

Take Your Child to a Live Performance

Many dance, music, and theater companies offer shows specifically geared to young children and their families. These performances offer a wonderful introduction to the performing arts. Attending high school or college music and drama productions is another way to introduce young children to live performance. Many early childhood programs use the following tips to help children prepare for visits to performance venues. You can try them before your family goes to a show.

Before your visit

- **Call the theater in advance** and ask what age children will enjoy the performance and how long the performance will last.
- **Explain what you will see and hear during the performance.** You can talk with your child about the characters, tell the story, or listen to other music in the same style. If the performance is based on a storybook, read it with your child.
- **Review appropriate audience manners.** Remind your child of how to behave among large groups, out in public, and during quiet times. Explain when applause is appropriate and how to be courteous to other people attending the performance.

On the day of the visit

- **Arrive early** so there is plenty of time to explore the theater. You might take a close-up look at the stage or peer into the orchestra pit. An early arrival also leaves plenty of time to use the restroom and find your seats.
- **Recognize that it is okay to leave before the end of the performance.** Preschoolers may find even a half-hour event too long. One adult can take the child who has reached his or her limits to the lobby or outdoors to play a game or read a story.

After the performance

- **Talk about what you just saw and heard.** Ask, "What did you think?" "What did you like best?" and "Which characters were your favorites?"
- **Read a related book or do an art, music, or dance project.** Provide dress-up clothes, puppets, props, and other materials so your child can reenact the performance.

A message from your child's teacher _____