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Filters And Kids
Fun or Flawed?

**Selecting
an Agent**
*Is Boutique or
Bigger Better?*

MEET
NATALIE HARVEY
AND NICK HAMON.

TIK TOK 

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Asked And Answered
*The Entertainment Industry's Most
Frequently Asked Questions*



Editor's Notes

Welcome to another wonderful edition of Aspire Magazine.

Our Summer/Spring 2021 edition has been put together during another tough year, so we are very thankful to everyone that helped us put it together. For this edition we chatted with two well-known casting directors to discuss the industry, and the confusion between their role and that of a talent agent. Our new blog is also continuing to thrive, so if you haven't already checked it out, please do! We have a huge range of blogs that don't make it to the magazine so there is heaps of new information to read.

I would like to thank all of our writers, advertisers and interviewees who contributed to the edition. We always love to hear your thoughts, so don't be afraid to reach out if you have anything you would like us to explore!

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Above: Ebony Beames
Right: Nadine Peppler

Filters And Kids: *Fun or Flawed?*

By Elle Cecil

Social media is everywhere these days, and as a result, kids in this era are growing up with a different view of reality. Though these platforms are often targeted at older children, Snapchat and Instagram filters are the new norm, and even very young kids can learn to use these apps and their filter functions.

So, what sort of effect are these filters having on our kids' self-image and reality?

Filters designed to have a smoothing or feature-enhancing effect are very popular on social media platforms and become even more prolific as technology advances.

Though social media undoubtedly has its benefits, most notably the ability to keep in touch with friends and family throughout the pandemic, it also has some fairly detrimental consequences.

A 2017 study conducted by the International Journal of Computer Science and Engineering suggested that social networks are changing the behaviour in which youthful people relate to their parents and peers.

The study suggests that the positive effects include allowing kids to network with friends and family, as well as assisting

the development of social skills, inspiring young minds and increasing reading and writing skills. However, the study also shows that social media and the use of image-altering technology has a detrimental effect on kids' body image.

Kids and adults alike will often post or send heavily filtered images that portray them in a certain light, hiding any skin imperfections or enhancing certain facial features such as their eyes or lips.

Though these filters may assist the portrayal of a certain theme or 'aesthetic', they can also be damaging to those that post and those that view the images.

