

1. Theatre (West End & Touring)

Overview

Theatre is a live, repetitive and highly disciplined environment. It requires a child to maintain consistent energy and precision for every performance across a long-term contract. Unlike film, there are no "second takes"—once the curtain rises, the child is performing in real-time.

Key Industry Terms

- **The Half:** The 35-minute warning before showtime (all cast members must be in the building).
- **Tech Rehearsal:** A long rehearsal focusing on integrating lighting, sound, and scene changes with the performers.
- **Sitzprobe:** The first rehearsal where the cast sings alongside the full live orchestra.

The Working Environment

- Buildings are often old, maze-like, and physically challenging (steep stairs, cramped dressing rooms).
- Backstage can be loud and fluctuate between very hot and very cold.
- The stage area carries inherent risks, including automated floors, moving scenery, trip hazards, and occasional pyrotechnics.

Key On-Site Team Members

- **Children's Administrator / Head Chaperone:** Primary point of contact for schedules and logistics.
- **Resident Director (RD):** Maintains the show's daily artistic standards.
- **Dance Captain:** Ensures choreography stays sharp and safe.
- **Stage Manager (SM):** Oversees the stage area and calls all technical cues.

Expectations & Hours

- **Expectations:** Exceptional punctuality, off-stage discipline (quiet and focused), and the ability to take notes and apply them immediately to the next performance.
- **Hours:** Late finishes, matinees (afternoon shows), and weekend shifts are standard. Children work on a regulated rota system to stay within legal working limits.

Communication Guidelines

- **Primary Contact:** Always speak to the Chaperone or Children's Administrator.
- **On-Site Concerns:** Raise any immediate issues directly with the Chaperone.
- **External Concerns:** Address broader issues via your child's agent or Local Authority (LA).
- **The "No-Go" Zone:** Never approach the Director or Lead Actors directly to discuss your child—it is considered highly unprofessional.

What to Pack

- **Quiet Hobbies:** Books or puzzles for dressing room downtime (no loud electronics).
- **Personal Hygiene Kit:** Deodorant, hairbrushes, and makeup wipes (if stage makeup is required).

Post-Project Aftercare

- **"Post-Show Blues":** The tight-knit "family" created during a run disappears suddenly when a show closes.
- **Transition:** Plan a restful, normalizing period with friends to help your child readjust to everyday life.