

CASTING (AUDITION) GUIDELINES

COVID NOTE: As of this writing in late 2024, around 2/3 of auditions are all via self-tape or Zoom. We predict theatrical auditions will not return to in person, even for callbacks with rare exception. For this reason, please read the Self-Tape document thoroughly, as well as do other research to ensure your self tapes inspire casting offices to choose you! Please keep this in mind as you read on...

- 1) When you get a casting notice directly from your agent or anyone else at PMT, respond right away as requested in the email or text. When you get an audition notice from Casting Networks (CN), Casting Frontier (CF), Casting App (CA) or Actor's Access (AA - reply by Cmail or email) respond by logging into the account from which it came and confirm, decline (with reason), or ask for time change (with reason.) You should also add any other questions you have in these notes on the casting site, not by email. Your responses, except confirms, are only seen by us, not by the casting directors on all sites except CF, where your reply is visible to the casting director and declines on AA (reply by Cmail instead.)

PLEASE READ:

- a. You cannot reply by email to the audition notices that come from the casting sites; these will go NOWHERE. Please send all your responses regarding the audition by logging into the website from which it came. We have multiple people monitoring each site, so that way we can all see your questions, as opposed to an email (unless declining on CN - please also email your agent your reason). Please check emails several times daily and nightly; we get some casting notices very late, even past midnight. We recommend you give our emails and the casting site emails VIP status so you get a pop-up alert on your phone. Some email address to set as VIPS in addition to your agents' email addresses are: notifications@castingnetworks.com, auditions@castingfrontier.com, audition_times@castingfrontier.com, noreply@actorsaccess.com, and no-reply@castingapp.com.
- b. Reply on the casting site right away so we know you are aware of the audition, even if you aren't sure if you can make it. Use the casting sites to send us your message like "I need to figure out babysitting but I will confirm by 4pm," or "I have to ask my kid afterschool if he is comfortable with the subject matter."
- c. Please do NOT leave any other notes like "Thanks!" or "We are so excited!" or "Confirming!" Notes on the casting sites (especially CN) should only be for necessary requests, or answers to questions we have asked. We know you are probably excited and grateful but please do not use the notes for this.
- d. We may text you from our business line to remind you of auditions to which you have not yet responded. **Please DO NOT reply back via the text line but follow the protocol above.** Our text line is used collectively by everyone at our agency and that is a lot of volume so responses via text are difficult to monitor. We also have individual personal business lines but you may not readily recognize those numbers so we tend to use the main line. **Similarly, don't start a text to our business line unless it is urgent;** replying via the

casting sites is the first step. But if you do have an urgent need, like you are running late or are having an issue on set, texting to 323-800-7500 will be an efficient way to communicate with multiple members of our staff, followed by a phone call or email if you do not receive an immediate confirmation from our end. Do not text in the middle of the night unless responding to your agent's own late night text since it may disturb several staff members. As of this writing, Paloma still prefers to use her personal cellphone, so if you are receiving a text from 323-800-7500, it is likely another member of our staff and not her. Here are our direct business numbers for reference so you know who is texting you if we use these direct numbers, but better to email so we can loop others in if necessary:

- i. Paloma: 323.863.2902
- ii. Alysa: 323.856.1247
- iii. Kristi: 323.856.1251
- iv. Melinda: 323.863.2897
- v. Julie: 323.825.4507
- vi. Renee: 323.643.9077

- e. If you can't make an in person audition that day at all, your response should be a decline, not a time change. Time change requests are only for the same day, but in your note, please do let us know if you can go another day. It is 95% typical that CDs will not see talent additional days for commercial, print and smaller tv/film roles so always try to make it! Larger tv/film roles may audition for several days.
- f. The reason why we need a reason for decline or time change request is that casting directors want to know why our submitted talent is not available. It looks pretty bad on an agency when talent that is assumed to be available upon submission then declines and creates more work for those CDs. Also, they may be holding auditions another day or time, so your reason for decline helps the CDs and us determine if we should pursue rescheduling. If you say, "We are out of town for a week and I forgot to bookout," then they won't reschedule, but if you say, "Has a test at school can't miss," then they may try to get your child in another day IF they do another casting.
- g. If a time **frame** was given for an audition, feel free to use it, but note the time that you plan on going on the casting site if it varies significantly from your allocated time. If a time **frame** was not given in the notes of your audition notification, **there is not one**, so please don't ask if there is one. If there is no time frame and you cannot attend at your assigned time, then you need to request a time **change with reason. We will disregard any requests without reason**, and the reason must be better than "There is a lot of traffic at that time." If you cited a reason and do not hear from us, this means that the casting director has not responded. They usually hate having to move their schedule around. If you have not heard back, please email the appropriate assistant/agent to follow up, but only when you need to know for travel planning purposes, not an hour after your first request. Please understand that some CDs are better than others about accommodating time changes, and sometimes it just is not possible. When you email, include all

