

## Is my child ready for an agent?

Every year dozens of people contact me seeking representation for their children. This information sheet will hopefully help you as you make the decision as to whether or not you feel the industry is right for your family.

1. The general qualities agents look for in inexperienced actors are:
  - a. Instant comfort in new situations and meeting new people. Auditions are 5 minutes long, there is not time for your child to “warm up”
  - b. Imagination
  - c. The ability to be believable in expressing a variety of emotions. This is not to be confused with “being a ham” or being able to parrot characters in movies. Film acting is realistic.
  - d. Clear diction and reading level typical of the age range of the child.
  - e. A genuine interest in acting on the *child's* part.
  - f. Self-confidence, one in 10 auditions gets you the part. The actor (and parent) must be able to deal with this.
  - g. General good manners and the ability to listen and take direction well. A set is an adult work environment. Children with attention problems will not function well in this setting.
  - h. Academic success, shoots will take place on school days. Actors miss school, if your child is struggling, acting professionally is not a good option.
2. The costs of entering the business:
  - a. Professional head-shots.
  - b. Resumes (may be prepared by the parents)
  - c. Listing fees (applicable to other agencies, I do not charge an annual fee)
  - d. An introductory workshop on auditioning for film techniques. I offer a 1 day workshop four times a year. Other agents may require different classes.
3. The general qualities agents look for in parents:
  - a. Flexibility, I can generally give you 24 hours notice about auditions and background work. Call time for actual work days can be as early as 6:00am. Film and television crews will not work around your schedule, you must accommodate theirs.
  - b. Availability, children under 16 must have a chaperone with them at all time. Agents are not chaperones nor are productions crews. This is both for your child's safety and insurance purposes.
  - c. Support but not pressure
  - d. Located in the Halifax area.
  - e. Reliable transportation, productions do not provide transportation. Call times are often so early that public transportation would not work.
4. Auditions:
  - a. Usually 5-7 minutes in length, outside school hours. Some will be during school hours.
  - b. Children should audition without their parent in the room. (except for preschoolers)
  - c. Union members have preference of audition, this means they are considered for roles and/or auditioned before nonmembers.
  - d. Commercial auditions are often improvised, occasionally they are scripted.
  - e. Film and TV roles are almost always scripted. Your agent will get the script to you ahead of time and your child must have it memorized.

5. Guarantees:
  - a. None, any agent who makes promises is not telling you the truth. If I say your child has potential, I will send them to auditions they are appropriate for.
  - b. My busiest age group over all is men 35-50, my busiest age group among my minors is boys and girls 8-12. I am currently seeking children in that age group as well as 6-8 year olds. I will take on talents in other age groups, if they are serious about the business and have non-professional training and experience.

In conclusion, I would like to remind parents that acting is not for every child. It is an innate skill and some children will excel in acting as other children excel in sports, music or other activities. If you decide that your family is ready to pursue work for your children in the acting business, talk to agents. Find the one that fits your family the best. Beware of anyone who requires that you spend a large amount of money up front. (For example, expensive classes, the agency photographer, listing fees, etc.) A good agent will work hard on behalf of your child and will always keep their best interests in mind,

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