

Nutcracker Parent FAQ's

What are Nutcracker auditions like? Dancers age 5-6 will participate in an informal ballet class during which they will be evaluated by our guest judges and Artistic Director. During the tumbling audition, children will be asked to perform basic tumbling skills and will be given an opportunity to perform their best passes and tricks for our judges. Dance experience is not required for tumblers, but children trying out for tumbling roles will be asked to learn some basic choreography during the audition so that our judges can assess their rhythm and coordination. For dancers ages 7 and up, our judges will evaluate the dancers during a technical ballet class consisting of barre exercises and center work. Some dancers may be asked to stay for additional evaluation, or may be asked to return during a different audition time slot. Dancers wishing to be considered for TCD Company will be evaluated for that position during the last fifteen minutes of their audition time slot. Company auditions typically consist of evaluation of dancers' technical skills as well as improvisation.

May my child submit a video-taped audition? Yes. While we much prefer that dancers attend the in-person audition, video-taped auditions may be submitted in extenuating circumstances upon approval by the Artistic Director.

Does my child need to prepare anything for the audition? No. Dancers are not expected to perform prepared choreography during the auditions.

Can I watch auditions? No. Our auditions are closed. You are welcome to wait in the Clark Hall lobby during your child's audition, but you cannot enter the studio or watch through the doors.

When will casting be announced? Casting is announced within two weeks after auditions. Follow our social media accounts and check our website for updates.

What if I (or my child) disagree with casting? When you audition for The Nutcracker you are auditioning for the show, not for a particular part. All casting decisions are made at the recommendation of our guest judges and in the sole discretion of the Artistic Director. All casting decisions are final. If a dancer declines a role or complains about casting s/he may risk not being considered for future TCD productions.

My child has been cast as an understudy. What does this mean? An understudy is a dancer who learns the choreography for a particular part but does not perform that part unless the regular performer is sick or otherwise unavailable. Understudies will be fitted for costumes for their roles, but ARE NOT guaranteed to perform in any shows. Being cast as an understudy is not the same as being "double cast."

What is "double casting?" Some roles may be double cast, meaning that two dancers are selected for one role and will alternate performances. Double cast dancers draw straws to determine which dancer will perform at each show time.

What do you mean when you say Act 1 and Act 2? The Nutcracker is a ballet divided into two acts.

Act 1 includes: the Prologue (opening snowflakes), the Party Scene (party children, party parents, Fritz, Clara, Maid, Dolls, Drosselmeyer), the Battle Scene (toys, mice, rats, soldiers, Prince, Clara, Rat King, Drosselmeyer), and the Snow Scene (snow corps, Snow Queen, Clara, Nutcracker Prince).

Act 2 includes: Angels, Sugarplum Fairy and Sugarplum Attendants, Cavalier, Trumpeteers, Spanish, Chinese, Dragon Carriers, Polichinelles and Mother Ginger, Arabian and attendants, Russian, Dew Drop Fairy, Flower soloists and Flower corps, and Marzipan.

Where will the dancers rehearse? Rehearsals are scheduled based on studio space availability and therefore the location will vary. Most rehearsals are held at the Dance Centre, the YMCA, and Academy of Ballet & Jazz.

Can I watch my child's rehearsal? Rehearsals are closed to minimize distractions. You may discreetly watch rehearsal if a viewing window is available, but you may not enter the studio and we ask that you not try to communicate with your child during rehearsal.

What should my child bring to rehearsals? Dancers should wear appropriate dance attire and bring back-up dance shoes, tights, bobby pins, and water. For longer rehearsals (full act and full show runs, Bama Week), dancers should bring something to keep themselves quietly occupied when they are not on stage. Please label your child's belongings and do not bring valuables to rehearsal.

I've seen Nutcracker dancers perform in public appearances and on TV. How do you decide which dancers get these opportunities? Public appearances are scheduled based on dancers' availability and school schedules, input from media producers/event coordinators, costume availability, appropriateness of choreography for the chosen venue, length of appearance, etc. Typically, Act 1 party boys and girls, dolls, Fritz, and Clara are chosen for media and public appearances.

What is "Bama Week"? Bama Week is the week of dress and technical rehearsals at the Bama Theatre leading up to opening night. This year Bama Week begins on December 10th.

Where do dancers need to go for Bama Week rehearsals? Dancers will enter through the side stage door on Greensboro Avenue. Dancers should check-in and out at the stage door for each rehearsal and performance.

Can I watch rehearsals in the theatre? No. All of our rehearsals are closed. If you would like to stay at the theatre to wait on your child you can volunteer to help with lobby decorating, the Nutcracker store, or the pointe shoe auction. We have plenty of things you can do to keep busy! You may watch dress rehearsal, but only if you sit behind the balcony if downstairs or behind the rail if upstairs.

Who will do my child's hair and makeup for dress rehearsal and performance? You are responsible for making sure your child has appropriate hair and makeup for dress rehearsal and performances. If you do not have experience with dance stage makeup please make arrangements before the first dress rehearsal to get assistance from another cast member's parent.

Do parents have to pay for performance tickets? Yes, parents must buy tickets just like any other patron. However, parents may buy advanced ticket vouchers at a discount from the regular ticket prices.

My dancer is only in Act 1. Can she join me in the audience to watch Act 2? Dancers can sit in the audience only if they are in street clothes (they should look like paying audience members) and a ticket has been purchased for the dancer.

Who watches my child backstage? Parents volunteer for time slots during Bama Week to monitor the dressing rooms and keep dancers quiet between scenes. Dressing room space in the Bama is very, very limited, so we ask that you stay out of the backstage and dressing room area unless you are a volunteer assigned to that space.

Will I be able to purchase a video of the performance? Yes. An order form will be provided to parents.

Is there a cast party? Yes. The cast party is planned by volunteer parents. A day and time will be announced prior to Bama Week.