- the info for the audition, including talent name, job name, and casting site.
- h. What happens when you don't reply? Well, your agent and/or PMT staff will harass you until we get a hold of you! Teasing aside, it will really keep you on our good side and "go-to list" if you reply promptly.
 - i. "Why am I getting multiple notices? I already confirmed!!" We send out additional alerts because sometimes the CD will send out new info like "Everyone must bring their favorite stuffed animal!" or "Sides are posted; everyone must be memorized!" Or maybe we will have finally gotten that much-desired time frame and send that out in a later email notice. You can't see these notes via text alerts so if you get another text notice after you have already replied about an audition, please do check your email.
 - j. "I just got an audition reminder, but I never got the first audition notice!" This just means you weren't on the first list from casting, but then they added more people, or auditions for more roles after they already sent out their first round of requests.
 - k. "I just got a callback notification but we never attended a first audition!" Lucky you! That means you are "direct to callback!" This happens if a client adds a role, or changes specs, or simply needs to see more choices and they are already in callback phase.
- 2) When heading to a casting, use "Lombardi Time" - the famous coach would say, "15 minutes early is on-time, on-time is late, and late is inexcusable." If given a specific time, you might be scheduled with a specific parent, sibling, or group to go in to the audition with. If you are early, you can typically sign in early unless a CD is particularly controlling; you don't have to wait for your time to sign in, but they may wait to call you in until your scheduled time. Similarly, always log in to a live online audition 15 minutes early!
 - 3) Sigalert.com should be on your bookmarks to check traffic and Waze is the amazing app to get anywhere in the shortest amount of time. Always keep some quarters in your car for meters and pay attention to parking rules. Most audition sites restrict their lots to employees and do not allow talent to park in them. Allow extra time in case you have to park far away and bring your stroller for the little ones unless specifically asked not to due to space limitations. When parking on the street beware street cleaning days, residence permit requirements (especially in Beverly Hills and West Hollywood), and the rush hour timeframe, when they will begin to tow cars (on La Brea, for example) usually at 4pm - on the nose!
 - 4) If given a time frame or "window" like 10-12, it means you can go anytime between those hours, not that you'll have to be there for the whole two hours. Actual wait time at an audition is highly unpredictable. Be prepared; take snacks, toys, games, homework, and anything else that won't disturb others to keep busy.
 - 5) There will be a sign-in sheet; sign in when you get there, even if you are early. Always know talent's current height, weight, clothing, and shoe size in case they

have you fill out a size card. The correct phone number to put down for Agent is (323) 800-7500. Avoid putting down your personal info unless it is specifically requested. Same thing on self tapes.

