



53 Children's Activities

Story thanks to
Leigh Boswell

acting up

Involving your child in drama has many benefits, writes Leigh Boswell

Last month the World Theatre for Children and Young People Day was celebrated across the world with many youth theatre organisations reflecting on the benefits that drama offers children. These days, the process of growing up has so many challenges for children that participating in theatre can provide an escape or release from these everyday pressures.

Drama isn't just for those children who are already a 'Drama King or Queen'. Yes, it is a great outlet for these children to express their creative ideas and talents but it also benefits those children who might be shy about raising their hand in class or putting their opinion forward.

Drama can benefit a child's development in many ways and here's just a few of them:

[1] Creative Thinking

Drama allows kids to think creatively by developing their imagination. Children who are able to think creatively often become the entrepreneurs and leaders of the future as they have the ability to invent and create solutions.

[2] Self-confidence

Drama builds a child's confidence and self-esteem in a fun and empowering environment. They obtain self-assurance by understanding there is no ultimate answer within drama and that their own personal point of view, as well as their own contribution, is very important.

[3] Literacy and Numeracy Skills

Drama is a wonderful way for children to interact with, and interpret literature, or text of any sort, even their own. By memorising a scripted play or devising their own creative story, drama allows kids to analyse how a character's personality and actions influence a storyline. In doing so they practice many of the higher order thinking skills in a playful context. They must think critically, apply knowledge to new situations, analyse, solve problems and make decisions – all skills that will benefit them at school.

[4] Social skills

These days, children can be absorbed in technology but drama encourages them to get up and connect with others and in doing so, they become more socially aware and develop more confident spoken communication.

[5] Communication Skills

Drama allows children to explore their own facial expressions and apply them to different scenarios and characters. They also experiment with their vocal abilities through voice training and specific body movements to get their character's message across to its audience; skills which transfer into their normal everyday lives.

[6] Emotional Intelligence

By participating in drama, children can transport themselves into the hearts, minds, bodies and

stories of other characters. In this way, they can gain a deeper understanding of others and they learn tolerance 'by walking a mile in another's shoes'.

[7] Cooperation

In our rush to have children acquire academic learning, we often forget their personal and social development. The emphasis in drama is on working as a team and working collaboratively rather than hogging the limelight.

[8] Friendship

Drama is fun and a place where children can be creative and silly. By its very nature it has the ability to create strong lifelong friendships with children as they laugh, learn and grow together week after week.

Leigh Boswell is the Artistic Director of The Young Company. The Young Company is a locally based not-for-profit youth theatre organisation in Cairns which holds acting classes for children aged 3yrs – 17yrs. For more information phone **4041 4066** or visit www.theyoungcompany.com.au

FREE OFFER

If you think your child would be interested in trying out a drama class The Young Company is offering PakMag readers a **FREE TRIAL WORKSHOP** in April.

To book in please contact them via email info@theyoungcompany.com.au and just mention PakMag!