

Best Winter Family Theater (& a Peek at Spring!)

rtjoaaron

The stage is set for family-friendly theater all across Chicago and we're giving you a peek behind the curtain. Current and upcoming shows feature everything from dinosaurs to singing pigs to circus acts. Read about them and get tickets now so your little characters don't miss out on some of their very favorite ones.



photo: Mr. Chickee's Funny Money / Charles Osgood

Mr. Chickee's Funny Money

Music lovers will dig this rhythm and blues production that follows the misadventures of Steven, a 10-year-old "spy" and president of the Flint Future Detectives Club. Along with his friends, Steven plots to save Flint from financial ruin. The show, which is based on the best-selling book of the same name by Christopher Paul Curtis, features music and lyrics by Motown legend Lamont Dozier and his son, co-music writer/lyricist Paris Dozier. Chicago soul singer Yaw Agyeman joins the A-list cast as Mr. Chickee. Also, take note: Tickets for the February 14, 6:30 p.m. show will be reserved for families with children on the autism spectrum in an effort to create a welcoming environment for them.

Now through March 2

Tickets are \$25-\$38

Ages 6 & up

Ruth Page Center for the Arts

1016 N. Dearborn St.

Gold Coast

872-222-9555

Online: chicagochildrenstheatre.org

The Princess and the Pea

It's a classic tale that never loses its charm. Kids reel with delight as Princess Penelope takes the ultimate "princess test" atop a 12-foot-tall bed. Will she feel the pea hidden under a mattress? Watch the show to find out.

Now through March 5

Tickets are \$12

Ages 2 & up

Stahl Family Theater (inside St. Patrick's High School)

5900 W. Belmont St.

Portage Park

773-205-9600

Online: chicagokidscompany.com



photo: Rose and the Rime / The House Theatre

Rose and the Rime

Music, acrobatic dance and stagecraft whirl together in this modern myth. Set in a little town by a big lake, the story follows a young girl who must risk her life to rescue a magic coin from the icy clutches of the Rime Witch. When the coin is returned, the town recovers from a deep freeze, but the coin's power inspires bigger dreams and greed creeps into the townspeople. The twisty-turn-y plot has just enough suspense and lots of visual artistry.

Now through March 9

Tickets are \$20-\$40

Ages 6 & up

Chopin Theatre

1543 W. Division St.

Wicker Park

773-769-3832

Online: thehousetheatre.com

Goodnight Moon: The Musical

The Northbrook Musical Theatre for Young Audiences transforms the classic children's book into a lively onstage production. Join the lead character, Bunny, in his bedtime ritual. It's anything but a snoozer because of exciting choreography and a marionette act starring Clarabelle the Daredevil Cow.

Now through February 22

Tickets are \$12

Ages 3 & up

Northbrook Theatre for Young Audiences

3323 Walters Ave

Northbrook

847-291-2367

Online: northbrooktheatre.org



photo: Stiles and Drewe's The Three Little Pigs / Emerald City Theatre

Stiles and Drewe's The Three Little Pigs

You've never heard the three little pigs get down like this before. Emerald City Theatre promises to blow the house down with its American premiere of George Stiles and Anthony Drewe's musical spin on the classic tale (they're the same Broadway composers as Honk! and Mary Poppins). Get caught up in the adventure of little pigs that search for new digs while escaping the big bad wolf.

Now through May 17

Tickets start at \$16. A limited number of \$10 tickets are available for each performance.

Ages 3-10

Apollo Theater

2540 N. Lincoln Ave.

Lincoln Park

773-935-6100

Online: emeraldcitytheatre.com

Schoolhouse Rock Live!

Introduce your kids to poli-sci, grammar and much more at the Emmy Award-winning 1970s cartoon series-turned-hit musical. They'll get an early education with fun songs that you loved as Saturday morning cartoons like "Just A Bill," and "Conjunction Junction."

