

[Print](#)[Close Window](#)

Arts education

(by Beijing Zhu - July 21, 2010)



For kids, enrolling in acting classes is not necessarily for the purpose of becoming actors, but can serve as a means to spur creativity, as a summer arts program of Metro Theater Company showcases.

The two-week camp ArtsINTERsection, which runs July 26 through Aug. 6 at New City School, is intended to engage children in classes featuring acting, music, visual arts and more.

The camp is targeted at two age groups — the preschool program for 4- and 5-year-olds and the school-age program for first- to fourth-graders.

Preschool kids will try their hands at creative drama, movement, music and visual arts while children aged 6 to 10 will take part in acting and improvisation as additions.

At the end of each week, kids are expected to give a performance, with their parents attending and watching.

“ArtsINTERsection is about exploring all the arts and also exploring the process of being a creative person,” said Emily Kohring, education director and artistic associate at Metro. “We look at the tools a person needs to get from a great idea to expressing that idea, whether the form is visual art, theater or music.”

In acting classes, children learn basic tools of acting — they improvise games, play characters and explore settings. In visual arts classes, kids work on a project using recycling materials and also make sculptures. And in music classes, they learn rhythm, improvise their own music and experiment with instruments.

The way the program works, Kohring said, is by creating a welcoming environment in which children skilled at performing and those who are just beginning to mix together.

“Led by teachers who are professional artists, the kids use their imagination to carry out the creative process no matter what level they are in,” Kohring said.

The point, as she put it, is to “put kids in the driver’s seat.”

“The program does not focus on training. Instead, it inspires children to discover what they like and what they feel comfortable with. We offer inspiration and guidance, but the kids write, direct and perform what excites and intrigues them,” she said.

The summer program has been open to the public since 1998 and this is the company’s fifth year partnering with New City School.

The responses from students and parents so far have been rewarding, Kohring said. “We have kids who come back year after year and who work as junior counselor. Children get individual attention in the program; the teachers are skilled and caring. Parents appreciate it greatly.”

More encouragingly, Kohring said, is that the program has promoted more than creativity. “Through participating in the activities, children learned life skills,” she said. “They learned how to cooperate with partners to solve problems together and how to communicate with others. Besides, they learned to build confidence in themselves and to express their opinions.”

“It is important for them to understand that there is not always one right answer but multiple ways to approach a problem and multiple answers to it,” Kohring added.

Similarly, Kohring suggested that multiple choices of life are available to children, saying that she hopes the kids will be successful no matter what life they lead.

“Whether they grow up to become doctors, teachers or take other professions, they can succeed once they bring their talents into full play, she said.

“Some kids think they are not as talented as their peers and we want to assure them that everyone has talent in some aspect,” Kohring continued, adding that everyone is born with a creative side and the goal of the program is to dig out the potential of each individual.

Kohring said that Metro Theater Company values arts education and sees it as an important mission to impact children by involving them in arts.

“The mission of our company is to foster inclusive community and nurture meaningful learning through the arts,” she said.

^ [back to top](#)