

ECT

elmhurst children's theatre



behind the
SCENES

Everything you need
to know about an
Elmhurst Children's Theatre
Production

www.elmhurstchildrenstheatre.com
P.O. Box 64 | Elmhurst, Illinois | 60126

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Thank you for your interest in Elmhurst Children's Theatre. We hope this brochure provides some insight into our productions.

Elmhurst Children's Theatre is dedicated to providing children in fifth through eighth grade, who are Elmhurst residents or who attend an Elmhurst school, a unique experience in all aspects of live theatre.

ECT productions are produced by professional directors, music directors and choreographers, hired by the ECT Board. The ECT Board is not involved in auditions or casting decisions in any way. The ECT Board simply performs an administrative function in support of the directors, facilitating auditions, rehearsals and performance processes.

ECT is a volunteer theatre company that offers a professional, safe, and low-cost environment in which your children learn about live theater and showcase their talents. In return, we require every family make a commitment to ECT. In addition to sharing talents, we need both actors and parents to promise to work hard and work as a team.

Questions

If you have any questions at any time, please don't hesitate to contact a member of the ECT Board.

President

Jessica Donato - jdonato@elmhurstchildrenstheatre.com

President-Elect

Trisha Graham - tgraham@elmhurstchildrenstheatre.com

Production Coordinator

Jenny Lukas - jlukas@elmhurstchildrenstheatre.com

Production Coordinator

Jeanne Plaisted - jplaisted@elmhurstchildrenstheatre.com

Treasurer

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Secretary

Mary Eileen Kungl - mekungl@elmhurstchildrenstheatre.com

Class Coordinator

Michele LoConte - mloconte@elmhurstchildrenstheatre.com

Class Coordinator

Michelle Walker - mwalker@elmhurstchildrenstheatre.com

Member-At-Large

Sara Clark - sclark@elmhurstchildrenstheatre.com

Auditions

Children in fifth through eighth grade, who are Elmhurst residents or who attend an Elmhurst school, may audition for an ECT show.

You can sign up to audition on the ECT website at www.elmhurstchildrenstheatre.com. There are two steps to signing up for an audition — completing the permission form and signing up for an audition time. The website has all the audition and show details including the audition time and date, contract night time and date, preliminary rehearsal schedule and audition requirements.

Please note, parents are not allowed to sit in on auditions. Board members will have cell phones available to call for pickup, once your child's audition is complete.

If you have ongoing out-of-town travel plans or other repeated commitments, we ask that your child not audition. If your child is a part of the cast, s/he must be available for ALL required rehearsals, with only one excused absence allowed.

What Happens Next?

After auditions, ECT production coordinators will send emails to all those who auditioned. Advancing children will be invited to a second audition, a.k.a. callbacks. Please note that being called back does not guarantee your child will be cast in the show. After callbacks, production coordinators will send you another email to let you know if your child has been cast in the show. You then need to decide if you and your family can meet the commitments outlined in this brochure, as well as, in the email from the production coordinators.

Should your child decline his/her role for any reason, ECT will need to be informed within the time frame given by the production coordinators in the casting email.

Contract Night

If your child is cast in the show, you and your child are required to attend "Contract Night." When cast, you will be given a password to the Members area of the ECT website. There you will find all the documents listed below. On contract night you will be asked to:

- Pay the non-refundable activity fee of \$300, payable to ECT;
- Turn in a signed Parent Contract and Cast Contract; and
- Sign up for a parent committee.

Communication

Communication is key! Throughout the show, our primary method of communication will be email. The production coordinators (PCs) will send weekly emails regarding the rehearsal schedule and other important info. Check your email frequently, especially on rehearsal days! There can be last minute changes. If you

have a Comcast email and can provide an alternate address, please do so, as Comcast tends to block ECT emails.

Your production coordinators — and main contacts — are Jenny Lukas and Jeanne Plaisted. They can be reached at:

Jenny Lukas - (608) 320-2105 or jlukas@elmhurstchildrenstheatre.com

Jeanne Plaisted - (773) 405-5683 or jplaisted@elmhurstchildrenstheatre.com

If your child will be late or absent, notify one of the PCs right away. Call either Jenny or Jeanne's cell phone if it is within an hour of rehearsal time. They do not have access to email at rehearsals.

There may be times when your child is dismissed early from a scheduled rehearsal, and s/he will call you to be picked up. Your child is welcome to use the PC's phone to call. A parent or guardian must be available by phone during all rehearsal times, in case of emergency.

The ECT website, www.elmhurstchildrenstheatre.com, should be used as a resource for information. Many documents will be stored there and regularly updated, including rehearsal and cast sitting schedules. Additionally, you can 'like' us on Facebook, follow us on Instagram ([ect_shows](https://www.instagram.com/ect_shows)) and Twitter ([@ECTShows](https://twitter.com/ECTShows)) for general ECT updates.

