

theatre

AT THE J

Family Handbook

Spring 2025

theatre AT THE J

SPRING 2025 FAMILY HANDBOOK

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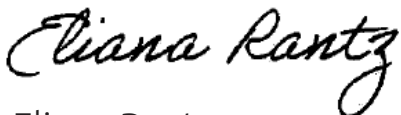
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Welcome to Theatre at the J!

Theatre at the J provides an outlet for creative expression and creates a safe space for children to find their place in the arts community. Designed to help each young artist reach their creative and personal potential, Theatre at the J will guide young actors through the development of self-confidence, learning the values of teamwork and collaboration, and strengthening their problem-solving skills. Working together to tell a story, each Theatre at the J Player will gain a deeper appreciation for and understanding of the theatre arts, all while forming lifelong friendships and strong connections in their community.

Thank you for your partnership and trusting me to create art with your children.

Sincerely,



Eliana Rantz
Theatre Director



Contact Information

Theatre Director:

513.644.0715

theatre@mayersonjcc.org

Communication Policy:

The majority of regular communication from Theatre at the J will be via email.

This includes important reminders and updates. Please note, unsubscribing from any MayerSON JCC emails will unsubscribe you from Theatre at the J communications as well.

We recommend saving theatre@mayersonjcc.org in your email address book to ensure you receive our emails.

Attendance & Participation

Pick-Up / Drop-Off Policy

Parents must drop off and pick up students in the theatre space. Please escort your child through the building and stay with them until they are with a Theatre at the J staff member.

Notification of Absences

A show is a commitment of time and energy. Make sure you review the rehearsal and performance schedule in advance of the start of session.

Do you anticipate any conflicts with soccer, music lessons, or other activities? If so, please **let the Director know of conflicts by email or phone in advance. All known conflicts must be submitted at the time of auditions.** Conflicts that arise after that date should be communicated to the Director with as much advanced notice as possible.

Behavior Policy

Theatre and children thrive with structure. We want participants to feel comfortable trying new things and expressing themselves. It is important that all participants treat one another with mutual respect and kindness. Participants will help craft rules as a company that center around the principals of respect, kindness, and creativity.

We will work to accommodate all participants' needs within reason. If, even with reasonable accommodations, participants exhibit behavior that either poses a safety risk to themselves or others, or is significantly disruptive to the process, staff will respond with the following discipline measures:

On first offense, the participant will receive a redirection during rehearsal and staff will check in with the caregiver at pick-up to notify them of the behaviors seen at rehearsal. We appreciate caregivers' partnership in addressing behavior at home, between rehearsals.

If the behavior persists at future rehearsals, a meeting with Director will be scheduled for the caregiver and participant prior to the next rehearsal to work as a team to find a solution.

In the event the behavior continues after these interventions, the participant will miss the next rehearsal and should return with a plan for their continued success within the company.

In extreme cases, if after all of the above measures have been tried, a participant may be told to leave the company. This option impacts the entire company, and would only be taken if the behaviors were extreme and all interventions had not resulted in a lasting change.

Examples of extreme behavior include:

- Use of hate speech (intentional or unintentional)
Hate speech is defined as any form of expression considered abusive or threatening, expressing prejudice on the basis of ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, or similar grounds.
- Physical aggression (intentional or unintentional)
Physical aggression is defined as behavior that causes or threatens harm to others.
- Leaving the space without notifying staff

Devices & Social Media Policy

To ensure a focused and productive theatre environment, we have a no-technology policy during class time. All devices (including phones and tablets) must remain in bags and be turned off or silent. We understand that caregivers and children may want or need to be in contact—we ask that this be limited to before or after class.

In case of an emergency, caregivers may call the JCC Welcome Desk at 513.761.7500 and ask that they be put in touch with or that their message is passed along to the Theatre Director.

Thank you for helping us maintain a safe, supportive, and focused environment.

Why Theatre?

Theatre is essential to our lives and to learning about the world around us. Students enter an imagined world of human beings and learn about life in a safe, yet cathartic environment, where they can see decisions being made, plans unfold, and consequences felt. This essentiality builds empathy in students as they immerse themselves into the thoughts, words, and actions of a character who may be in radical opposition to who they are. Theatre cultivates a sense of literacy, develops intuition and reasoning, and enhances students' ability to effectively communicate their thoughts and feelings.

