

Factsheet #7



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A Parents' Guide for Child Performers

Your child's rights & working conditions on set

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

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 ACTRA is here to help you.

ACTRA Agreements Protect Your Child. The agreements negotiated by ACTRA set out the minimum terms and working conditions for 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 the agreement from ACTRA Toronto. Be sure to familiarize yourself with the minor's section before you arrive on set. You're the front line of defense for your child and ACTRA is only a phone call away if any of the terms or conditions of the agreement are breached.

Don't Forget To Be A Parent.

You're the best judge of your child's capabilities. If a production makes a special request that you're uncomfortable with, or if you believe your child's health or welfare is being threatened, speak up on behalf of your child. Call ACTRA if you believe your child may be in physical danger or is being worked overtime. It's important to remember that you, or a guardian appointed by you, must always be with children under the age of 16.

What You Need to Know:

How Long Can My Child Work?

Under the Independent Production Agreement (IPA), which covers film, television and digital media, children under the age of 12 can only work eight hours a day plus one hour for a meal break. Under the National Commercial

Agreement (NCA), the same rule 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 ACTRA

agreements. Never let your child work without a signed contract. 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.

On Set Tips for Parents and Child Performers:

- Encourage your child to take their work seriously.
- Help your child understand the nature of his or her role and follow instructions. 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 the 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 or an allergy, which may affect his or her performance, 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. 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.
- 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.
- Know what you're expected to provide for your child on the shoot such as clothing, toys, etc.
- Bring books, quiet games, snacks and other material to occupy younger children during breaks.
- Productions frequently take longer than anticipated, so book babysitters and other activities accordingly. You should be prepared to stay until the approved time limit for your child is reached.
- 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.

What Should I Know About Talent Agents?

A talent agent is contracted to arrange auditions and negotiate a contract for your child. A list of agents and the Entertainment Industry Coalition (EIC) Code of Ethics are on the ACTRA Toronto website. ACTRA Toronto only lists agencies who are members of Talent Agents and Managers Association of Canada (TAMAC), EIC Agency Association (EICAA), or have signed the EIC Code of Ethics. Be wary 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 project, director, producer, casting director and ad agency (for commercial auditions). Keep a work diary to record this information; it will be important if your child is booked. Take special note of shoot dates and inform your agent immediately of any scheduling conflicts. Otherwise your child will be expected to

be available on the shoot dates. Auditions must be held a reasonable length of 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. Remember to fill out the ACTRA sign-in sheets.

Do I Have To Stay On-Set With My Child?

A parent or guardian of a child under age 16 must be at the studio or 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.

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 co-ordinating 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.