

Letter for First Time Hot Shoe Show parents,

I know many of you have questions about our upcoming show. I hope I can cover most of them in this letter. If your questions are still not answered, or if something is confusing, please don't hesitate to call or ask. This has become second nature to us, but it can be overwhelming the first couple of times. I believe that sharing information will make this a more enjoyable event for all of us.

The first rehearsal your child has at the auditorium will be the Thursday before the show. **This first rehearsal is for “blocking”**, during which one level at a time works onstage. The students will run through their dances in regular dance clothes. This time is used to help the students become familiar with the stage. Please remember to arrive at least 15 minutes before the time listed, so your dancer is ready to go at their time. This helps us stay on schedule. After their time on stage, we will show you and your child the backstage dressing area and we will have a briefing to answer questions about which costume your dancer(s) should come dressed in first, how to have their hair, and any other question you may have. At either this rehearsal or Friday's Dress rehearsal, the videographer will be doing interviews with the dancers for the show DVD. **ALL dancers** are encouraged to participate, as it makes our DVDs extra special.

At dress rehearsal on Friday, your dancer(s) will come dressed in their first costume, which will be posted in the studio and on the web site; you will also be given the same info during the briefing at the first rehearsal. Those in the opening number will arrive in this year's HSS shirt. All other costumes need to be in a box or basket labeled with the dancer's name. The dancer's name needs to be on EVERY piece of costumes & shoes, in a place that cannot be seen when it is worn, so that we can find the rightful owner of anything that becomes misplaced. Please have makeup already applied to save us time. If you have questions about the type of application, there will be a stage make-up class offered at the studio. Please ask about date and time. The dress rehearsal will run longer than the actual show. This time is used to make sure the costumes are properly lighted and stage cues are correct. Therefore, we

will try to run the babies out of sequence so that we can let them go home early. Your patience will be appreciated, if we are running behind schedule. We make every attempt to stay on schedule; but, when you are working with 100 plus people, sometimes your best intentions just don't work out.

We prefer that people do not watch dress rehearsal, **BUT** if you insist, only those with a ticket for the show will be permitted to watch. **Dress rehearsal is the ONLY time you may take pictures and videos of your dancer.** I know you want close-ups, and during the real show, pictures and filming are not allowed. We are trying to give a big time production feel to the show and teach the students about theatre etiquette. We teach our students about proper audience behavior such as no filming, no flash photography, turning off cell phones and removing crying babies, no yelling out from the audience, and no getting up in the middle of a routine. All of these things can distract the dancers and undermine all their hard work. Please, help us by setting good examples.

We will have room-moms to help dress the children and younger dancers will have older dancers as buddies to help with changes as well. We will also have videotapes and you can send crayons and coloring books. **No markers** because they can get on costumes. **We cannot have food backstage**, as a rule of the auditorium, as well as common sense; it can ruin costumes. We will provide Cheerios and water for the dancers. If you still send snacks, please send salt-free, grease-free, mess-free snacks. Also, please, give them to the adult in the room to control the messes. Make sure to feed the dancers before the dress rehearsal and show. Only parents who volunteer to be room parents are allowed backstage during dress rehearsal or the show, it raises the anxiety level of the children and there is not enough space. Remember, it is important to us too that your child looks good and has a great time, so help us prepare them by letting them know that mom lets you off at the door and then goes around to the front to her seat. We are very good at calming nerves, but occasionally one of the dancers will need some extra attention and we will come get you, if we need you. If you have any concerns about these arrangements, please talk to us ahead of time so we can make everyone comfortable.

We will have a videographer filming the night of the show. He will set up at the back of the auditorium and DVD copies are for sale. You can place your order at the studio. Dancers love to watch themselves over and over. I understand if you would like up close shots of your special dancer. After dress rehearsal, the stage is open for pictures or videos of them doing their dance. For the safety of all our dancers, please don't film or take pictures during actual performances, you may take pictures and videos at dress rehearsal.

We never really know just what young children are going to do when faced with a large audience. Most of the time they enjoy themselves and do what we have practiced, but some can be frightened by all the people or feel afraid of making a mistake. We work very hard to help them with these fears and try to make this experience an enjoyable one. Children pick up on the anxieties of the adults around them so try to be positive about their performance, even if it is less than what you expected. In a few years they will have learned to face an audience with ease.

The show will run about 3 hours including intermission. In fact, it is such a long show that we discourage very young children from coming to the show. We ask that you buy a ticket, even for a baby, to be respectful of the comfort of those around you. On the night of the show do not arrive too early---**OUR ROOM MOMS MAY NOT BE THERE YET AND THIS CAUSES A PROBLEM BECAUSE SOMEONE HAS TO WATCH YOUR CHILD.** Check the rehearsal schedule for your dancer's time. The dancers stay backstage throughout the entire show and are involved in the final number. We will have a video party at the studio when the video is complete, so that we can watch our performance. We will send out invites as soon as we have a date, so watch your e- mail.

I hope this has helped with some of the questions you may have. As always, we are here to help with any other needs or questions. We are very excited about the show and very glad that your child and you are a part of it!