

Parents' Guide to the Arts in New York City 2008-09

The Department of Education has worked to make the arts a staple of every student's classroom experience—from Kindergarten all the way through high school. A background in the theater, dance, music, and the visual arts is essential for students who want to continue their arts studies in college or who want to pursue a career in the arts. Arts instruction also helps students who have interests spanning all subject areas to develop as students.

In New York City, arts education happens both inside and outside the classroom. New York City abounds with affordable opportunities for families to enjoy the arts together. As a parent you can help to make sure that your child makes good use of the museums, exhibits, plays, and performances the City has to offer.

How can I find arts opportunities across the City?

- The Department of Education's **Arts and Cultural Education Services Guide** is a compendium of hundreds of New York City arts and cultural opportunities. Teachers and parents can use this guide to find specific arts programs or to explore more general interests. The guide is available on the DOE Web site at www.nyc.gov/schools/offices/teachlearn/arts/resourceguide2.html.
- The Alliance for the Arts, a New York City non-profit that partners with the Department of Education, has created the **NYCKidsARTS** Web site, where there is a catalog of New York City cultural opportunities for children. Parents can search through the catalogue by borough or by discipline, and can look for events that offer student discounts. To enter a search, go to <http://nyckidsarts.org/>.
- **High 5 Tickets to the Arts** is a non-profit organization that offers \$5 tickets to a season of events and performances for teens ages 13-18. Each High 5 season includes some of the best New York City dance, music, theater and visual arts events. Teens may buy one extra \$5 ticket for an adult if they'd like to go with a parent, teacher or mentor. Tickets can be purchased online at <http://www.highfivetix.org/flash.html>.
- Every year, **New York City Parks** present a season of arts programming open to the general public. Whether it's by going to see Shakespeare in the Park or by enrolling in a free outdoor painting class, families in every borough can take advantage of great arts opportunities close to home. For a schedule of events, go to <http://www.nycgovparks.org/>.

Exposing your children to a wide array of cultural experiences is the first step to fluency in the arts. Talking to them about their experiences with the arts is the next step. This means asking your children about their reactions to museums or performances. Whether children are talking about nineteenth-century paintings, orchestral works, or modern dance performances, they are developing their own opinions and tastes. They may even be inspired to undertake their own creative endeavors in response to what they've seen and discussed.

How to Learn More about Arts in your Child's Schools

The "Arts in Schools Report" is a new tool that allows parents to see the arts opportunities available at their child's school. A school's report shows whether students have access to art, music, theater, and dance; whether there are teachers of those subjects in the building; whether there are spaces dedicated to studying these subjects; and whether the school has any partnerships with the cultural community. These reports provide parents with the information they need to decide which schools can offer their children the richest arts education. To view your school's report, go to the DOE Web site at www.nyc.gov/schools, type in your school's name in the "Find a School" window, and click on the "Statistics" link on the left side of the page.