

Should you pursue modeling and/or acting for your child?

Does your child have what it takes to be a model and/or actor? Well, if your child is under three years old, then the first thing to look for would be cuteness. Does everyone on the street stop to speak to you about how beautiful your child is? If yes, then take that as a big clue that your child may have a special look that attracts admiration from others.

If your child is over three years old and younger than six years old, then the first thing to look for is cuteness coupled with character. All models, even if they are not actors, have to have some ability to act. Modeling is a type of acting. Yes, you can be beautiful with little personality and get lucky from time to time but chances are that if you had to go out on a "Go See," where the child has to go out and meet the client in order to possibly get the job, and your child didn't charm the potential client, then your child will most likely not get the job. If your child is on the shy side, you would have to try and break your child of being shy in front of a camera. Maybe you have a child who is shy with people but not shy in front of a camera. In that case, it can work.

If your child is over six years old, then the first thing to look for is cuteness coupled with character and the child's desire to participate in modeling and/or acting. All three of those things combined are very important. If you think your child should model and/or act but your child doesn't really want to do it, then you are really wasting your time. We all know that when a child reaches six years old that they have developed their own opinions and limited independence of you and what you want them to do.

At this age and older, it is very necessary to know that your child wants to model and/or act in order for them to be even remotely successful.

Now that the above has been established, I will proceed with my recommendations for parents who want to pursue modeling and/or acting for their child:

Start by finding a good photographer in your area and setting up a photo shoot for your child. Once you have found someone that will take time with your child in his or her studio, then plan what clothing and props you would like to take. Start by taking only three outfits for your child. Your props can be something as simple as the child's favorite toy or stuffed animal. When picking out the child's clothes, try and keep it to what they normally wear on a daily basis. You can go to the local grocery store and buy a parenting magazine to get some ideas as to what to put together for your child or search out children's fashions online. For little boys, I strongly recommend staying away from jackets and ties for that is really not normal attire for a little boy. A jacket and tie on a little boy needs to be saved for weddings and funerals - not their first photo shoot. For little girls you can get away with frilly pageantry type dresses, but I personally do not recommend it - you, the parent, make the call on that one.

Once the photo shoot has been completed and you have received your proofs or images, go through them and pick out five of the best images to have printed. Print one of them as an 8"x10" headshot and the other four images can be printed on one 8"x10"

collectively. Once you have your five images printed, contact a local talent agency that represents children and set up an appointment for your child. Sometimes agencies only have "Open Calls," where they meet new faces, on certain days of the year and/or week. The agency will tell you their normal procedures and you will have to comply with them. Do not just blindly mail in copies of your child's pictures. Most agencies just throw them in the trash. Follow their guidelines and you will have a better chance of getting your child signed by the agency. It is the agency that will find most all of your child's work.

Do your homework on the agency that you are planning to see! Ask for references! Always investigate the agency thoroughly before you sign anything or pay for anything. Most legitimate agencies will not charge you for representation. They take a commission percentage from booked jobs. However, it is common for an agency to ask you to pay for printing "Comp Cards." "Comp Cards" are what an agency uses to book a "Go See" and it has your child's specifications and pictures on it.

The agency that has signed your child will then advise you on future steps to take with your child and what they recommend. But please keep this mind - - It is always good to continue to look for other opportunities for your child on your own. Try not to rely solely on the agency for everything that your child is going to do. You have to be diligent.

And the last bit of advice is this. If you have gone through all of the steps to get your child started in modeling and/or acting, please be patient with your agency. There are NO guarantees that your child will be picked time after time for jobs. It is a tough business and there are thousands of cute, charismatic and natural born child models and/or actors. Just try and enjoy what your child gets when they do get something.

Have some fun with it!

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