

TUSCALOOSA CHILDREN'S THEATRE HANDBOOK



**TUSCALOOSA CHILDREN'S
THEATRE**

601 Energy Center Boulevard Northport, Alabama 35473
www.tuscaloosachildrenstheatre.org

Welcome to Tuscaloosa Children's Theatre

Welcome to the Tuscaloosa Children's Theatre (TCT), a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization founded by a group of parents, educators, and theatre professionals who identified a need for the youth of Tuscaloosa to have opportunities to perform. From its humble beginnings in 1986, the organization has grown tremendously. Today TCT offers onstage and offstage opportunities for hundreds of children each year and houses audiences of thousands of children annually.

TCT's mission is to educate and expose the children of Tuscaloosa and surrounding counties to all aspects of stage performance and production. Our mission is fulfilled through several programs including two to three performances staged at the Historic Bama Theatre yearly, summer camp and the TCT Ensemble. The Ensemble is a theatre-based leadership group that focuses on personal development helping rising 9th grade students through rising 12th grade students reach their full potential.

TCT has a small staff and a large volunteer base. The Executive Director and Artistic Coordinator work with the Board of Directors, Board President and Executive Committee to set TCT's artistic vision and fulfill the organization's mission. Funding for TCT comes mostly from ticket sales, cast fees, program ads, tax deductible individual donations, corporate sponsorships, grants and the City of Tuscaloosa and Tuscaloosa County Commission. The cost of producing staged plays can be \$30,000-\$40,000 per production and the organization relies on participants, sponsors and community partners to help offset the costs. TCT also teams up with other non-profit organizations to provide outreach. For each production a different organization is chosen and the cast and families collect items on the organization's wish list.

The casting of a TCT performance is a rigorous and challenging process. Careful casting leads to a great production, but talent is not the only criteria. Respectful behavior, good attendance and the ability to follow rules and directions also factor in for a pleasant and rewarding experience for all. Participating in a TCT production is a team effort and parents/caregivers as well as actors have responsibilities. Although there are several people involved with auditions the Director is responsible for the final decisions on casting. All casting decisions are final. Actors who decline parts after casting risk not being considered for future productions. Casting will be posted on the TCT website and social media with directions on how to accept your role.

Cast Members' Responsibilities

- Prepare and memorize assigned lines, songs and choreography.
- Attend all called rehearsals and performances, arriving and leaving on time.
- Be quiet and respectful during rehearsals and shows.
- Adhere to the rules set in place by the Artistic Staff, Play Coordinators and Parent Volunteers at rehearsals, dress rehearsals and the Bama Theatre.
- Perform in all six school shows and four public shows.
- Take care of items used in shows such as costumes, props, microphones, sets, loaned scripts, etc.
- Abide by the policies set forth in the TCT Handbook.

Parents' Responsibilities

- Ensure that your cast member arrives and leaves on time for all rehearsals and performances.
- Based on the size of the cast, volunteer for at least two rehearsals and two shows once at the Bama Theatre. There will be Sign Up Genius links for rehearsals and show week.
- Become involved by volunteering during rehearsals, backstage, at the Set Shop or with any craft or costume projects needed.
- Attend required parent meetings (first parent meeting, new parent meeting and parent meeting at the Bama Theatre the week of the show).
- May be financially responsible for items lost or damaged.
- Cast fees are due at the first parent meeting via cash, check or Venmo.
- Abide by the policies set forth in the TCT Handbook.

Rehearsals at the TCT facility

- Rehearsals are *Monday, Tuesday, and Thursday from 6:00 p.m.– 8:30 p.m.* Other rehearsals may be scheduled as needed.
- Members of the cast must be on time. We do our best to begin and end rehearsals on time. This is made easier when our actors are ready at their scheduled time.
- Excessive unexcused absences can lead to dismissal from the show.
- Anyone who misses rehearsals for any reason will be responsible for learning any choreography, music, or blocking that they missed. Cast members are encouraged to find a fellow actor to go over material. Often there is no time during rehearsals to go back and review for actors who were absent. Typically, videos are posted on a closed Facebook page to refer to if you missed and also to practice from.
- Cast members are required to attend all scheduled rehearsals for which they are called unless listed at auditions as a conflict or they are sick. Attendance is taken at rehearsals. If your child is going to miss or be late for a rehearsal that was not already pre-approved, you must contact the Stage Manager prior to rehearsal to let him/her know. Preferably, as soon as you know that your child will be late and/or miss. If your child is sick, please do not allow them to return to rehearsal until they are symptom free for 24 hours.
- The Stage Manager will send out Rehearsal Reports after each rehearsal. These must be read in full as you will be responsible for any changes that affect you. Rehearsal schedules are subject to change; therefore it is important to check your email daily.
- Rehearsals are closed to parents, friends and family members due to the distraction to the cast and Artistic Staff. The only parents allowed during rehearsals are the Parent Volunteers signed up for the rehearsal. We ask that no family members, including siblings, come to rehearsals when serving as a Parent Volunteer.
- There will be NO food or drink allowed in the rehearsal space with the exception of water.
- The rehearsal space must be kept neat and clean, including the bathrooms.
- Cast members are to stay in the rooms assigned to and only enter and exit through the main doors to the building.
- Please pick up your child promptly when rehearsal ends. Cast members 8th grade and younger are never to leave the rehearsal facility unless a parent or responsible adult picks them up. A parent or representative must come to the door of the facility to get the actor if the child is in the 8th grade or younger. THERE ARE NO EXCEPTIONS! Please note, only cast members 9th grade and older are allowed to leave to go to their car or meet their parents in the parking lot.
- TCT will not be responsible for children dropped off early or picked up late if there is no Parent Volunteer or Artistic Staff on site.

