

Getting Your Child Involved in the Acting Business in California – A Quick Start

Children require 1) an active Entertainment Permit and 2) a Coogan Account to work in the acting business in California.

ENTERTAINMENT PERMITS

Entertainment Permits are obtained from the Department of Labor and Industry Standards. <http://www.dir.ca.gov/DLSE/DistrictOffices.htm>

Search Entertainment Work Permit and you will be taken to a link for an application: <https://www.dir.ca.gov/dlse/OnlinePermits.htm>

Follow directions on the form. There is no cost for an Entertainment Permit in California.

You can apply online which can take up to a week to process. If you are in a rush, you will need to go down in person to one of the local offices nearest you for faster same day service.

- a) Children 15 days old through Kindergarten age, need a Birth Certificate or other form of identification attached to their application. The type of identification that is allowable is listed on the Application form.
- b) Children under the age of one month also require a Doctor's certification to the Application.
- c) School Age Children during the school year, require their School's Registration Office to fill out a portion of the Application stating the child is in good standing in all coursework.

Renew your child's Entertainment Permit every six months.

COOGAN ACCOUNT

You also need to open a Coogan Account for your child. By law, a portion of your child's entertainment earnings is to be deposited into this account until your child reaches the age of 18. Producers will ask you for your Coogan account information along with your child's entertainment permit when you come to set to shoot a project.

Most banks offer Coogan Accounts. If you are a member of SAG-AFTRA or you live with someone who is a member, you may be eligible to open a Coogan account for your child with the SAG-AFTRA credit union if you also open an account yourself. The SAG-AFTRA credit Union is very familiar with these types of accounts and will allow you to open one for your child once they have been offered a SAG-AFTRA job.

For more information on Coogan accounts, go to sagaftra.org and type in the search "Coogan Accounts."

Other considerations you may not be aware of

- 1) While your child works on any set, you will also be required to be there with them as their Guardian. If you are too busy to do this, you will have to provide someone who is an adult to accompany your child.
- 2) If your child is working on set for a union project during school day(s), the producer will provide an on set teacher for your child but you will still have to be present (or provide

an adult to be present) as your child's guardian on set. Usually your child would bring their homework with them to set to work on during the on set school hours.

- 3) Depending on your child's age, the hours your child is allowed to work on set is restricted. See SAG-AFTRA.org or the DLSE for further information on working as a minor.
- 4) Casting cannot ask you to audition your child prior to times school ends. Simply remind them your child is still in school if you are asked to bring your child during school hours. Homeschooled children can attend auditions at any time during the school day.
- 5) Children grow so fast that you will be asked by any agency representation to update your child's photographs every few months for babies and every six months for growing children. This is an added expense you should consider prior to involving your child in the acting field.
- 6) Children under the age of 18 can be "taft hartley'd" into the union without the Producer's having to pay a fine so it is much easier to get a child eligibility to join the union than it is for an adult.
 - a. Often children are released from their Agencies upon reaching the age of 18 as their agency may handle only Youth. If their Agency also handles adults and still releases the child from their roster upon reaching the age of 18, it might have something to do with the now added difficulty of getting the child Union Eligible.

Obtaining Representation for your child

Many Talent Agencies handle children. You can find a list of names from the SAG-AFTRA.org Professional Representatives tab. Search "SAG Franchised agents or ATA/NATR agents" and look under the region you live closest to. A list of agencies will appear. Look for "All Ages" or "Youth" under the agency description to find agencies that also handle children.