.org (as well as included in this packet).

**Application Checklist 2018-19**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Completed Entry Form |  |
| Correctly Formatted Title Page |  |
| Completed Play |  |
| All Materials Sent (emailed or mailed) |  |

**EXAMPLE:** Correctly Formatted Title Page

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TITLE OF THE PLAY

By Student McPlaywright

123 Student’s Home, Cleveland

Heights, OH 44118

Cleveland Heights High School

Grade 9

**EXAMPLE:** Correctly Formatted Play

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TITLE OF THE PLAY p. 1

* Make sure the header of each page of the play is numbered and includes the title of the play - but NOT the playwrights’ name! (See above) ↗
* Character List: It helps to list your Character Names and a brief description of each person who will appear before the play begins.

(See below)

Characters

Tamara: A middle school student. The leader of her group of friends.

Chaz: Tamara’s friend who is kind of lazy.

Alicia: Tamara’s friend. She’s funny and likes to stand out.

Jason: Tamara’s friend who is smart and shy.

Daniel: The school bully who is trying to get Tamara into trouble.

↙↙↙ Dialogue should be written like this.

*Scene 1: A middle school hallway, in between classes.*

TAMARA

I couldn’t sleep last night.

ALICIA

Why not?

JASON

Are you worried about the geography test? I was up late studying for it.

TAMARA

No, it’s not that. It’s something else...

…AND SO ON!

**WHAT’S NEXT?**

For questions or to book a workshop, email [youngplaywrights@dobama.org](mailto:youngplaywrights@dobama.org), or call 216-932-3396 and ask for Education Associate Carrie Williams.

For further information on the Festival or to download Entry Forms, visit <http://www.dobama.org/marilyn-bianchi-kids-playwriting-festival/> .

Play submissions should be emailed to [youngplaywrights@dobama.org](mailto:youngplaywrights@dobama.org) with the subject heading **MBKPF Submission**.

Plays can also be mailed to:

Marilyn Bianchi Kids’ Playwriting Festival

Dobama Theatre, 2340 Lee Rd

Cleveland Heights, OH 44118

**Plays must be received by March 1st 2019 to be considered for the 41st MBKPF Performances.**