

Fantasia Family Music School Programs

What is our philosophy?:

Fantasia Family Music creates performing arts programs for all children regardless of experience or expertise focusing instead on their exposure, energy and excellence of preparation. This means that all children get equal opportunity to dance, speak and sing on stage. There are no "leads" at the elementary level and all who work hard and participate become "stars". Just as reading, writing and soccer skills are developed through exposure and practice, performing skills are not limited to a special few. We believe that the format of a musical best fits the developmental stages of the elementary child and offers the optimum experience for all types of learners. Anyone can learn to be a good performer and speak, sing, dance, memorize lines and act. Each of these experiences enhances one's education and lifelong artistic expression.

What do our programs look like?

Our original, age appropriate musicals draw from a variety of genres, ranging from traditional to pop, show tunes to movie scores as well as some original selections. The staging includes choreography that may range from creative movement to country western to swing. When the children have mastered most of the music and dance, we work on interweaving libretto and narrators to deliver a lively 40 to 70 minute show.

Each of our musical programs is custom designed and written to "fit" the children. In order for everyone to take part equally, each student will learn and perform in:

1. All grade level number(s)
2. All class or group numbers
3. Dramatic skit

Themes are not necessarily curriculum based but include a wide range of topics appropriately planned for the respective grade level. (For a list of our musicals, please see Attachment A.) We believe that providing live professional musicians to accompany each dress rehearsal and show provides a unique and fascinating experience for the child that further teaches them about collaboration and teamwork.

Why add more to the week of busy activities?

- Children are born performers. They love to get attention for anything from a jump off the diving board to a cartwheel. That “Mom, Dad, look at me!” never goes away. Unfortunately many parents and schools make the determination that a “talent” for music and acting has to exist before much concentration is placed in that area.
- Arts education is a fundamental part of the core curriculum according to the CA Dept. of Ed. and State Board of Education. which states that, “the arts foster students’ abilities to develop problem-solving skills, flexibility, creativity, cooperative approaches, persistence and responsibility as well as oral and written language skills.”
- The arts enhance the process of learning. The systems they nourish, which include our integrated sensory, attentional, cognitive, emotional and motor capacities, are the driving forces behind all other learning. That doesn’t mean that one cannot learn without the arts; many have. The arts, however, provide learners with opportunities to simultaneously develop and mature multiple brain system, none of which are easy to assess because they support processes that yield cumulative results. It may be more important to value the nonacademic benefits of the arts. Why be sheepish about the possibility that the arts may promote self-discipline and motivation? What’s embarrassing about countless other art benefits that include aesthetic awareness, cultural exposure, social harmony, creativity, improved emotional expression and appreciation of diversity. Aren’t these the underpinnings of a healthy culture?
Arts with the Brain in Mind; Eric Jensen, Assn. For Supervision and Curriculum Development
- The arts are one of mankind’s most visual and essential forms of language and if we do not educate our children in the symbol system called the arts, we will lose not only our culture and civility but our humanity as well.
- Adding Performing Arts to the curriculum is on the cutting edge of elementary education. California high schools recently added requirement, as UC and private colleges requiring such.

- SAT scores: Arts' students scored higher on the SAT: 61 points higher on the verbal and 46 points higher on the math than students with no arts participation.
-- 1995 College-Bound Seniors National Report, "Profile of SAT Program Test Takers" The College Entrance Examination Board, Princeton, NJ
- I have long believed in the important role that music and the arts can play in helping students learn, achieve and succeed. Education in theater, dance and the visual arts is one of the most creative ways we have to find the gold that is buried just beneath the surface. They (children) have enthusiasm for life, a spark of creativity and vivid imaginations that need training...training that prepares them to become confident young men and women.
-- -- US Secretary of Education Richard W. Riley, AMC News, 3/21/98
- The US Department of Labor issued a report urging schools to teach and prepare children entering in the future workplace. The skills they recommend (working in teams, communication, self-esteem, creative thinking, imagination and invention) are exactly those learned in school music education programs.
-- -- Goals 2000: Educate America Act

In "Champions of Change: The Impact of the Arts on Learning," the contributors highlight some of the "take-home" messages about arts:

1. The arts reach students not ordinarily reached, in ways not normally used. This keeps tardies and truancies and, eventually, dropouts down.
2. Students connect to each other better - greater camaraderie, fewer fights, less racism, and reduced use of hurtful sarcasm.
3. It changes the environment to one of discovery. This can re-ignite the love of learning in students tired of being filled up with facts.
4. Arts provide challenges for students at all levels, from delayed to gifted. It's a class where all students can find their own level, automatically.
5. Arts connect learners to the world of real work where theater, music, and products have to appeal to a growing consumer public.
6. Students learn to become sustained, self-directed learners, not a repository of facts from direct instruction for the next high-stake test.
7. Students of lower socioeconomic status gain as much or more from arts instruction than those of higher socioeconomic status. This suggests the gifted programs need to expand their targets.