Whether acting, singing, designing, or building, students grasp the entirety of the world of theatre and its processes from inception to completion, thus teaching the importance of responsibility and follow-through. By interacting in worlds and situations where there is no clear-cut right answer, students can flex creativity and problem-solving abilities in a space built on artistic value, respect, and collaboration that they can carry on into other aspects of life. Helping students pursue a passion in arts like theatre is an investment in our future as we create empowered, confident citizens who respect themselves and each other.

Elements of Theatre

Theatre is made up of many different aspects and there are many different ways to be involved in theatre. Each role is equally important and they all exist to tell stories.

In addition, the process of presenting a play offers young people the opportunity to develop social skills and learn valuable life lessons. Some examples follow:

- **Everyone's contributions are important.**
- Everyone must **work together**, encouraging **collaboration** and **community**.
- Children learn the importance of **listening** to each other speak and **waiting one's turn**. They take **positive risks** and conquer fears while **building self-confidence**.
- But the best part? **A show is a lot of fun for everyone involved**, no matter what part you have in the cast or crew.

The Process of a Show

- Meet and Build Community
- Ensemble Activities
- Audition Preparation
- Auditions
- Rehearsals (see full calendar)
 - Regular Classes: Music, Dance, and Blocking
 - Technical Rehearsals
 - Dress Rehearsals
- Performances
 - May 14 & 15 at 7pm** (Call Time: 5pm)
 - May 18 at 2pm** (Call Time: 12pm)
- Strike (breaking down the set after the show and cleaning up the space)
- Cast Party

Audition Announcement & Preparations

**Auditions will be held on the second week of the Theatre Session.
Please make every effort to be on time and in attendance that day.**

Auditions will include preparing an acting side (small section of the script) by selecting 1-2 characters to read for. Actors will also be asked to sing 16 bars of a song that will be given by the Music Director. The audition may also include a dance portion. Materials and information will be provided in advance of the audition with time to practice at home.

Auditions are presented in front of a panel of qualified members of the production team. Theatre is a collaborative effort, and it's important to remember the Director's role to see the big picture and guide every aspect of the production. Casting is always a giant puzzle of figuring out who will do the role well, and also what is best for the ensemble and the show. All parts are equally important as the show needs everyone to succeed. The goal is for our young actors to grow and learn no matter their role.

So, you're in the ensemble...

Prepare to own the show! Every role is essential to the story we are telling, and the ensemble is no exception. The ensemble numbers in any show bring the power and enthusiasm to the performance and can often make the biggest impression on the audience (and the cast!).

If your young actor is in the ensemble, please avoid saying anything that might diminish their confidence and pride in this important role (e.g. "just the ensemble" or "only the ensemble").

Parent/Guardian Involvement

Aside from the support and guidance you will offer your child, any extra time you have to volunteer on the production is welcome. Please let us know your particular skills or interests.

Volunteer Background Checks

Background checks are REQUIRED for all parent volunteers working directly with children.

To ensure the safety and well-being of our students, all parent volunteers must undergo a background check before being approved for volunteer opportunities at the J.

Background checks will be **coordinated by HR at the JCC at no cost to you** and scheduled at a time that is convenient for you. All background check information will be kept confidential.

We thank you for your cooperation and partnership.

Rehearsal / Show Supervision

Every parent is recommended to provide on-site supervision one day during the class session and at least once during tech week and/or performances.

- **Rehearsal Supervision:**
Supervise the cast backstage during practice. Remind them to be quiet when not on stage and help them listen for their cues.
- **Performance Supervision:**
Supervise the cast backstage before and during the show. Assist with costumes, cues, and other coordination.

Additional Opportunities

Every parent/guardian is encouraged to help with the production. No experience is necessary! This is a great chance to learn about theatre and create a strong community. (NOTE: For any activities that do not involve direct contact with children, background checks are not required.)

- **Playbill Ad Sales:**
We sell ads in our playbill to help offset the cost of the high-quality programming we offer. We are looking for parents to reach out to businesses, organizations, and individuals to purchase ad space in the playbill. Low cost and high visibility!
- **Costumes:** We appreciate any sewing talent, as well as help finding pre-made costumes.
- **Props:** Help us find, collect, and even make props for the show.
- **Set Construction and/or Painting**
- **Hair & Makeup:**
Share your makeup skills and help the cast get into character for the performances.
- **Cast Party:** Help us plan and throw a cast party at the end of the season!

Please email theatre@mayersonjcc.org with your interest, availability, and skills!

Thank you for partnering with us and trusting us with your children.
We look forward to an amazing season with you.

theatre AT THE J



MAYERSON JCC
of Cincinnati

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