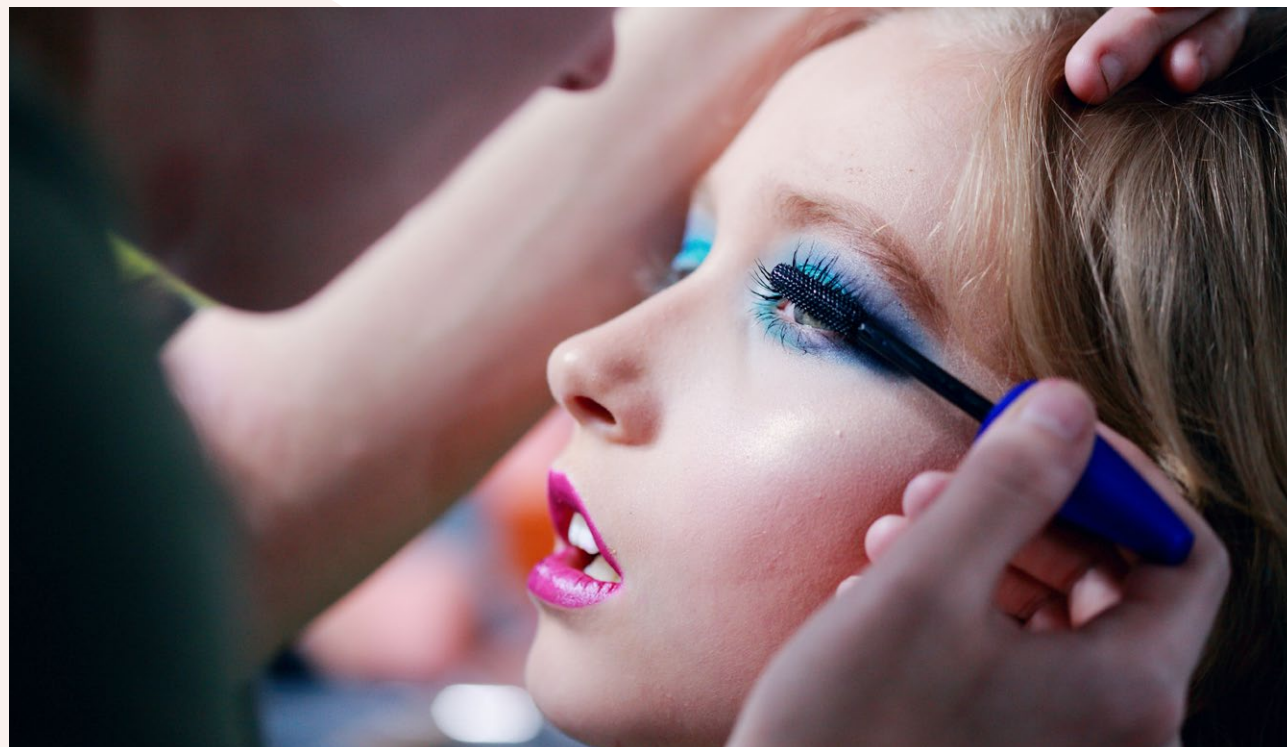
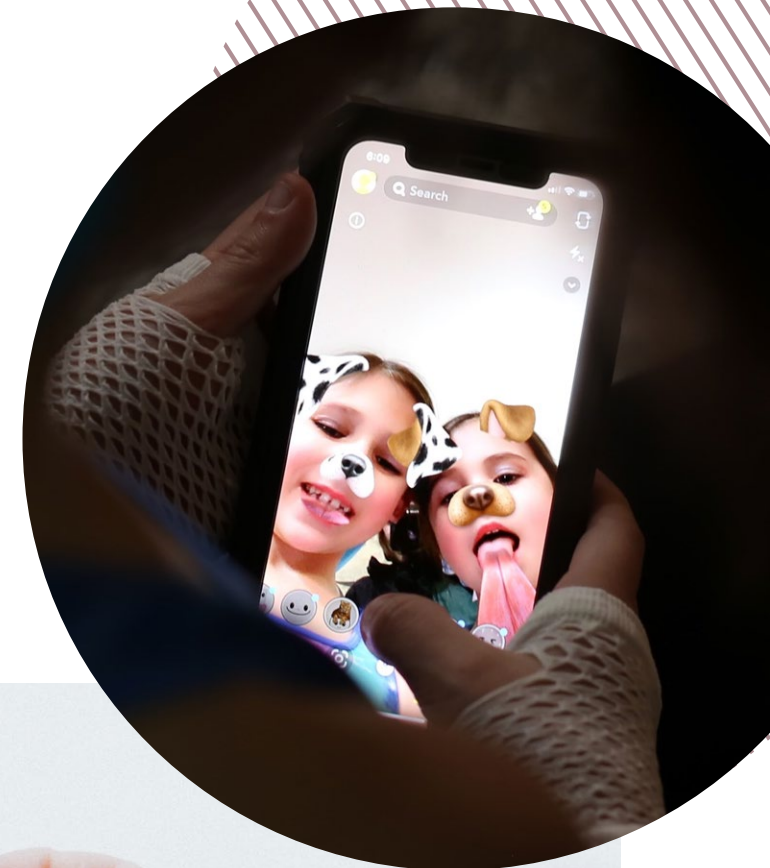
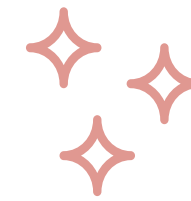
Much like the wildly popular glamour shots of the eighties, these filters are designed to hide any perceived flaws and produce a more pristine appearance. These dreamy, blurred and grainy images however are quite obviously not natural, though nonetheless, they are extremely pleasing to the eye.

The difference between these retro image effects and modern-day filters is often it is hard to tell whether or not the filter is actually there. Some filters are extremely obvious, for example, Snapchat's infamous dog face filter. However, others are extremely subtle and only work to make minor enhancements within the image.

For example, heavily filtered images hiding any normal human features such as acne, redness or dark circles may then put pressure on both the posters and the viewers to look a certain way and fit this portrayal of what is considered 'popular' and 'attractive'.

The expectation that to be beautiful, you need perfect skin or features is quite often a harmful notion and is often thought to negatively affect kids' self-esteem and confidence. Those that post a filtered image may feel obliged to live up to their online persona of a smooth-skinned youth. Likewise, any friends or peers that may see these images are likely to compare themselves to the kid in the filtered image and may experience lower self-esteem when they aren't able to emulate the image's content in real life.

It is all good and well for kids to experiment and enjoy social networks with their friends, but the media they consume often portrays unrealistic standards and is heavily edited. It is important to encourage your child to distinguish the difference between real life and things they see on social media. Acne or other skin imperfections do not determine their worth as a person and neither do likes, comments or shares on social media. Kids need to know and learn that as humans, everyone is perfect in their own way, flaws and all.



It is important to encourage your child to distinguish the difference between real life and things they see on social media.



Selecting An Agent Is Boutique or Bigger Better?

By Elle Cecil

If you and your child are venturing into the world of acting and modelling, it is often quite difficult to figure out where to start. Internet advice forums suggest that gaining representation from a talent agent is the best place to begin, but how do you know what to look for?

When researching for talent agents, you may see the term 'boutique' used when referring to smaller agencies. This term is used to describe and promote agencies with smaller talent bases and less staff, stating that they are able to provide a more personalised service due to the small group of talent that they represent.

