

# Camps & Schools

## The Benefits of Theater Arts Education

### 11849KE Takes Center Stage

While theater arts education has long been considered a valuable creative outlet for children and teenagers, it does not seem to get the credit it deserves for the impact it has on a child's ability to learn.

But recent studies and a growth in the availability of drama-focused educational opportunities, are supporting the notion that the theater arts is not a frivolous pursuit, but a beneficial one.

"Data continues to support the fact that theater arts education can benefit all young people," said Jerome Vivona of Drama Kids of North Nassau County.

"When creative dramatics focus on having fun and letting your imagination run wild and not on who has the lead role, it can really have a positive impact.

According to a newsletter from the Theatre Communications Group, the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum recently released the second year of findings of a three-year study to evaluate the impact of arts education on literacy among elementary school children. The results suggest that arts education increases fundamental literacy skills in elementary school students. The study, Teaching Literacy Through Art, was funded by a grant from the US Department of Education. The study found that students in the program performed better in several categories of literacy and critical thinking skills — including extended focus, hypothesizing and providing multiple interpretations — than did students who were not in the program.

More and more students are reaping these benefits at programs like Drama Kids, according to Vivona.

"When applied in a classroom environment, the skills developed at Drama Kids can improve a child's ability to give book reports, speeches and actively participate in group projects. However, the most important role of drama," Vivona said, "is the confidence and self-esteem that it builds in children.

"We see it every day and hear from parents on a regular basis about how they didn't realize that drama activities could have these additional rewards," Vivona said.

Drama Kids focuses on creative drama activities and plays that have an advancing scale of language development, enabling students of various ages and abilities to progress at their own rate and comfort level. The programs emphasize activities that focus on confident acting skills, strong speaking techniques, creative movement and dialogue development.

Unlike traditional drama that can cause children to develop extreme stage fright and teaches them to focus solely on the audience experience, Drama Kids of North Nassau County uses new activities every class, so there is no need for lengthy line memorization and provides short plays so different students in a class can take turns having leading roles and reinforces good speaking habits so public speaking can be developed.

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For more information, please contact Jerome Vivona at 876-4228.

Drama Kids International is the largest after-school drama program in the world, with more than 45,000 students currently at its 1,500 plus locations both in the United States and internationally. Its copyrighted curriculum features original, creative lessons with a built-in advancing scale of language development that enables students of different ages and abilities to progress at their own rate. Its curriculum differs significantly from traditional drama programs, with an emphasis on fun drama activities that are designed to allow all students to fully participate and develop acting and speaking skills regardless of

age or prior experience level.

Drama Kids offers age-appropriate classes for students ages 3-through-18 years old. Classes meet once each week for one hour at locations throughout the country. The program allows new enrollment throughout the year, space permitting. Drama Kids also offers Drama Kids Preschool Workshops, Drama Kids Summer Camp and Drama Kids at School, an in-school program for elementary and middle schools that bring its innovative curriculum directly into the schools as part of the school's after-school program. For more information, visit [www.dramakids.com](http://www.dramakids.com).

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