

Dear Harmony Arts Theatre Parent,

Once upon a time, I was a first time Theatre Parent. I had no idea what I was doing. I signed up my child to be in a play and I dropped her off at class and I picked her up. I skimmed the newsletter once in a while when there was one, but really, I was clueless. I did not know how to properly read a script. I did not know stage lingo....I was just a drop off- pick up kind of gal, hoping that if I needed to know something special, someone would somehow reach me and let me know what was I had missed.

Thinking that many of you might identify with my story, I thought this letter could be a sort of mentorship to help out our first time parents, and to realize that you have a support system here if you need it.

Creating a show is a living, breathing thing. It grows as it is worked on and practiced. Things are added, then changed, then modified, cut, re-added, re-cut, and changed again! The skeleton is created by learning the music, learning the lines, and learning basic blocking. Once the skeleton is established, we add the flesh, with facial expression, vocal expression, and body language. The more layers of flesh we can add, the more beautiful the "Being" of the show will be. The goal is to produce a top-notch performance with your children, but it can't be done without the dedication of the performer and the ones who support them. You play an important role for your child and will be proud of what has been created when you watch the show! Nothing beats that feeling of joy! You will realize how proud you are not just of your young actor, but all of them. They have become a family, bonded by what they have created and you will see it and appreciate it.

When my child first started, I was just like most of you, but maybe worse off. I didn't know anything about anything. I didn't even know what a jazz shoe was! Let alone that they came in flesh-tone or black!! I didn't know what an audition entailed, or how measures of music worked, scripts, rehearsals, stage right, stage left, cast parties, what tech rehearsal meant....blah blah blah.

So here I want to share with you a few things, and I know I won't even cover close to it all, but it is at least a start.

The auditions usually happen once per show. Each child will prepare an excerpt given or suggested to them by their MT teacher. It might be from that particular play or it might be from something else. No matter what the acting excerpt is, we are looking for the bones and the flesh. The should have memorized lines, vocal expression, be facing out to the "audience" and pretend to be responding to their pretend fellow actor on stage. We are looking for vocal projection, and clarity. There is also the element of confidence, the actor being comfortable in their body, and being able to open up their body language. As their support person, you can help them memorize and pick out the tone in which the words are said to help them. For example, when you say the words "I did it," they can be said in various ways. Excitedly, regrettably, sarcastically, bitterly....you get the picture. Sometimes they need help understanding the script to know which tone to use where. You can also help them with any of the above listed. Body language, use of hands, vocal projection, etc.