

Parents and Guardians,

The performing arts are an active way for your child to express himself while encouraging the development of both social and academic skills. When your child gets up in front of an audience to perform a play, he is learning how to speak in front of large groups as well as learning how people interact with each other. He is also developing memorization and language skills that can be applied across academic subjects.

Dance, theater, music, dramatic reading, and puppetry are all forms the performing arts. Many children already engage in these activities during every day play. Does your child ever dance through the house? Does she give each character a voice when reading a story aloud? Does she play dress up with your clothes? All of these activities are developing performing art skills. Below are some other activities that your child can do at home with just a few household supplies.

Perform a dramatic reading:

A dramatic reading is a simple way to get your child involved in the performing arts. All you need to do is find a book or story that your child likes, and prepare a small area for the show. Your child can either read from the book during the show, or memorize the words and recite the story while adding his own special touches. It's fun if your child gives each character in the story his/her own voice and mannerisms.

Have a puppet show:

All you will need for a puppet show is a table with a table cloth or sheet over it and something to be the puppets. Decorated socks, paper dolls on sticks, and stuffed animals all make excellent puppets. Your child can then gather story ideas from books, TV characters, or something that happened at school. Once she has the story planned out and has practiced a few times, it's time to grab some popcorn and enjoy the show. Your child can hide behind the "stage" (table) and her puppets can perform on the stage without her ever being seen.

With a few more materials, your child can put on a play, a dance performance, or a concert. Imagination is the most important ingredient in each of these settings. Encourage your child to be creative, and make the performance a family event. Knowing the proper way to watch a show from the audience is another important skill when learning about the performing arts, and the family can help model this behavior. Soon your child might be reading for fun, developing social skills, and gaining confidence all while having a great time.