February 28-May 4

Tickets are \$15

Ages 3 & up

Marriott Theatre

10 Marriott Dr.

Lincolnshire

847-634-0200

Online: marriotttheatre.com



photo: The Magical Exploding Boy / Actor's Gymnasium

The Magical Exploding Boy and the Invisible Circus

If your little one dreams of walking the tightrope, check out The Actors Gymnasium's high-flying story of a boy who learns he can't escape from a unique destiny. Expect amazing acrobatics, original live music and a whole lot of clowning around.

February 15-March 23

Tickets are \$15 for children; \$20 for adults

Ages 4 & up

The Actors Gymnasium at Noyes Cultural Arts Center

927 Noyes St.

Evanston

847-328-2795

Online: actorsgymnasium.com

Disney Junior Live On Tour! Pirate & Princess Adventure

Mickey Mouse's pals from Disney Jr., including Sofia the First and Jake and the Neverland Pirates, embark on a pirate and princess adventure. The show is packed with new music and special effects. Bonus: Ten minutes before each show, Doc McStuffins makes an appearance.

March 14-17

Tickets are \$15-\$75

Rosemont Theatre

5400 N. River Rd.

Rosemont

847-671-5100

Online: rosemonththeatre.com



photo: Lyle Finds His Mother / Lifeline Theatre

Lyle Finds His Mother

In a story based on the book by Bernard Waber, Lyle the Crocodile (a croc that loves living with his adopted family) takes off with a movie star to search for his birth mother. The plot sounds pretty deep, but this world-premiere musical is heartwarming and laugh-out-loud funny. The book will be sold onsite and cast members are available for autographs after the show. Also, kids are invited pre or post-show (depending on when you go) for Stories Come Alive; it's an experience at which cast members dressed in character read books or play games with audience members for about 45 minutes.

March 22-April 27

Tickets are \$15; Stories Come Alive is \$5 per child

Ages 5 & up

Lifeline Theater

6912 N. Glenwood Ave.

Rogers Park

773-761-4477

Online: lifelinetheatre.com

Sesame Street Live presents Can't Stop Singing

Elmo casts a spell with Abby Cadabby's magic wand on Sesame Street and it causes everyone to sing nonstop. In this show, kids learn why it feels so good to sing a song, but why it feels good to stop, too. Even Elmo learns a little something about the power of music. Of course, it's brought to you by the letter "A" as in, And now your family has something to do on April 2¹

April 2

Tickets are \$15-\$58

Rialto Square Theater

15 E. Van Buren St.

Joliet

815-726-7171

Online: rialtosquare.com



photo: Erth's Dinosaur Zoo Live / Broadway in Chicago

Erth's DINOSAUR ZOO Live

Take a trip way, way, way back to pre-historic Australia as ancient creatures come to life right before your eyes. Insects, mammals and dinos — from a sweet little baby Dryosaur to a giant T-rex — make an appearance in this interactive children's show. The large-scale puppets were created with paleontologists and are based on current science and interpretations of fossil evidence, so even the biggest dino superfan will approve of their accuracy.

March 26-30

Tickets are \$28-\$38

Broadway Playhouse at Water Tower Place

175 E. Chestnut St.

Gold Coast

312-977-1710

Online: broadwayinchicago.com

Sleeping Beauty

Oh, that horrible Maleficent! She's cursed Sleeping Beauty into a deep sleep and only true love's kiss will wake her. Will she sleep for 100 years or will the prince make it in time? Who needs Soapnet with drama this good? This exciting, musical version is based on the classic fairytale and is good wicked fun for any little prince or princess in grades Pre-K thru 3rd.

April 15-25

Tickets are \$14 for adults; \$12 for children 12 and under

Ages 4 & up

Metropolis Performing Arts Center

111 W. Campbell St.

Arlington Heights

847-577-2121

Online: metropolisarts.com

What show are you excited to take your kids to? Let us know in the Comments section below.

— Jo Aaron