Attendance Policy

ONLY ONE ABSENCE IS ALLOWED AND IT MUST BE EXCUSED IN ADVANCE BY THE PRODUCTION COORDINATORS.

If your child is a part of the cast, he or she must be available for ALL required rehearsals, with only one excused absence allowed. The children work as a cohesive team, and the absence of one person can prevent the entire group from achieving their rehearsal goals. An absence (other than those due to illness) without prior approval from ECT will mean dismissal from the cast. No refunds will be offered. Repeated absences due to illness may, unfortunately, also lead to dismissal, at the director and the ECT Board's discretion.

We understand that special circumstances and events arise that would require more than one excused absence from rehearsal. We ask that you list these potential conflicts on your registration form so that the production team is prepared. We are aware of most D205 performance dates and kindly ask that you include the D205 conflicts on the registration form. An unacceptable conflict would include a regular repeating event, such as a class every Monday night. Failure to include a known conflict will be treated as an unexcused absence.

Tardiness

We ask all cast to arrive at our rehearsal venues 10 minutes before start time. Most rehearsals are scheduled for 6:30 p.m., so plan on arriving at 6:20 p.m. Late arrivals disrupt rehearsals, and, with a tight rehearsal schedule, we have no time to waste. After the first occurrence of tardiness, cast members will be given a warning. After two occurrences of tardiness, a parent must meet with the production coordinators, or whole ECT Board, to discuss attendance or dismissal from the program.

Behavior

We need to use every minute of our cast's and director's time productively. We will notify parents if cast members are repeatedly disruptive or cause damage to our rehearsal spaces. This type of behavior may also lead to dismissal from the cast.

Rehearsals

The first rehearsal is Contract Night. Please review the rehearsal schedule on the ECT website before registering. You must confirm your child is available all dates noted and include known conflicts on the registration. Once your child is assigned a part in the cast, please check the detailed rehearsal schedule located in the Members area of the website carefully. Your child may not be called to every rehearsal or for the entire rehearsal time.

It is possible that additional rehearsals will be added to the posted rehearsal schedule, and we will notify you of those, as soon as the information is available. For the most recent complete rehearsal schedule, please see our website.

The week before the show is called tech week. This is when the entire production is put together. These rehearsals are on stage and includes fine tuning the sets, lights and sound. Tech week rehearsals begin as early as 5:00 p.m. and end as late as 10:00 p.m. We will make every effort to reduce these hours, if possible. The entire cast must attend all tech week rehearsals. While we realize this is a long time, there is often down time, as the tech details are refined. We encourage cast members to bring homework for the quiet times.

Do Parents Play a Role?

ABSOLUTELY! Elmhurst Children's Theatre is a 100-percent volunteer organization. Parents create costumes, build sets, procure props and market our shows. There is a significant time commitment required for both parents and actors alike. Many people ask how much time they will need to commit... well, that depends on the committee and the show. Your time might be concentrated over a few weekends or evenings of building sets; or spread out over the entire production, searching online for costume pieces or shopping thrift stores for props and costumes; or writing press releases, selling ads, marketing the show, and scheduling eat-and-earns.

At Contract Night it is mandatory for one parent from each family to sign up for a committee: Sets, Costumes, Props, or Marketing. Please review the committee descriptions below before attending contract night. In addition, a parent from each family will be assigned to cast sit during rehearsals.

Committees

As previously stated, each family will sign up for a committee on Contract Night. The four committees needed to produce a show are: Sets, Props, Costumes and Marketing. The committees will be sized based on the needs of each show. A committee chair will be identified for each committee and will meet with the director to understand his or her vision, and then work with the committee to bring that vision to life. With everyone's participation, no single person should be overloaded with duties. Every little bit helps! Trisha Graham is responsible for coordinating the committees and is happy to help in any way.

Failure to fulfill your volunteer committee duties could result in a meeting with the Board and reduction of your child's role in the current or future ECT productions.

Marketing Committee: Responsible for the show poster, T-shirt, program, press releases, group sales, cast party, eat-and-earns, and other marketing activities needed to promote the show.

Props Committee: Provide all hand-props that the actors carry on and off stage, as defined by the Director. Create any unique items needed to decorate the stage.

Costume Committee: Find, acquire, and create all of the costumes for the cast as envisioned by the Director. Costume creation may include, but is not limited to, searching through ECT's (or other) "costume closets" for suitable items to use/modify; using glue gun, needle, thread and bedazzlers to create/embellish costume items; shopping at thrift stores or elsewhere to acquire items as needed; sewing garments that will be created from scratch or need alterations; or organizing, labeling and cleaning rented costumes.

