

Alternatives for Youth After High School In-service Training

Ronn Reinberg, Lighting Specialist
“How to coach kids to go into theater/the arts”

April 4, 2007

- ❖ “Theater is an opportunity for people who don’t fit into society to do something beautiful for society.”
- ❖ What kids need to know to succeed in the theater business:
 - **Be reliable & responsible.** Do what you say you’ll do.
 - **Be fun to work with.** Theater is collaborative. People will want to work again with people they liked working with in the past.
 - **Have a skill.** Most importantly, learn how to communicate; learn how to listen; learn about humanity. In school, focus on subjects like psychology, sociology, and/or anthropology rather than theater.
 - **Be passionate & dedicated.**
- ❖ Some skills to look out for that might indicate your kiddo would be good for theater:
 - Likes to build things
 - Likes to tinker with things (take things apart to see how they work). “In theater, you build magic tricks.”
 - Likes sewing; interested in vintage clothing, fabrics, and/or fashion design
 - Is a visual/observant person. Is very aware of lighting.
 - Interested in hair & make-up
 - Likes drama/acting
 - Likes painting
- ❖ If you notice that your kid has any of the skills listed above, point that out to the kid. Let him/her know those skills could be used in theater.
- ❖ Introduce kids to community theater groups, school theater groups (they can crew shows at schools even if they don’t attend those schools), and professional theater companies.
- ❖ Apprenticeships work very well in the arts. A number of skill sets can be used in theater (e.g., painting; technical work; acting; sewing; etc.). To work in theater, kids don’t necessarily need college; they just need to find someone who needs a helper/apprentice. They need to expect not to get paid right away! “You have to pay your dues. You may not be going to college, but it still might take four years to learn the skills necessary to succeed in theater.”
- ❖ Talent is a gift, but skills are learned. Kids must understand that they need **patience** to develop their skills and become successful in theater.

- ❖ If kids seem interested in theater, take them to a show. Point out the costumes, lighting, sound effects, etc. to them. Introduce them to people involved in putting on the show.

- ❖ Let kids know that a huge number of people, with a number of different skills, come together to make theater performances happen. For example, a musical could involve the following players: choreographer; director; music director; production manager; stage manager; designers (sets; lights; sound; costumes; props; effects); designers' assistants; technical director; building crew (carpenters; electricians; shoppers; stitchers; crafts people); load in crew (carpenters; riggers; electricians; technicians); administrative assistant; publicist; fund raiser; ad salesperson; program creator; ticket sellers; house staff (house manager & ushers); actors; dancers; musicians; singers; deck manager; deck crew (set crew; prop runners; wardrobe); light board operator; sound board operator.