

Children and young people in entertainment

Information for Parents

When your child becomes involved in the entertainment industry it is exciting for all of you and your child may gain many positive experiences. You can be reassured that laws are in place to protect your child's welfare and prevent them from being exploited. For example, your child may have a Chaperone. It is also important that as parents you are satisfied as to the safety of the environment in which your child will be working. This information sheet helps parents think about some of the issues.

Does your child need a licence to perform?

- Every child from birth to compulsory school leaving age, who is taking part in a public performance, must have a licence or exemption issued by their local authority.
- The person(s) responsible for the production will make the application for the licence. This is usually the television or production company.
- You will be asked to complete part of the application form and supply a copy of your child's birth certificate and photographs. Ensure you read part 1 of the application form as this provides details of your child's performance.
- The licence applicant must inform the Licensing Authority who will be looking after your child's welfare during the production. This must be an approved chaperone, however as parent/legal guardian, you can chaperone your own child.
- It is important that your child's education does not suffer. You must obtain school permission for any school absence and in some circumstances a tutor may be provided by the production company. It is important that you liaise closely with school to assess the impact on your child of frequent performances.

How can you prepare your child?

- Talk to your child about all aspects of keeping safe.
- Make it easy for them to withdraw from situations in which they feel uncomfortable.
- Encourage them to have someone to talk to about any difficulties or concerns.
- Don't let your child give out their mobile telephone number, email address, home address etc. to anyone, without your consent.

What you should look out for

- Activities where parents are discouraged from watching.
- Poor communication with you and your child.
- Individuals who show favouritism.
- Children spending time alone with an adult involved in the production or assignment.
- If your child's basic health and safety needs are not being met, e.g. lack of refreshments, inappropriate clothing, lack of sunscreen etc.
- You feel that the physical state of the environment is unsafe for them to work in.
- Concerns regarding the way your child's Chaperone is working with your child.

Parents acting as chaperones

- As a parent chaperone you cannot look after any child other than your own unless you are an approved chaperone.
- You must remain with your child at all times.
- You must ensure that suitable refreshment, rest and toilet facilities are available.

- You must ensure that the child is receiving the required rest breaks and not working more hours than allowed under the Regulations, taking into account any conditions on the licence.
- If your child becomes ill or is under too much stress, then you have the right to stop him/her from performing until you are satisfied he/she is well enough to continue.
- Your child's continued wellbeing overrides the needs of the producer and if you have to take some action against the licence holder's wishes, you must contact the Licensing Authority.
- Further information regarding the role of the chaperone can be found in the 'Guidance for Chaperones' booklet on the Blackpool Council website – www.blackpool.gov.uk

What can you do if you have concerns?

- Discuss your concerns with the local authority which has issued the licence.
- Do not hesitate to withdraw your child – their long-term safety and happiness is most important.

Help and advice

Useful contacts:

Blackpool Child Employment Team	01253 476578 / 476588
Blackpool Council Customer First	01253 477477
NSPCC – Freefone Helpline	0808 800 5000
Childline Freefone	0800 1111

If you are concerned about a child, phone Blackpool Council Social Care Duty Team on 01253 477299

Child Employment Team / Children's Services / Blackpool Council /
childemployment@blackpool.gov.uk
www.blackpool.gov.uk