



YOUNG PERFORMERS

AN OVERVIEW AND FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

WORK PERMITS AND TRUST ACCOUNTS

DO I NEED TO GET A WORK PERMIT FOR MY CHILD?

State laws on work permits vary widely, so you will need to check with your state of residence and, if different, the state where your child is performing to see what's required. Work permits are usually issued by each state's Department of Labor.

WHAT'S A TRUST ACCOUNT?

Some states (California and New York, for example) require that you set up a child performer trust account. The most common names for these are Coogan, UGMA, UTMA, or Blocked Trust accounts. Almost every bank offers at least one type of these accounts, and a portion of your child's earnings will be transferred to that account by the producer. Some states require a specific type of account (e.g. California and Coogan accounts), so check to make sure whatever account you open will be in compliance with state laws.

For a breakdown of state permit and trust account laws, see:
<http://www.dol.gov/whd/state/childentertain.htm>

SCHOOLWORK

HOW IS SCHOOLING HANDLED? WILL MY CHILD HAVE A TUTOR?

It is important to talk to your child's school about maintaining educational obligations independently. Requirements for tutors vary by Equity agreement and by state, so check to see if the Equity agreement under which your child is performing or your state of residence and/or performance has rules relating to tutoring. Whether or not a tutor will be provided by the producer, it's up to you to make sure that the curriculum and tutoring time or independent study work is accepted by your school as satisfactory academic performance. To avoid truancy, check with school administration to find out how absences will be counted on days your child is working.



ARE EQUITY RULES THE SAME AS SAG OR AFTRA'S?

No, Equity's rules are not the same as those for SAG (Screen Actors Guild) or AFTRA (American Federation of Television and Radio Artists). Equity's rules also vary per agreement, so it's important to consult whichever agreement under which your child is working for any specific requirements. When in doubt, call an Equity Business Representative.

HEALTH AND SAFETY

WHAT IF MY CHILD BECOMES ILL?

Before a performance:

Notify stage management as soon as possible before half-hour of any illness or injury that will prevent your child from performing. Your Stage Manager will give you a number to call if your child will be late or unable to perform.

During the show:

It is important that you provide contact numbers where you can be reached in case of emergency so that management can contact you immediately. You should also consider providing management with a signed document authorizing the providing of medical treatment for your child until you arrive.

WHAT PRECAUTIONS ARE TAKEN TO ENSURE MY CHILD'S SAFETY?

Safety is extremely important to both Equity and management.

Equity has established many safety standards, and all parties work together to reduce risk to performers and crew.

WHAT SHOULD I DO IF MY CHILD GETS INJURED ON THE JOB?

Immediately report any injuries to the Stage Manager and company manager, no matter how minor the injury. If you report an injury when it occurs, you can spare yourself much trouble down the road if a minor injury develops into a more serious one. An accident report must be filed with the insurance company carrying the employer's Workers' Compensation policy. Find out the name and address of the Workers' Compensation Insurance carrier and policy number from the employer.

EQUITY AND PARENTS

DOES EQUITY PROVIDE ANY PROTECTION FOR PARENTS OF YOUNG PERFORMERS?

Equity is a union that represents stage Actors and Stage Managers, and in this capacity it provides support and protection to those individuals employed in the production on Equity contracts. However, parents can expect Equity to do the following:

1. Ensure a safe and sanitary workplace environment for your child.
2. Enforce the terms and provisions of your child's contract.
3. Respond to questions you may have about your child's contract.

The Volunteer Income Tax Assistance program, or VITA, can help when it comes to figuring out how to file taxes on your child's earnings. Check with your closest Equity office for more information.

WHERE CAN I FIND OUT MORE INFORMATION ON WORK RULES?

All Equity agreements are available as PDFs on the Member Portal members.actorsunion.org. If you do not have access to the portal or have questions, call your local Equity office and speak with a Business Representative.

WHY CAN'T I WAIT BACKSTAGE WHILE MY CHILD IS REHEARSING OR PERFORMING?

Space backstage and in rehearsal halls is extremely limited, so access is often restricted to only those individuals actually employed in the production. It is not unusual for theatres to require parents to drop their children off to the child guardian at the stage door without coming inside.

GENERAL QUESTIONS

AFTER THE RUN IS OVER, WILL MY CHILD BE ABLE TO PERFORM IN SCHOOL/RELIGIOUS/COMMUNITY THEATRE PRODUCTIONS?

When one joins Equity, they agree to perform only on a union contract. However, under certain circumstances Equity members can request a waiver to perform at their school or religious institution. For more information about what qualifies for a waiver, please call your regional Equity office. Also, Equity members under a certain age can apply for what is called Juvenile Withdrawal, where they place their Equity membership on hold. For more information on Juvenile Withdrawal, call and speak with the Equity Membership Department.

HOW IS MY CHILD EXPECTED TO BEHAVE?

It's important for young performers to know that they are expected to behave the same way any adult would while at work. One of the most important things you can discuss with your child before he or she enters a professional work environment is the importance of working cooperatively with all the show personnel while backstage or onstage. Additionally, backstage areas frequently contain hazards, so it is important for your child to understand how to stay safe. With trap doors, hydraulic lifts, scenery and other equipment moving in and out, safety is a top priority.

WHO ARE SWINGS? WHAT DOES "DOUBLE CAST" MEAN?

A swing is a performer in the singing and/or dancing chorus who fills in for absent chorus performers. Children's roles are often double cast, which means multiple children will share one role with an alternating performance schedule. Check with your Stage Manager to make sure you know when your child will and won't be performing.

WHO CAN ANSWER MY GENERAL QUESTIONS?

You should feel free to speak to the Equity Stage Manager(s) whenever you have a question or concern. If they are not able to assist you, they may refer you to someone else, such as the company manager. You may also call upon the Business Representative, the Equity staff member who administers the Equity agreement, to help with any questions or concerns. Know that all calls to Equity staff are confidential, so you shouldn't be afraid to call if you have a question or problem.

IMPORTANT PEOPLE TO KNOW

STAGE MANAGER

Coordinates productions during rehearsal and performance and maintains the artistic integrity of the show. They are employed under Equity contracts just like Actors. If your child has any special health or dietary needs/allergies/sensitivities/ restrictions, you should inform your Stage Manager.

COMPANY MANAGER

Handles all people employed in the production. This person usually is in charge of travel and housing arrangements for tours and sometimes handles ticket requests.

CHILD GUARDIAN

Sometimes referred to as "wrangler", the Child Guardian serves as a producer-designated supervisor of children at the theatre. This person is the one who takes your child to the stage and waits in the wings until your child is offstage. Though they are not tutors, it is helpful for you to meet them and to let them know if there is any schoolwork that your child should be working on independently while backstage.

DEPUTY

The Equity Member who is elected to be the on-site liaison between the company and Equity. Elections for deputies usually take place on the first day of rehearsal. Only Equity Members aged 18 or older may be elected Deputies. Also, parents of Equity young performers have the right to attend any Equity company meeting where a vote takes place (Equity Members aged 12 and older are eligible to vote).