

The Auditioning Process

Auditioning, or “trying-out,” for a play or musical is a big step in a child’s theatre education. Auditions help a director to select young actors that will become her/his “cast.” As a parent you can help guide your child through this sometimes trying, but certainly rewarding, experience. The most important thing you can do is *listen* to your child. Make sure that they are ready for the experience of being a part of a play, and try not to encourage them beyond their level of comfort. When the time is right, their eagerness will let you know!

Preparing for the Audition

- 1. Find out what is required for the audition.** Generally, for a musical a student is asked to prepare a one-minute song with sheet music. Junior Theatre music classes are a great source for appropriate songs with sheet music. You can also check the public library, or music stores. Make sure that your choice is in the correct key, and that it is a song that your child enjoys singing. If it is a straight play, usually a one-minute monologue (memorized) is required. Again, look to your Junior Theatre classes for great monologue choices. JTAGS also sells monologue books for children, and Junior Theatre has JTRAMS (Junior Theatre recycled audition materials). These materials are located in the upstairs office(Room 208).
- 2. Attend the Pre-Audition Meeting whenever possible.** Junior Theatre always holds a Pre-Audition Meeting prior to the week of auditions. This meeting is important because the director gives information on the style of the play, good choices for audition material, and the types of performers that he/she is looking for in the cast. The Pre-Audition Meeting gives different information for each play, so don’t assume that “if you’ve been to one, you’ve been to ‘em all!”
- 3. Attend a Junior Theatre Audition Workshop.** Junior Theatre holds private workshops for audition pieces (music and monologues) for a small fee prior to each audition. You can sign up for these at the Pre-Audition Meeting, or afterward in the JT office. This is a great way to get a last minute confidence boost and get some objective advice from a JT Teaching Artist.
- 4. Practice at home!** The better your child knows their piece, the more confident they will be during the audition. Provide as many positive strokes as you can, and give your child opportunities to share their audition piece with family and friends!
- 5. Stay relaxed at the audition.** The actual audition day can be quite overwhelming if there are a lot of other children there. The best thing you can do is to stay relaxed and help your child stay relaxed. Concentrate on the fun of performing, not the idea of “getting in the play.”
- 6. Afterwards, stay positive!** If your child comes out of the audition disappointed, do your best to stay positive. They may feel that they did not do their best, but it is very difficult to perform in an audition situation, and usually they are harder on themselves than anyone.

After the audition, you will have to wait to hear if your child is “called back.” A “call back” means that the director would like to see the child again, perhaps to have them sing something from the show, or to see them next to another actor. A call back is not a guarantee of either being in the show, or of not being in the show. Following the call back there is usually one day before the cast is announced. If your child is either not cast, or is cast, but does not get the role they were interested in, you will probably see your child very disappointed. This is the most difficult part of the process for both child and parent. Please help your child to feel good about themselves by praising their courage, and the hard work they put into their audition piece. Remind them that not getting a part in a play in no way means that they are not talented; it just means that there was not a perfect part for them in this particular play. Being a part of the technical crew is a good way for a child to be involved in the production process. Also, encourage them to audition again in the future. Auditioning is a skill, and like any skill, takes practice!

Directors, Musical Directors and Choreographers are human. They have preferences, emotions and tastes like all of us. Moreover, they often have a “vision” of what they are looking for walking into auditions. Their choices are made to fulfill this vision and may include such things as “type” casting, seeing a particular role as a certain height based on a selection for an opposing character, or trying to fit someone into a costume. Actors should be encouraged to take not being cast as impersonally as possible. They may have had a perfect audition and just not be the right one for the part.