

Dear New Theatre Parent,

Once upon a time, I was a first-time theatre parent. I had no idea what I was doing. I signed my child up for a play, dropped her off at rehearsal, picked her up after, and hoped that if something important came up, someone would let me know. I skimmed the occasional newsletter, but I didn't know how to read a script, what stage left meant, or what in the world a jazz shoe was (flesh tone OR black?!)

If this feels familiar, I'm here to let you know: you are not alone.

Putting on a show is a living, breathing thing.

It grows and changes constantly. Things get added, cut, rearranged, and reimagined. At first, the kids learn the basics: music, lines, and blocking — that's the skeleton. Then we add the flesh: facial expressions, movement, body language, character work. It takes dedication from the kids *and* from the people supporting them — that's you.

You'll be amazed when you see the final product. Not just by your child, but by *all* of them — they become a family through the process.

Auditions

When my daughter started, I didn't know how auditions worked, what "measures of music" were, or what "tech week" meant. I felt behind before we even began. That's why I want to share a few things I wish I'd known.

Each child will prepare a short scene or monologue (sometimes from the play, sometimes not). I look for preparation, vocal and facial expression, body language, and confidence. You can help your child memorize their lines, explore different tones ("I did it" can be excited, sarcastic, guilty...), and understand what's going on in the scene.

They may also be asked if they're comfortable with solo or group work (singing, speaking, dancing). This helps your child and I decide what kind of challenge they are comfortable with and what will help them grow.

Casting

We've all had that moment when we saw our child's role and thought, "Really? That's it?" Usually, *we* are more upset than they are. But every role is given real thought. Every part — big or small — is important. Sometimes a role with just a few lines requires a very specific kind of performer. Sometimes strong ensemble leaders are needed.

I remember when my daughter was cast as Gus the Mouse in *Cinderella*. I read the script and thought, "She only has two lines?!?" But on opening night, I was blown away. She was on stage almost the whole show — singing, dancing, acting — and she *shone*. That's when I realized: it's not about how many lines you have. It's about what you *do* with them.

I saw that she loved it, and because she was loving it, I loved it too. And I felt so proud of them all... you'll see what I mean.

Trust the journey, even if it feels a bit overwhelming.

Ensemble roles are just as valuable — sometimes more so. They require just as much focus, energy, and commitment. Your child will be backstage changing costumes, moving props, managing quick changes, helping castmates — they are busy! and it's wonderful to watch them step into that responsibility.

Rehearsals

Rehearsals can feel chaotic. Plans shift. Costumes change. Extra rehearsals get added. Last-minute trips to Walmart might happen. It's all part of building something creative and alive. Just know it *always* comes together.

Tech & Dress Rehearsals

Tech rehearsal is mostly for lights, sound, and staging — not so much for acting. It can run long and be a little stressful. Dress rehearsal brings it all together: costumes, mics, lights, scene changes, and full run-throughs. It's fast-paced and sometimes messy, but it's essential.

After the Show

When the final show ends, we “strike” the set, pack costumes, and clean the space. Everyone helps — the more hands, the quicker it goes. The stage manager will guide the set breakdown; the costume coordinator will direct packing. Jump in wherever you're comfortable — it's appreciated!

Then we celebrate with a cast party. It's a vital part of the process, helping the kids say goodbye to something they've poured themselves into. Some kids cry, some don't — but almost all of them feel the emotional weight. You might notice they're extra sensitive or tired for a few days after. That's normal. Sunday is usually a well-earned day of rest.

Finally, welcome.

We're so glad you're here. If you ever feel unsure or overwhelmed, reach out. Your Parent Committee is here to help. You're part of a community now — and we're all in this together.

Sincerely,

Jan, Kerrie, & Committee