

A Day in the Life of a Child Performer

BY MATTEA CONFORTI

When you hear about "Broadway child actors," you may assume that we are all the same; that we all are homeschooled, or that we all live in New York City. Well, I am a child actor working on Broadway, but my life outside of the theater is very different from what you may be thinking. I do not live in New York City, and I am not homeschooled. I attend a public school in New Jersey, and most of my friends have nothing to do with show business at all. Some of my friends I have known since before I began acting professionally, and others I have met along the way. But to them, I am just Mattea, their crazy and fun-loving friend, who also happens to be on Broadway.

My typical day starts with a full day of school and then driving to New York City to the theater. I attend school every day except Wednesdays, when I go to a few morning classes but then leave early to make my matinee call time. When I miss school, I am tutored at the theater by my on-set teacher. It can be hard to miss school at times, but I try really hard—with the help of my parents and teachers—to stay organized and to keep an open line of communication with my school so that I can keep up with my assignments.

Once I am at the theater, I meet my guardian at the stage door, and I don't see my parents again until I come out after the show. Many people think that I have a parent backstage with me, or that either my mom or dad watches the show nightly, but that's not the case. Broadway kids are assigned guardians who are responsible for them during both rehearsals and performances. Our guardians make sure that we are happy, healthy, and safe at all times. You really develop a close relationship with your guardian. Mine has become like a big sister to me.



A Broadway child actor is also very lucky to develop close friendships with the people at their show. I have gotten very close to all the cast members, stage managers, crew, hair and makeup artists, dressers, security guards, and security dogs! The other *Frozen* girls are my "sisters," and I share a very special bond with them. When we are not doing our homework backstage, we play games together, do crafts, hang out—basically anything typical kids do to have fun.

Outside of the theater, I love to dance, sing, read, work out, play with my puppy, and play field hockey. I have been dancing since I was three years old, and before I got involved in acting, I was a competitive dancer. I still love to go to my dance school in New Jersey for lessons. In between shows on two-show days, I like to take dance or voice lessons with my New York-based teachers. I also love to spend my breaks with the other girls in the show. We try to take advantage of all New York City has to offer. Some of the things we like to do are get dinner at our favorite restaurants, have a picnic and play games in Bryant Park, and go to a movie, bowling, or to a museum.

I think it is very important for people to know that although working on Broadway is a lot of fun, it is also a lot of work, and it takes a lot of dedication, sacrifice, and support from family and friends to make it happen. I am so grateful that I have a very supportive family who have helped me achieve my dreams. I am especially grateful to my parents, grandparents, brother, and sister, who always support me no matter what, and who are an integral part of my journey.

