

How to Parent a Child in the Arts

Musical Festival Checklist



By Marion Abbott

What Is Your Child Performing When?

Most young artists perform multiple times in one festival.

Be sure you're super clear on what your child is performing and in what class on which day.

Have you checked in with their teacher?

When you receive the schedule, check in with their teacher ASAP. Do you both have the same information?

Is your child on track to be fully prepared to perform all of their pieces?

Have you booked extra lessons?

Don't wait until your child is panicking two days before their festival performance.

Book extra lessons when it feels like you have oodles of time left.

Leaving it to the last minute may result in your not being able to get the time your child needs to feel super comfortable.

Have You Hired An Accompanist?

If your child requires an accompanist, do NOT leave this to the last minute. Ask your child's teacher for suggestions.

Often festivals will have lists of accompanists they recommend. Trying to secure one at the last minute is an awful situation to be in.

Have you acquired/arranged to acquire the correct number of original copies?

Every festival requires the artist to provide the adjudicator with an original copy of their piece, and the accompanist if applicable.

If you purchase music online, make sure you've printed off your receipt as proof that you did in fact buy it.

Have you numbered the bars of music?

Sometimes festivals ask you to number (in pencil) the bars in your child's music. This saves the adjudicator valuable time as they write their comments. Instead of having to write 'At the part where the eighth notes speed up to the ...

'they can just write 'in bar 43 ...' This will enable them to

spend more time concentrating on your child's performance and not trying to explain which part of the music they're referring to in their notes.

Have you packed throat lozenges? Kleenex? A bottle of water?

You KNOW if you don't pack those things, you'll end up needing them desperately, right? Water, of course, is a must-have always.

Have you/your child dressed in layers?

Venues are either too hot or too cold, rarely 'just right'. Be sure to wear layers so you can adjust as needed.

No artist can perform properly if they're freezing cold.

Have you told your child's school they will be absent?

I was once at a festival with my son. My phone went off. It was his school, wondering where he was.

Take care of this as far in advance as possible so you don't have to worry about it on performance days.

Have you marked down the Venue address correctly?

You know that thing where you add an address to your e-calendar and then don't realize until it's too late that the helpful internet chose the same address in a different city? Or country? Triple check that the venue address matches what you've been given.

Have you planned your commute?

Check the weather and road closures. Or ask someone who loves looking up those sorts of things! Don't find out the hard way that the highway you were planning on taking is closed or that freezing rain is expected and you'll need to leave an extra half hour earlier.

Have you researched parking?

I think there's a special place on the 'Panic List' for the 'can't find parking and I'm late' experience.

It's the worst! God bless the internet where we research parking possibilities in advance!

Have you made sure you have cash on hand?

Most festivals charge a nominal fee for admittance and/or printed programs.

And most of them do not accept anything other than cash. Be sure to have on hand so you're not dashing to the closest ATM.

Have you remembered to breathe?

Exactly! You weren't breathing were you? Prepare as much as possible, but please remind yourself to breathe in the joy of watching young artists share their gifts. It will improve your heart health.