



A What to Expect Guide for Teachers

Welcome to Evergreen's Grow a Show Program: A weeklong science theatre residency program for your whole school!

Your school is about to have the unique experience of turning curriculum into an original theatre performance, all under the guidance of a team of artists from Evergreen Theatre!

Here are some general expectations and FAQs to help you prepare for your residency.

What Teachers Can Expect from Evergreen:

We are delighted to come to your school and work with you on such a rewarding project. We emphasize a team approach and are committed to good communication and support throughout the residency.

- Your artists will provide an overview of the residency process for staff in an opening orientation meeting on Monday morning prior to visiting individual classrooms.
- You will be given clear instructions about what and how to rehearse on every day of the residency.
- Your artist will make it clear to students and teachers what needs to be ready for the next rehearsal and how to achieve that.
- Your artist will lay clear behavioral ground rules for the students at the beginning of the residency that are probably not very different from your own classroom rules (ie, one person talking at a time, treating each other with respect)
- Your artist is NOT coming in as a science expert who will be teaching science curriculum, but rather as an experienced drama facilitator.

(Your students should have a solid understanding of the science concepts related to their chosen theme ahead of time in order to get the most out of the experience)

- Your artist will show you fun drama games that emphasize teamwork and focusing, and some great techniques for approaching science through the medium of theatre.
- Your artist will work cooperatively with your students to create a script and implement a performance plan for a “mini play” to be presented in the final showcase based on your chosen theme.

What Evergreen Expects from Teachers:

Our residency project requires flexibility and dedication. As our common goal is to ensure that every student has a positive performing experience on the final day, we ask that you respect the following:

- Flexibility around time – While our aim is to keep the residency project time commitment to about 50% of your teaching day, we do occasionally have a class that simply needs more time and instruction to achieve their best for the performance. If the residency artist senses that your class needs some extra rehearsal time, they will let you know as soon as possible, and ask that you are flexible with providing them with that time. When logistically feasible, we will insert extra “flex practice” blocks directly in the Evergreen schedule ahead of time, so you will have a good idea of when such a rehearsal might take place.
- Flexibility around room arrangements – Most of our rehearsals are held in the classroom, but as they do require space for blocking and movement, we ask that you are willing to move classroom furniture to the perimeter of the room and provide your class with an open space for rehearsal. Ideally, it works best if the gym can be reserved for the exclusive use of the residency program for workshops and rehearsals for the full week. (See contract)
- Participation – As we ask the students to treat the project as a group effort with full participation, we would like the teaching staff to help us model that behaviour. The teacher is expected to be not only present in the classroom, but actively participating in the rehearsals and performance. This provides a wonderful opportunity to build relationships with your students and sets a great example for them. Moreover, students and fellow staff members and

parents love seeing the staff performing alongside the students for the final showcase at the end of the week, and your school community will gain a new sense of unity and spirit if everyone participates. You don't have to be in the spotlight, but even joining in the background not only sets a good example for student participation, but can be an excellent way to manage more difficult or rambunctious students, and support your artist as well. That being said, we want the week to be fun and supportive for teachers, so please let your artists know if you have any reservations about being on stage.

- Nametags – It really helps the residency artist to establish a rapport with the students if they can call them by their names. A simple piece of masking tape with the student's name written on it is ideal – it is soft, flexible and will not get in the way during movement work.

FAQs:

Do I need to do any preparation before residency week?

Yes. A few weeks before the residency, you will have chosen a specific topic to explore during residency week (facilitated by your school residency coordinator). The Evergreen model works best when our artists help your students explore familiar curriculum with the lens of theatre and performance. If your topic is relatively new to your students, we ask that you spend at least 30-45 minutes doing a bit of research and brainstorming with your class ahead of time. You will be provided with a "theme sheet" to facilitate this process which you will need to return to Evergreen as soon as possible.

What topics can I choose from?

Almost anything – with the understanding that our costume stock, while extensive and impressive, is largely science/environment oriented and not exhaustive of every potential. We also HIGHLY encourage teachers in the same grade groupings to communicate with one another and each pick DIFFERENT topics in order to allow for more diversity of themes in the final show and greater costume possibilities. Although we recognize it's likely ideal to create a piece about the topic you are currently studying, we ask you to be open to reviewing a theme you studied earlier or introducing the basics or one element of a curriculum strand you plan to address later in the school year in a situation where all grades are working on the same curriculum on the same schedule.

Do I have to make costumes?

No. Evergreen brings a set, sound system, stage lights and costuming for all participants. Students may be asked to bring items from home as well if needed. Some teachers/classes choose to build small props/pieces as an additional activity, but it is **not** a requirement. Please be aware that we have more costume stock to choose from for certain themes (ie. nature, environment, animals) versus others, but we can get creative when we need to! Students/parents will not be required to purchase anything for the residency performance.

How much time should I plan for Evergreen residency activities?

Each class spends approximately one hour in rehearsal with the residency artist each day (45 mins for Kindergarten). Depending on the class's needs/interests, they may need to spend up to an additional hour in rehearsal on their own after that. The additional hour of class rehearsal does not have to be one solid time block. You can break it up into half hour sessions, twenty -minute sessions, or any time slots that are best for your class. Your residency artist may have suggestions for effective rehearsal techniques that can work around your daily schedule. The performance day (typically Friday) is more involved, as it involves the dress rehearsal and performance, which may take place in the evening.

What if I have a disruptive student? Should they be allowed to participate?

As theatre is very close to imaginative play, it is natural for children to get excited. The residency artist's goal is to channel that excited energy into the project. We find that most students are pretty keen to participate and modify their behaviour accordingly. If you have any concerns about behavioral issues in your classroom, please talk to your artist outside of class time, so that expectations can be managed proactively.

What if I have a student with stage fright or shyness?

We emphasize teamwork and the importance of including all the students in the piece. We ask all students to give the project a fair try, but if they are still finding that they are anxious about performing, then we work with them to find another way to participate – either through technical assistance with the lights

and sound, or artwork for the set, etc. We respect every student's boundaries, and will never force a child to perform if they are anxious or uncomfortable. However, even shy students usually surprise themselves when they are handed a costume and having fun with friends.

What if I have a student with special needs? Can they participate?

We always work to integrate special needs students in whatever way makes them feel successful and a part of the team. If the student has a designated aid, we find it is useful to have them participating in the activities as well. The artists have expertise in engaging students from all walks of life, and are happy to find a manageable level of participation for students with special needs on a case by case basis.

Do the students perform on the stage?

Evergreen brings in a pipe and drape system to set up as a backdrop – usually on the gym floor. If it works better (with a number of considerations taken into account including safety concerns and size considerations etc.), we are absolutely open to using the stage if your school has one. This can be discussed and determined together with the Evergreen Artist Team Leader on the first day of the residency following a site tour.

Can students or parents attend the dress rehearsal?

Typically all classes come to the dress rehearsal so they can watch their peers perform. If there are a few parents/guests who will not be able to make the main performance, they would be welcome to attend the dress rehearsal (with the understanding that it may not yet be a fully polished performance).

If you have any further questions, don't hesitate to send us a note at programs@evergreentheatre.com