

Helen Hayes Youth Theatre – Letter of Agreement

The casting of roles is part of the reality of putting on a theater production. Unfortunately, there aren't enough parts for every member of the cast to play a leading role. We recognize how hard it is to not get one's dream role and, in fact, every member of the staff has had to face the same situation themselves in their professional careers. At the beginning of each casting session and throughout the rehearsal period, we will discuss these feelings with our cast members. Unfortunately, we have had a few incidents of verbal attacks from parents who don't understand the casting situation so we now ask that each parent and student read and sign this statement.

On the first day of rehearsal, we hold an audition where the production team will evaluate your child's abilities, comfort level and experience in order to determine the best place for them in the production. During the audition process, every member of the cast will be taught a song from the show and a short dance combination. Then, one at a time and in a private room, each cast member will sing about 16 bars from that song for the director, choreographer and musical director. The entire cast will do the dance combination together. After that, we might call some kids back to either read or sing particular numbers as we try to decide who will play which part. Some kids may be ready for a role with many lines, while others may be uncomfortable with that responsibility. Some kids might be ready for a big part but end up in the ensemble. Some participants have a lot of stage experience while others have none, but we do not let that be a deciding factor in casting. Some kids have had leading roles with us in the past, but this year may end up in the ensemble.

We welcome everyone and find a place in the cast for each participant. We will alter the script in order to offer more opportunities for featured roles. We attempt to be fair and spread the leading roles around as much as possible. Singing at home, performing for friends and family or participation in school theater productions does not carry the same pressure as performing on our stage after a two-week rehearsal period. Please trust our creative team to make the best decision for your child and know that we understand how much this experience means to your child. We will try to highlight everyone's individual talents in the production.

Theater is about community. Therefore, we take an ensemble approach. An ensemble is "a unit of complementary parts that contribute to a single effect". Every cast member is important to the finished piece. That does not mean that every cast member will have the same number of lines or features in the show. For us, theater is not about the final product (although we use our best efforts to put on an excellent show), but rather about the process of putting on a show and the individual journey your child is taking to reach the final goal. If your goal is to make your child a star, this may not be the program for you. If you and your child much have a lead in the show and nothing else matters, then this is definitely not the program for you.

We look forward to a wonderful summer with you!

The Staff of the Helen Hayes Youth Theatre

I have read the letter of agreement.

Parent's Signature:

Student's Signature:

Name of Student: