



625 Church Street  
 Toronto, Ontario  
 Canada M4Y 2G1  
 Phone 416.928.2278  
 Toll-free 1.877.913.2278  
[info@actratoronto.com](mailto:info@actratoronto.com)  
[www.actratoronto.com](http://www.actratoronto.com)

# Parents' Guide for Child Performers

ACTRA and producers have negotiated agreements that ensure your child's experience as a performer is memorable, safe and rewarding.

## Three Simple Rules:

**1. You are not alone.** As a parent of a child working in film, television and commercials, you want to fully understand your child's rights and working conditions under ACTRA agreements. **Remember to ask questions.** A legitimate talent agent will help guide most business decisions and, as always, ACTRA is here to help you.

**2. ACTRA agreements protect your child.** ACTRA agreements set minimum terms and working conditions for ACTRA members, including your child. ACTRA members are free to negotiate up from these minimums but cannot negotiate below them. Always ask your agent which ACTRA agreement applies to the production and get a copy of that agreement from the ACTRA Toronto office. You'll have lots of time on set to read the whole agreement but make sure to familiarize yourself with the minor's section before arriving on set.

ACTRA stewards and On-Set Liaison Officers (OSLOs) visit sets often and rely on you to inform them if these terms and conditions are being breached. **You are the front line of defence to protect your child and ACTRA is only a phone call away.**

**3. Don't forget to be a parent.** You are the best judge of your child's capabilities. If a production makes a special request that you are uncomfortable with, or if you believe your child's health or welfare is being threatened, **speak up on behalf of your child.** Call your child's agent. Call ACTRA Toronto. When it comes to protecting children there are no stupid questions. Call ACTRA first if you believe your child may be in physical danger or is being worked overtime. **It is important to remember that you, or a guardian appointed by you, must always be with children under the age of 16.**

**Children need to know that they are loved and accepted. They must enjoy a certain degree of success in their lives and need encouragement and recognition.**

## FAQs

**How long can my child work?** Under the Independent Production Agreement (IPA) covering film and television work, children under the age of 12 may only work 8 hours plus one hour for lunch. Under the Commercial Agreement the same applies to children aged 15 and under. Exceptions are made for children aged 12 to 15 under certain circumstances. Time spent under hot lights varies according to age. Please check the agreement your child is working under for more details.

**How will my child be paid?** Minimum fees are outlined in the various ACTRA agreements. Never let your child work without a signed contract in place. With the completion of a contracted role, payments will flow either to you or your child's agent. Income tax is not generally deducted at source. The agent's commission is based on gross fees. Other deductions will include contributions to the insurance and retirement plan with the ACTRA Fraternal Benefit Society (AFBS), ACTRA member dues, and the minors' trust fund.

**What should I know about talent agents?** A talent agent is contracted to arrange auditions and negotiate contracts for your child. Be sure the agent you select is legitimate and ethical. A list of agents and the Entertainment Industry Coalition (EIC) Code of Ethics are online at [www.actratoronto.com](http://www.actratoronto.com). ACTRA Toronto only lists agencies who are either members of TAMAC (Talent Agents and Managers Association of Canada), members of the EICAA (EIC Agency Association), or that have signed the EIC Code of Ethics. Be very cautious of agencies that offer guarantees of work or try to sell you courses, photos, services or demand up-front fees. Legitimate agents only make money if your child works as a performer.



**What should I know about auditions?** Your child's agent will call you with the time and place, and details of the names of the project, director, producer, casting director and ad agency if it's a commercial audition. Keep a work diary to record this information; this will become very important should your child be booked. Take special note of shoot dates and inform your agent immediately of any scheduling conflict. Otherwise, your child will be expected to be available on the shoot dates. Auditions must be held a reasonable time after school hours. Always arrive 10 to 15 minutes early and make sure you've read the breakdowns and scripts that your agent has provided. If you're attending a commercial audition, remember to bring the ACTRA sign-in sheets.

625 Church St.  
Toronto, Ontario  
Canada M4Y 2G1  
Phone 416.928.2278  
Toll-free 1.877.913.2278  
info@actratoronto.com  
www.actratoronto.com

**Do I have to stay on-set with my child?** A parent or guardian of a child under 16 must be at the studio or location accessible to the child at all times when the child is on set and must go with the child to and from the set or location. Stay with your child.

**What about missing school?** If your child is going to miss more than two school days in a given week, the IPA requires that productions provide a qualified on set tutor for your child. You will be responsible for coordinating work assignments between the school and set. Production is obliged to provide the curriculum outlined by your child's principal. Please contact the ACTRA Toronto Children's Advocate for more information.

### **On-set tips for parents and child performers**

Work on a film, television, radio program or commercial is work, so please encourage your child to take it seriously.

- Help your child understand the nature of his or her role and follow instructions if needed. Although a child's moods can be unpredictable, as an attending parent or guardian it's your responsibility to ensure your child cooperates with any reasonable request. Always keep in mind that your child has been hired to perform as instructed – provided that these instructions don't violate ACTRA agreements and are not uncomfortable for either you or your child.
- If your child is asked to do something that feels wrong, trust your instincts. You have a right to say 'no,' or call ACTRA Toronto. If your child has a potential emotional or physical reaction such as fear of heights, which may affect his or her performance, or an allergy, always tell the producers at the time of booking. ACTRA agreements contain clauses that protect minors from performing subject matter of a psychologically damaging nature.
- It's your right and responsibility to be near where your child is working and to have contact with him or her between takes. Don't leave, even if production staff say, "stay clear" on a tight set.
- Make sure your child is well rested and prepared to do his or her best work. Producers rely on you to honestly tell them how your child is feeling and whether this may jeopardize the next day's shooting schedule. If your child is old enough to be asked to work overtime (ages 12 to 15) but he or she is overtired – just say no!
- The set is not a social club or child care centre. Siblings, friends and relatives should not be invited to come on set and watch your child perform. Obtain clearances long before the production date if you must bring another individual with you.
- Make sure you know exactly when and where your child should report for work and note this in your diary.
- Make sure you know what you're expected to provide for your child on the shoot such as clothing, toys, etc.
- There may be a lot of waiting time on set, so you should bring books, quiet games and other material to occupy younger children.
- Although you may be told that the shoot may take less time than the maximum allowed for children under ACTRA agreements, you should be prepared to stay until the approved time limit for your child is reached. Productions frequently take longer than anticipated, so book babysitters and other activities accordingly.
- Ask if transportation is provided. If it is, make sure you know where to get the bus or van and at what time. Leave yourself lots of time to get there and remember to account for travel time when booking babysitters.

Additional information is available from your agent, ACTRA Toronto and the **ACTRA Toronto Children's Advocate Theresa Tova**, at **(416) 928-2278 ext. 6605** or **ttova@actratoronto.com**.

**ACTRA Toronto**  
625 Church St.  
Toronto, ON M4Y 2G1  
(416) 928-2278 or  
toll free 1-877-913-  
2278  
www.actratoronto.com  
info@actratoronto.com

**ACTRA Toronto** has more than 15,000 members and is the largest organization within ACTRA (Alliance of Canadian Cinema, Television and Radio Artists). As an advocate for Canadian culture since 1943, ACTRA continues to secure the rights and respect for the work of professional performers.



© 2010 ACTRA Toronto

625 Church Street  
Toronto, Ontario  
Canada M4Y 2G1  
Phone 416.928.2278  
Toll-free 1.877.913.2278  
[info@actratoronto.com](mailto:info@actratoronto.com)  
[www.actratoronto.com](http://www.actratoronto.com)