- 6) At SAG (Screen Actors Guild, the actor's union) commercial auditions, SAG requires the client to pay talent a minimal amount if they are waiting over an hour, whether or not they are in the union. On the sign-in sheet you will see an entry for SAG number or social security (SS) number, which they will need to pay you for your time. If you are uneasy about writing down the SS number for anyone to see (and rightfully so), you can wait to add it until you sign out, or put down any similar nine digits until you are there over an hour, and then change it to your correct SS number when you sign out. We offer this idea because if the CD sees anything written down in the SS column, they may get you in faster. Be advised that we have heard that requesting payment for overtime auditions may be frowned upon by the CD running the particular audition since payment comes out of their pocket unless their client has agreed to pay such fees. We can't say whether or not any particular CD holds these grudges, but you may want to be prudent as to when you use the system. Some waits for auditions are egregious; others are minimal. See separate doc for more on SAG.
- 7) The initial audition is typically run by associates or assistants and seen via photos or video by the main CD from their office. Select copies of the footage are then sent to the client, producer and director. The person that puts them on camera is NOT a decision maker 95% of the time so there is no need to brown nose to that person, but they could be instrumental in giving the CD feedback, so do be polite. Don't take too much to heart if they tell you your kid nailed it. At a callback, you may want to wear the same thing or similar outfit from original casting (so they remember) and keep in mind that now all the decision makers are now in the room. Talent should be polite and say thank you as you leave the room. Do not intrude in their space to hug or shake hands unless invited and do not overstay your welcome.
- 8) We have heard on occasion that some staff/clients even monitor the waiting room to see what an actor's disposition is really like. Consider that the audition starts from the moment you get out of your car. This applies to parents too - nobody likes to deal with pushy or frazzled stage parents. Take a moment to find your zen.
- 9) "Have you heard anything???" You will never hear that you did not get chosen, so consider no news bad news. You will have the shoot dates for all print and commercial jobs, so if you have not heard by the day before the fitting, you probably did not book. We almost never get feedback regarding how talent did, so it is generally pointless to ask us for feedback on an audition. Generally, the only time CDs volunteer feedback is when something goes horribly wrong, and we most certainly will share that feedback with you. Most jobs put talent on hold within a day or two but could do so anytime up until they shoot. As soon as we

know, you'll know; the best part of our job is telling talent they got a hold or booking so we won't wait to call, text, or email you, or all three! In your excitement, don't forget to reply with your confirmation!

- 10) Being put on "hold" or on "avail" means that the job is considering you. It does not mean they are booked just yet. They basically want to confirm they have you reserved for their job. It may be wise to not tell your child about a hold until they book it. Some kids actually take it worse knowing they were so close and didn't get it. Things have changed over the years and now more talent is put on hold than in the past. They may still hold 5 actors or models for a role, so you may still only have a 20% chance of booking. If another job (job B) wants to use you on any of the dates for which they are already on hold for job A, we can challenge the hold for job A to release or book. If talent is released from a hold, no payment is warranted. If talent is booked, 99% of the time you will do the job and get paid. If you are released less than 24 hours before the scheduled booked job or the shoot is cancelled or postponed, we will more than likely get the full or half rate for short notice cancellation. For talent hired as background for film and television (generally all bookings for kids four and under), it is never an official booking until you get a calltime the night before.
- 11) Once you have been put on hold or avail, or booked a job, it is up to you to track the scheduled work date(s). If you get an audition for another job that would either hold callbacks or work on a work date already engaged or held by the other job, alert us to the issue so we can advise if you should still go. Once you have actually booked the job (not just holding) add all work dates as bookouts on PMT unless you know it will be a short hourly job that may still allow for an audition that day. We have a lot going on so booking with one agent does not mean that all the other agents know, so do not assume they do.

ADDITIONAL GUIDELINES FOR PARENTS OF SMALL CHILDREN

- 12) If you have to send your child with someone else, particularly if you are unavailable and unable to answer your phone, please make sure their guardian knows all the pertinent info for your child AND know how to contact us in an emergency. You might even want to leave a note on the casting site like "Lisa's nanny Jane will be taking her. You can reach her at ---- if needed." This goes for secondary guardian if the primary guardian is usually the one to drive.
- 13) Typically, parents will go into the room with their child until around age 3 or 4, then they go in by themselves. You should remain within earshot of children of all ages for safety and peace of mind, and because sometimes they need additional information, like how to spell your child's name, if they have a valid work permit, or schedule. If you ever feel uncomfortable, feel free to ask to be in the room, open blinds a crack, or keep the door slightly ajar as appropriate given the audition room setup. If you feel very uncomfortable, never be obliged to

allow your child (or yourself) to audition. For most commercial and print auditions, your child will likely go in the room with a group. However, theatrical auditions are usually one on one. Your audition notices will usually note who will be in the room. Do your homework, and Google those people for your comfort, especially if you are self-submitting on projects that may be on a less professional level that do not have the oversight of a large, well-respected casting office.