Sets Committee: Design, build and paint stage settings as envisioned by the Director. This includes using the ECT platforms and periactoids that are in the storage locker. The sets committee is responsible for moving and assembling all of the set pieces into the auditorium during set load (usually the Saturday or Sunday before the Monday of tech week). The committee is also responsible for striking the set and returning all pieces to storage or elsewhere as necessary.

Reimbursement

Each committee has a limited budget, and all purchases must be approved by the committee chair. Committee members are not expected to purchase show items out of their own pockets. To receive reimbursement for expenses, print out the reimbursement form in the Members area of the website, include your receipts and give the form and receipts to the ECT treasurer. All receipts are due by the last show. We can also provide you with a tax exempt letter for purchases and have tax exempt accounts at several stores in the area.

Cast Sitting

Each family will be scheduled to cast sit at rehearsals. At least one production coordinator will be present at each rehearsal to oversee the entire session and assist the director, as necessary. Cast sitters are responsible for maintaining a productive working environment for the director. This includes quieting cast members down, helping to keep cast members on task, and separating cast members, if necessary.

Cast sitters need to arrive ten minutes before rehearsal begins and stay the entire rehearsal, in order to help the production coordinator be sure all cast members have been picked up at the end of rehearsal. If you have to switch your scheduled day with another parent, please inform one of the production coordinators of the change. Check in with Jenny or Jeanne to see how you can be most helpful, if you are unsure.

Responsibilities of Cast Sitters

- Assist the directors and production coordinators, as needed, especially if the rehearsal separates into two rooms. We need an adult present in each room.
- Keep actors quiet and orderly during rehearsals.
- Watch that actors are safely picked up at the end of their rehearsal time. This is a hands-on job, and even though there may be some down time, we ask that you save your phone/book/etc. for another time. We have a great group of kids, but we have such a short time for rehearsals, and sometimes they need to be reminded to stay focused during this time.

Please do not hesitate to let the production coordinators know if you have any questions or concerns.

Clean up

After the final Sunday performance, at least one member from each family is required to stay and help break down the set, clean up the auditorium, transport items to our storage facility, etc. Each family will be assigned a specific task to complete. This task list will be distributed during tech week.

Poster Distribution

Under the direction of the Marketing Committee, cast members will meet on a weekend in downtown Elmhurst to distribute the show posters to various downtown businesses. This typically takes about an hour. It is not mandatory, but a lot of fun for the kids! Please check the rehearsal schedule on the website for date and time.

Spreading the Word

Cast members and their families will be asked to help spread the word about our show. Show details will be emailed to you a few weeks before the show in hopes that you to forward the invitation to your friends, families and neighbors. Social media is a powerful marketing tool! We will also distribute a smaller version of our poster that you can print and hand-deliver as you are able. The kids take great pride in advertising the show, and enjoy providing autographs to their "fan club" after performances.

Costumes

The costume committee will provide you with all costume items and/or instructions for assembling your child's costume. A costume rental fee might be required of cast members depending on the costume needs of the production. You may be asked to purchase small items such as tights, shoes, etc. All costumes must be approved by the director. During tech week, your child will be provided a laundry basket in which to store his/her costume and personal props. They will bring the basket to and from rehearsal, as instructed. They need to keep track of their props and costume items and keep them in good condition. After the last show, all ECT provided costumes and the laundry baskets will be taken home by cast members for cleaning, then returned to the costume chair within seven days.

Make-up

Stage make-up should be worn by all actors at dress rehearsals and performances, as instructed. Parents provide the basic stage make-up for their child. Make-up must not be shared. Special make-up effects may be in order for some characters.

Program Notes and Advertising

Each cast member's family will have the opportunity to place a complimentary congratulatory ad in the program. Information regarding this will be emailed as we get closer to the show. There is also the opportunity to place a paid ad in the program. Please contact any board member for more information.

Stage Crew and Ushers

For each of our productions we are looking for middle school and high school students to work back stage, lights, sound, etc. We also need ushers at each show to pass out the programs. These are usually younger siblings of the cast members. An email will be sent with information regarding the process to sign up for stage crew and ushering.

Show Tickets

Each family will receive two complimentary tickets to the show. Additional tickets are sold at the door for general seating inside the auditorium. For groups of 12 or more, ECT offers priority seating, and the option of a backstage tour. Great for Scout Troops and other group outings. Contact Mary Eileen Kungl for group sales.

Cast Party

There will be a cast party after the final performance on Sunday afternoon in the cafeteria. Pizza and cake will be served. Each cast member is given a show poster to have signed at the party.