

# About DCT's Sensory-Friendly Programming Initiative

Dallas Children's Theater welcomes children with developmental disabilities and their families with adapted programs that ensure they and their families can receive the many benefits of drama. Our sensory-friendly performances and classes are designed to be easy on the senses and meet children and families where they are.

## SENSORY-FRIENDLY PERFORMANCES

Sensory-friendly performances feature a relaxed, accepting atmosphere with friendly, trained helpers; reduced sound; increased lighting in seating area; and a custom lighting plan to reduce harsh stage lighting. We offer social stories, parent tips sheets, and quiet rooms to increase comfort with coming to the theater.

## Attending plays help children with developmental disabilities grow and connect!

- 95% of non-verbal children are visibly at ease or engaged during the performance.
- 96% of parents say their child with sensory sensitivities enjoyed the show.
- 90% of parents say their child grew or learned through the experience.
- 89% of parents say their child had a positive experience with a person they didn't know.

## What parents say:

*"It's so comforting for me and my children to feel welcomed at a theater: no angry looks from other parents when my child is restless or vocalizes, and not being asked to leave because our presence is a distraction to other audience members."*

– Julie Ross, parent

*"This was life changing for our family to be able to go to this show. We recently moved from Raleigh, North Carolina, and despite having a lot of Broadway-style shows, we were never able to go. Your theater was one of the reasons we chose to move to the Dallas area, and we have already purchased tickets for every future sensory show that was available. THANK YOU!!!!"*

– Daniel Matthew, parent

*"Our whole family just loves coming to DCT. It feels like home."*

– Natalie Olszewski, parent

*"As a child with autism, emotions are hard for Timothy. He asked how the rabbit knew how people were feeling. We were able to converse about something that he struggles with."*

– Brandi Westmoreland, parent

*"It was her first time to a play because I had always been afraid to take her. Having this successful outing allowed her to experience something new without feeling bad about herself, anxious, and out-of-place."*

– Anonymous parent



dct.org

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## BLUE PEGASUS PLAYERS CLASSES

Blue Pegasus Players classes are tailored for children with developmental disabilities and sensory needs. Offered throughout the year, the sessions help students better identify emotions, support one another, and take initiative. Some classes feature opportunities for typically developing children to support, make friends with, and learn from children with developmental disabilities. These amply staffed sensory-friendly acting classes build emotional and social skills and self-confidence for students with various levels of ability.

### **Blue Pegasus Player classes help children with developmental disabilities develop and grow at even deeper levels.**

- 96% of students improved in at least two skills like understanding of emotions and supporting and encouraging other students.
- 94% of parents say they have noticed increased self-esteem and use of imagination.
- 83% of parents say they have noticed improvements in their child's social functioning since attending the class.



### **What parents say:**

*"Kiari now introduces herself confidently to a new person in her age group, whereas before she was really shy and she would just kind of stare."*

– Ruth Rosa, parent

*"Tej has grown by being part of the group and not sitting by himself, isolated. Even that itself is a big thing."*

– Ravi Munaganuri

*"Jacob gained confidence from attending the class. He chose several jokes to tell and was so excited to share them with our family."*

– Melissa Kunko, parent

*"When Palmer got to sing on the stage and sign autographs after the show, he told me it was the best day of his life."*

– Lisa Lee, parent

## PROGRAMMING BEYOND OUR WALLS

Dallas Children's Theater takes our sensory-friendly programming on the road as well. We conduct academic-related drama instruction for students with intellectual disabilities in partnership with classroom teachers at Notre Dame School in the Uptown area of Dallas. Our national tour conducts sensory-friendly performances across the country as requested.

### **2019 SENSORY-FRIENDLY PROGRAM PLAN**

- Eight sensory-friendly performances at DCT
- Three or more sensory-friendly performances on the national tour
- Five Blue Pegasus Players sessions with a culminating performance at the end of each session
- 20 drama instruction classes at Notre Dame School

