

I CAN PRETEND! DRAMA FOR CHILDREN WITH AUTISM

SUPPORTED BY [CWB WEALTH MANAGEMENT](#)

COURSE GOALS

The goal of this course is to help our children:

- ✓ Learn to play imaginatively and co-operatively with other children in a classroom setting.
- ✓ Achieve a positive sense of self-awareness and self-esteem.
- ✓ Gain a basic understanding of perspective taking (understanding where others are coming from).

STAFF BIOS

All of our instructors are trained in the methodology behind I Can Pretend! by the creator of the program, Demetra Hajidiacos.

ASHLEY BUTLER graduated twice from MacEwan University, from both the Early Childhood Development and Theatre Arts programs. She holds her Non-Violent Crisis Intervention Training certificate, her Suicide Prevention and Intervention certificate for children under age twelve, as well as her Sexual Abuse Prevention certificate through Little Warriors. She currently works with students with special needs in the classrooms of the Edmonton Public School District, and has previously worked privately in the homes of families with children diagnosed with special needs. She has taught for the Foote Theatre School since 2009 in our young children's musical theatre classes. In 2014, she was appointed lead instructor of the I Can Pretend! Program.

BRADY HUGHES currently works as an interventionist with the Centre for Autism Services Alberta. He is also a fourth year Recreational Therapy student at the University of Alberta. After working in banking for many years, he decided it was time for a career change. He discovered Drama in High School and joined his hometown's community theatre group after graduation. Over the years, he has been able to try his hand at many aspects of theatre production. He is very excited to be assisting with this class.

JOSH LANGUEDOC has been an educator for 9 years but is also an actor, playwright, and director. When not involved in theatre, Josh has worked for many organizations and communities. He uses theatre and drama as a creative means for children. Josh has led and facilitated numerous camps with the City of Edmonton, worked one-on-one with children with special needs with the Over-The-Rainbow Society, used play to facilitate inclusion between children with special needs and other children with the YMCA of Edmonton, and used improvisation to meet IPP goals for students with special needs at specific Edmonton Public Schools. Josh is currently finishing an after-degree in Secondary Education from the University of Alberta and has taken numerous classes and workshops on inclusion, physical skill development, anti-bullying, positive child guidance, and drama therapy. Josh is extremely passionate about theatre education and welcomes you and your family with open arms into this program.

NON-STAFF ASSISTANTS

In some cases, parents prefer to send their own assistant or the teacher requests that a family provide their own assistant. In these circumstances, non-staff teaching assistants will be trained by the teacher and follow classroom protocol.

STUDENT EXPECTATIONS

We provide a structured lesson using best practice teaching for children with autism. Students are expected to arrive on time and participate fully in the lesson. Kindly note that students who have difficulty sitting attentively for short periods of time (story, teacher led instruction, circle time) may require their own educational assistant provided by the family. Please speak to the teacher prior to the first class if you think this will be the case for your child.

ARRIVING LATE

We ask that students arriving late knock on the classroom door. A teaching assistant will escort your child into the room at a time that is not disruptive to the other children in the class (much like arriving late to the theatre!).

PARENT EXPECTATIONS

Our goal is to help your child improve their imaginative play skills as well as social skills. This takes discipline, practice, and a whole lot of structured fun! Parents are expected to bring their children into the building at least 5 minutes before the start of class and stay in the building until the teacher has come out to greet the class. Parents are not permitted to drop off/pick up their children outside in Shoctor Alley or send their children alone upstairs before the start of the class.

SAFETY POLICY

We ask that all new parents remain in the seating area upstairs during class time in weeks 1 and 2. If you decide to step outside during class time, please leave another adult in your place in the event that your child needs you. Starting week 3, you may fill out the sign-out sheet in the lobby, leaving us a phone number you can be reached at in the event of an emergency. Returning families may sign out on the first day of classes.

COMMUNICATION

A weekly email will be sent home outlining important concepts taught in our lessons. If your child is going to be absent, please email the instructor as it does affect the structure of our lesson.

INDIVIDUALIZED CLASSROOM SUPPLIES

If your child is sensitive to sound, we ask that you supply your own set of ear defenders for classroom use in a zip-lock bag labeled with your child's first name and last initial. A set of ear defenders can simply be an inexpensive set of headphones with the cord snipped. If your child uses fidgets, picture cards, a white board, schedules (first this, then that) tools in their classroom at school we ask that you supply those resources for classroom use in a plastic container labeled with your child's first name and last initial (you can label your whiteboard with a permanent marker; no plastic container needed).

OUTDOOR SHOES

We ask that all outdoor shoes during the wintertime are taken off and stored outside the classroom door. Please feel free to supply indoor shoes for your child.

ALLERGY ALERT

Please be aware that the Foote Theatre School is a Nut Free Building. Students, who have life-threatening allergies, are responsible for carrying their EpiPen at all times.

TREATS

At the end of each class, students select a small toy from the "treat box." We also hand out edible treats including lollipops and fruit gummies. Treats are gluten-free, casein-free, and selected with care to ensure that all children (including those with allergies) can enjoy the same treat as their friends.

IMPORTANT NOTES

Please leave all outside toys outside. They are distracting to the students and sometimes hard to put away once they have been brought into the building. This includes cellphones, tablets, and other electronic devices.

HOW TO REGISTER

To register, or if you have any additional questions, please contact:

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