

Hi Parents!

I just wanted to fill you in on the new musical theatre class structure for kids 4-9yrs starting this Fall.

In the past, we have been able to have full cast productions for our younger kids because shows like Lion King Jr. and Seussical Jr. offered another option in their "Kids" production scripts. These are 30 minute shows as opposed to the full hour productions of the Broadway Jr and Disney Jr scripts. They are tailored to younger children in many ways and provide a much easier program for both kids and teachers.

With the Little Mermaid, and with Frozen and Mulan, there are no "Kids" versions available. With the popularity of The Little Mermaid, we felt we needed to go ahead and jump into full productions with all age groups. While the final show was awesome and the kids were adorable, the enormity of the production took its toll on the quality of our weekly classes. It was simply way, way too long--too many lines, too many musical numbers, too many scenes, too many costume changes. With so many scenes that required only part of the class on stage, downtime for the other half was always a problem. There's a lot of energy in these kids and we want to make the most of it instead of trying to suppress it constantly to keep a quiet, calm classroom. It should be a fun class that allows these kids to be themselves, act their age, and gives them more opportunities for successful stage experiences.

Every semester we try to make adjustments to our programs. We look at what is working and what is not, and try to implement solutions that will make your children's experience with us each week a productive and meaningful one. With that philosophy in mind, we are restructuring the Musical Theatre classes for our Jrs and Sprouts to be built around a variety show-based performance format. What this means is that the final show will be 3 group musical numbers from Frozen (this is the number that our contract with Disney will allow) that have individual solo parts in them as well as introductory lines from the script. Once these musical numbers have been mastered, we will start adding other musical numbers from other productions one at a time, at a pace that allows review time each week.

This new format has many advantages that will hopefully reduce the amount of anxiety we are seeing in kids (and parents) outside of class, and the chaos and stress we are experiencing in-class.

- More opportunities for solo parts and character portrayals (ie different Annas and Elsas in each musical number)
- Fewer lines and lyrics to memorize and retain over the 6 month semester
- Slower pace allows time each week for critical skill building games and activities
- Whole group numbers and scenes include everyone and lessen the amount of downtime kids have when not on stage
- Greater confidence in the final performance because sufficient time has been spent in rehearsal
- Successful experiences for all kids as the spotlight is shared
- Kids feel they have more input in what goes on in class and their show
- Teachers are less stressed—good for everyone 😊

I know this is on the manifesto side of explanations, but I wanted to make sure there were no misunderstandings about our intentions in this decision. Everything we do is to provide the most positive theatre experiences possible for these kids. They are amazing and we love them.

There will still be a Jrs Cast for Frozen, however, enrollment is based on careful consideration of each child's experience and ability to participate in a full production & remain focused during a 2 hr class. It doesn't do a child any good to place them in a performing experience for which they are not fully prepared. Kris will make final decisions on enrollment in the Cast class. Showcase Cast has also been opened up to ages 6-18 for auditions as a few younger kids are needed in that cast.

Feel free to contact me with any questions or concerns. Thank you for your support of our efforts.

--Kris, Kimbur, Maddie, and Maddy