Show week rehearsals

- During show week, your child will have daily rehearsals *Sunday through Tuesday* and daily shows *Wednesday through Sunday* at the Bama Theatre. Members of the cast are required to stay until the Director releases them. They are encouraged to bring homework, books, etc., to work on quietly while waiting.
- Cast members must sign in and out for rehearsals at the Bama theatre.
- Food and drink may not be consumed in the theatre, dressing rooms, backstage, etc. Plan to eat before coming to rehearsal. Water is all that is allowed backstage.
- Cell phones must be kept on silent during rehearsals and are not allowed on the stage or in the house. If this is not followed, phones may be taken up at the door and returned as the actor exits the building.
- Cast members must be on time. If your child will be late for a show that was not already pre-approved, you must contact the Stage Manager prior to rehearsal to let him/her know. Preferably, as soon as you know that your child will be late. If you are sick, please do not return to a show until you have been symptom free for 24 hours.
- Please bring a pen/pencil and paper to take notes during Company Meeting and after rehearsals and between school shows. You may not use your cell phone to take notes.
- Members of the cast will be assigned to dressing rooms. Actors are not allowed to change dressing rooms. Our Costumer must know where all costumes are at all times in the event repair is needed prior to the cast's arrival at the theatre.
- There will be assigned backstage Parent Volunteers to keep the cast quiet, to help with costumes and to be responsible for keeping the noise level down.
- Parents may attend dress rehearsal at the Bama but must sit in the house. It is important to remain quiet so that the Artistic Staff can have full concentration. Parents may video and photograph dress rehearsal only. No flash photography is allowed.
- Please pick up your child promptly when rehearsals end. Cast members 8th grade and younger are never to leave the Bama Theatre unless a parent or responsible adult picks them up at the Stage Door. A parent or representative must come to the door of the Bama to get the child if they are in the 8th grade or younger. THERE ARE NO EXCEPTIONS! Please note, only cast members 9th grade and older are allowed to leave to go to their car or meet their parents outside of the Bama.
- TCT will not be responsible for children dropped off early or picked up late if there is no Parent Volunteer or Artistic Staff on site.

School shows and public shows

- Cast members must sign in and out for performances at the theatre.
- No one will not be allowed to leave the Bama Theatre between the school shows. Everyone will remain and eat lunch provided by TCT. THERE ARE NO EXCEPTIONS!
- The stage door will be closed one hour prior to the beginning of the show and will not be opened until the show is finished; this includes intermission.
- There will be a Parent Volunteer at the stage door during shows. No one will be admitted unless their name is on the list of volunteers assigned to work. This policy will be strictly enforced. The backstage door will open only after the show is over.
- Cast members will be allowed to visit with friends and family after public shows ONLY, not during school shows. Cast members will be held at the Stage Door until an adult comes to get them. Cast members 9th grade and older will be able to leave after a public show without a parent picking them up to visit with family.
- Please pick up your cast member promptly when shows end. Cast members 8th grade and younger are never to leave the Bama Theatre unless a parent or responsible adult picks them up at the Stage Door. A parent or representative must come to the door of the Bama to get the cast member if the child is in the 8th grade or younger. THERE ARE NO EXCEPTIONS! Please note, only cast members 9th grade and older are allowed to leave to go to their car or meet their parents outside of the Bama.
- Everyone must leave the Bama between the second Friday school show and the Friday night show and between the Saturday afternoon and Saturday night shows. No one is allowed to remain at the Bama. TCT will not be responsible for cast members dropped off early or picked up late if there is no Parent Volunteer or Artistic Staff on site.
- If you would like for your child to come out in their costume to visit with friends and family, you must discuss this with them prior to the show. Parents will not be allowed into the Bama from the Stage Door to get their child. Parents must wait for them to come out.
- TCT will not be responsible for cast members dropped off early or picked up late if there is no Parent Volunteer or Artistic Staff on site.