- 14) Most commercial auditions will begin with a slate for anyone over age two. They will have to stand on a mark on the floor and say "Hi, I'm ----- and I am ---- years old." Please practice this. Sometimes they may ask for additional information, like height or agency name. At some auditions, they may just ask them to smile in the room or do what the action is in the commercial, for example, jumping, finding Easter eggs, texting, etc. after the slate. Others may ask some questions to get to know their personality, so work with your child on responding with more than one word. For example, if they ask: "What's your favorite sport?" Instead of saying "Soccer," say, "I love soccer because I am really fast and can beat everyone to the ball." For print, they may have your child try on an outfit but most of the time it is just a quick picture or two. Work on jumping while smiling and looking at the camera; they love to get photos of kids jumping as a secondary photo. For talent going to theatrical auditions, we will have specific preparation discussions.
- 15) For babies and young children, get there early to allow for changing, possibly a snack, and a little running around time. Rushing into an audition can confuse or scare them. Don't automatically wake your sleeping baby when you get there; check to see if there is a wait, sign in, keep an eye on the flow and timing of the list, and let them sleep until you feel you need to waken them, change them, and liven them up out of any grogginess.
- 16) Always take backup outfits. Look at the audition notice for wardrobe, but most jobs will be stated as "casual cute." Dress to suit their age, not older or too "perfect." Take extra outfits in case they spill something on themselves or have an accident. No hats, jewelry, big hair accessories, or braids. Babies will be shooting in layettes for jobs so dress them in simple onesies or cotton shirts and pants, not fancy dresses or jeans.
- 17) If your child gets upset right before they call his or her name, please ask the CD to give you some time. I remember a situation where a toddler named Mikey was very excited and happy to play with another kid's toy in the lobby. Just before they called Mikey in, the child left with his toy, leaving Mikey very upset. Mikey's Mom took him into room thinking there was no other option, and it was hardly a successful audition. No one likes to see a crying child. Not only does it frustrate them, you, and the child, but also no one wins... except maybe the toddler that just left with his cool toy who probably booked the job! Same goes for diaper accidents – take care of your child first; the casting can wait. Hint: always take a

backup new toy hidden in bag in case this happens to you!

- 18) Joking aside, you need to carefully manage your baby or toddler in the moments before an audition. Keep an eye on how quickly kids are getting called in and try to estimate how much longer you have before your child goes in. You don't want your child getting engrossed in anything – toys, food, even you – just before they get called. If your child tends to be clingy, you cannot hold them lovingly while waiting and then suddenly release them to be directed by a stranger and expect them not to get upset. If your child is like this, try and get them to interact with others they aren't familiar with so that the unknown casting staff doesn't then come as such as shock. Do this especially if they might go in the room with an actor sibling or parent. If they tell you who your child will be paired with seek them out and let your child get used to them; if they don't tell you, do the same with likely candidates. If your child is going through a particularly clingy phase with someone, it may be wise for that person NOT to take him or her to auditions or bookings. Let someone else that the child is not so attached to take them.
- 19) Practice auditions at home, telling them they get a special toy or treat after you take their picture, not before, and then follow through. Try various toys and treats to see what works best for your child. Don't use any messy foods! You want them to keep them busy while you wait but you don't want to entertain them with anything too difficult for them to put down. For toddlers and younger kids, play "Simon Says" a lot to get them used to listening and taking direction. CDs will often play that game in auditions.
- 20) Incentive. At some point, your child will start to ask why they should go to auditions, and even jobs. Only you truly know what drives your child, so whatever that is, have a plan that incentivizes your child to perform as they are asked. The worst feeling is to have driven a long time only to have your child refuse to do something in an audition room. Remind them before they go in that their "job" is to listen and do what they are asked to do (as long as no one is getting hurt.) I always add in that last part to remind them that they always have an out to go find mommy or daddy in case anything scares them. Even worse is to be on set and have 30 people waiting around for your child to do what they need them to do. It may come down to YOU being able to talk your child into performing. Of course, we want all kids to have fun on their outings and jobs, but everyone has an occasional bad day and may still have to audition or work when they don't want to. Know how you will manage these situations. Focus on reward; you never want your child to associate auditions with being scolded or punished.