BEST PRACTICES FOR KIDS IN VOICEOVER

AUDITIONS

Short, concise scripts

01

- **Short, concise scripts** written clearly as sides or a word / PDF document.
  - Storyboards are great for creative vision, but a VO only doc should always be included in any audition for kids. Easy to read, easy to deliver!

Short Auditions

02

- **Auditions should be short,** and considered a SAMPLE of voice capabilities, not full project reads.
  - Time is valuable, and auditions typically take much longer for kids than for grownups. Production teams should request exactly what they need to get a good feel for how a child will perform in a role. Ideally, audition files should be no more than 1 minute in length. Longer auditions can be reserved for the callback.

24 hr + Turnaround Time

03

- **An audition turn around time of no less than 24 hours**, is recommended, regardless of time zone.
  - Allow enough time for kids to review your specs, record a great audition, and deliver it back. Keep in mind that kids have school, activities, and of course need to sleep - no matter where they live.

48 hr + Turnaround Time for Music

04

- For musical auditions, a turn around time of no less than 48 hours is recommended. **Learning songs to music takes time and practice.** By making sure ample time is given to rehearse and record the song, casting will have a larger range of talent that will be able to submit.

In-Person Auditions

05

- For the safety and security of all, **make sure a parent or guardian is always present** during auditions, callbacks, and jobs where kids are involved.
- Live directed auditions/callbacks, whether in person or virtual, should be **no longer than 45 minutes.**

BEST PRACTICES FOR KIDS IN VOICEOVER

DIRECTED SESSIONS

Session Times

01

- Work should ideally take place outside of school hours whenever possible and should not extend past 9pm in the MINOR'S time zone according to SAG-AFTRA.

←

Session Length

02

- **Session time should be limited to 45 minutes, before a 15 minute break is allocated. Total max session, 2 hours**
  - Kids' brains are still growing and their attention spans are short. Creatives may find that younger children can only focus for a very short time before needing a break. The session will go much more smoothly if the creative team can be attuned to the child's needs and give them plenty of brain breaks.

→

Scripts

03

- **Scripts should be given ahead of time** for kids to read and practice the script and for "parental content control"
  - Ideally the day before, but at least one hour prior to session start.

←

Parent/Guardian Presence and Involvement

04

- A parent or guardian must be allowed to be present for the entire session.
- A parent or guardian must be able to listen in to any audio the child hears during the session, including engineer and client comments, music, reference audio and playback, and see any video if applicable.
- Establish whether or not the parent may or may not coach the child during the session, as needed, depending on age.

→

Understanding Kids

05

- **Creatives should understand the nuances of working with children.**
  - No swearing or inappropriate/angry language. Positive affirmation, and professionalism in all aspects creates a safe working environment for all.

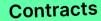←

RATES & USAGE

Standard Industry Rates

01

- Play fair. **Kids should receive standard industry rates** comparable (if not more) to adult rates for all VO genres

Payment

02

- **Children should be paid in a timely manner**, as is standard for adults.
- **Define and clarify payment terms** relative to each states regulations on minors earning income.
- Production should provide **necessary documentation** for minors to obtain special bank accounts (Coogan Trust Account, etc.) if required.
  - *It is up to parents and guardians to review the specific payment and work permit requirements for the child's state of residence.*

Work Permits

03

- If required, **establish a work permit** in the child's state of residence, and share with production.
- Prior to working, parents/guardians should have proof of work permit for their child, relative to their state's laws and requirements. Production/creative teams and certain US states may not require documentation, but it is always best to have this established in advance of any job.
  - *It is up to parents and guardians to review the specific payment and work permit requirements for the child's state of residence.*

Contracts

04

- **Have an agreement/contract signed by both parties** upfront so that all parties are protected and expectations are clear.
  - Share this signed agreement at least 30 mins prior to session start time, to be able to review.

Artificial Intelligence

05

- Sound files should **not be used to make or train AI** for digital clones, voice doubles, or any other synthetic version of a child's voice. All contracts should include clear language which defines the usage of any sound files created for the job.