Costumes

- Costume fittings will be scheduled by our Costumer. Cast members will be measured at rehearsal but may be required to go to another location for their fittings.
- Costumes are provided by TCT; however, you may have to purchase tights, socks, shoes and/or other accessories. Costumes and shoes are to stay at the Bama Theatre. No piece of your costume is to leave the theatre. Bring street clothes and shoes to change into before leaving. Bring a bag to place your own clothing in to keep the dressing rooms neat and clean. All costumes must be hung up before leaving each day. If your costume is found not hung up properly, it will be put into "Costume Jail".
- Please do not eat or drink in costumes. Only water is allowed while in costume. It is highly recommended to bring a personal water bottle. Do not sit on the floor in your costume as it may become dirty or damaged.
- No cast member will be allowed outside in costume if it is raining.

**Instructions for parent volunteers at rehearsals
in the TCT building
(include but not limited to):**

- Please do not bring other family members with you for your assigned shift.
- Sign in at the Volunteer Table.
- Check in with the Volunteer Coordinator.
- Please keep the cast members QUIET during rehearsal.
- If the cast members divide into groups, each group should have a Parent Volunteer.
- Check all the rooms and bathrooms to ensure they are put back in good order. Pick up trash, return chairs, tables, etc.
- For safety, a parent MUST come to the door to pick the cast members up if they are 8th grade and under. Please help us to enforce this safety rule. Cast members 9th grade and older are allowed to leave to go to their car or meet their parents in the parking lot.
- You must stay until each cast member has left. Please check in with the Volunteer Coordinator before you leave.

**Parent volunteers instructions for backstage assignments
at the Bama Theatre
(include but not limited to):**

- Please do not bring other family members with you for your assigned shift.
- *Green Room*: Make sure the cast members are quiet. Unless they have been called by someone on crew or need to change their costume, they should remain in the Green Room. No one should be in the wings unless they are called. When the show is over, please make sure that the room is cleaned up and chairs are straightened back up.
- *Stage Right Dressing Room*: This dressing room is usually for younger cast members. Help with changing costumes as needed. Once they have changed, they need to go to the Green Room and not remain in the dressing room. If they remain in the dressing rooms they may miss their calls. Make sure that cast members hang up their costumes, put their accessories in their bag, and put their character shoes on the floor. When the show is over, please make sure that the room is cleaned up before you leave.
- *Stage Right/Ramp*: Make sure the cast members are quiet in the wings and not talking or dancing. Do not allow the cast to run especially down the ramp.
- *Stage Left*: Make sure that cast members are quiet in the wings and not talking or dancing. Dressing rooms are usually for older cast members. Check the dressing rooms to ensure costumes are hung up and dressing rooms are cleaned once the show is over.
- *Stage Door*: Ensure no one enters the door unless they are a cast member, member of Artistic Staff, Crew, Parent Volunteer or Board Member. Please refer to rules regarding cast members' leaving the facility.
- Please do not leave until you have checked in/out with a Play Coordinator.

Other Ways Parents and Actors Can Help TCT

- Promote the show on your social media - Share posts about the show, make your own posts. Be sure to tag #TuscaloosaChildrensTheatre.
- Place posters around town – Grab a few show posters and place them at your school, place of worship, or local business.
- Sell tickets – Encourage your friends, family, co-workers, neighbors, and others to buy tickets early.
- Purchase a Break-A-Leg – Give your star a shout out in our Playbill Break-A-Leg pages. Prices from \$20-\$70. Watch your email for the form.
- Sell playbill ads – Playbills are expensive but a wonderful keepsake for cast and crew. Help us offset the cost by buying or selling an ad for the show. We offer ads from \$50 for a ¼ page black and white to \$300 for a color full page. Email mld1203@gmail.com for more info or see the handout in the Parent Folder.
- Buy items at the Gift Table – Actors love to receive gifts backstage during the show and TCT is happy to deliver items purchased from our Gift Table in the Bama lobby. All sales from the Gift Table support TCT.
- Sponsorships – Become a sponsor or help solicit a sponsor and put a spotlight on the company's image, delivering recognition as a valuable partner in delivering cultural and economic impact to our region. Prices are \$150 to be a Gift Table sponsor for a show and \$500 to be a Show Sponsor. Email tct.execdir@gmail.com for more information or see the details in your Parent Folder.

Miscellaneous Information

- In case of inclement weather, TCT will cancel shows and rehearsals in following with the Tuscaloosa City Schools closings.
- The week of shows there will be a photographer to take cast and individual pictures to purchase.
- There will be a gift table in the lobby of the Bama Theatre for you to purchase gifts for your child that may be sent backstage during the public shows.
- The week of the shows there will be a Cast Party. All cast members are invited. Please refrain from bringing siblings of the cast members.
- At the Cast Party, cast members will receive posters for their friends and the Artistic Staff to sign.

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