However, unlike some businesses like clothing or jewellery stores, talent agencies aren't really able to be classified as 'boutique' agencies. There are no regulations around this and there is nothing stopping any talent agency from using the term to describe their business, so it isn't a reliable way of measuring an agency's quality.

Agencies that use the term 'boutique' may often just do so to positively describe the small scale of the business. Though more personalised services may be available from smaller agencies, this isn't always the case. Small-scale agencies might promote the notion that your child will have more chances of landing a job due to the lesser number of talent on their books. However, this is not the case.

Clients and casting directors will often have a very specific look and persona in mind when scouring talent for a job. Regardless of whether your child is with a small or large agency, if they fit the casting criteria then that's all that is important.

'Boutique' agencies will also often encourage parents to join them so that their children don't have to 'compete' with other kids on the books.

However, clients and casting agencies often look to larger talent agencies simply because they have more talent and therefore more chance of representing the right fit for the role. They are also more likely to want to source talent for multiple roles from the same agency as they don't have to search far and wide, and it is administratively simple. The broader the horizons of talent, the more chance your child will be booked for a job.

You wouldn't visit a store with a very small product selection unless you knew that they stocked the exact item you want. Instead, you would visit a larger store and search for the item there, because there is more chance that you'll find what you are looking for.

Bigger agencies are also more likely to receive more briefs, castings and job opportunities than small agencies, simply due to the chances of success in finding the perfect fit for the job. Large agencies are just that for a reason: they are almost always able to satisfy the client or casting director, leading to strong client relationships and industry connections.

When searching for representation for your child, there are many things that you should take into consideration. Some agencies will be going for a certain type of look and others might be after kids with particular talents. However, you can be sure that if your child is passionate and patient with their endeavours in the industry, then they have the ability to succeed. Different children will react differently to certain circumstances, and it is your job as a parent to decipher the information out there.

Try to remember that flashy words and advertising don't always mean that the quality of the agency matches its appearance. Look past the marketing strategies and weigh up the pros and cons of each agent, taking into consideration their experience, past clients, history and communication style. Much like any business or creative venture, you need to work out what is best for you and your child. After some research, you'll be equipped with all the knowledge necessary to make the best decision for your child. It may take a few tries, but you will eventually find your perfect fit!



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Learn *the* Lingo 2.0

It is recommended to look into regular performance-based classes like drama, singing, dance, musical theatre, screen acting, modelling etc.

Manager vs Agent – A ‘Manager’ is invested in training and managing only a small number of people. Their full-time job is to manage a person’s career, diary, travel arrangements, portfolio, skills, training & ‘brand’. An actor/model can have a manager as well as an agent. An agent’s job is solely to source work for the actor/model. Agents don’t organise acting classes or teach confidence skills. They just provide the opportunities to you for potential work – like a recruitment company. Agents are also much more regulated, with talent agencies needing valid labour-hire licenses in QLD and VIC. It is your responsibility to ensure your child is confident & ready to go when those opportunities come their way. Kids don’t need a manager (you are their Manager), but it is recommended to look into regular performance-based classes like drama, singing, dance, musical theatre, screen acting, modelling etc., to help them with confidence & audition skills.

Talent – The actor or model. You/your child are NOT the client. In industry terms, actors and models that agents represent are known as ‘the talent’, and agents will often refer to your child this way.

Client – A person or company using the services of a talent agent to look for talent for their shoot. e.g. Casting Directors, Producers, Advertising Agencies or the designer of a clothing brand.

Brief – Clients will send agents a ‘brief’ detailing the talent requirements for their shoot. Examples: Girls 8-10 years, Boy’s size 6, Girls 6-9 years old who have blue eyes & brown hair or Teens 12-14 years who play soccer. Briefs can be broad or more specific, depending on what the client wants & needs. An agent will never know what they may be looking for until they receive a ‘brief’.

Pitch – After a brief is received, the talent agent will ‘pitch’ (i.e. submit or put forward) all suitable talent options. These are their suggestions to the client of the talent who are best suited to perform the role. From there, it is the client’s choice which of these talents progress to the next stage of casting.

Casting Director/Casting Agent – A Casting Agent or Casting Director is

often employed by a brand or producer to deal with the initial casting process. They will send out the briefs to all agents and will organise auditions before submitting the most suitable options back to their client to make the final decision on the cast.

Print Work – Often referred to as ‘stills’, models may be booked for ‘Print Work’ or for the purpose of creating photographic images for printed marketing material such as brochures, flyers, magazines, catalogues, newspapers, billboards etc. These days these images will usually appear digitally / online or on social media as well.

TVC – A common and shortened term for a television commercial.

Fit Model – Someone who tries on the sample clothing, during the design and sample stage, to make sure they fit and before the clothing is purchased in bulk by the brand. This is NOT for photoshoot or catalogue work, but you would still be paid for your time. Fit models need to match the very specific measurements of standard clothing sizes.

Portfolio – A portfolio is a collection of images, either in print or, more commonly these days, online. Portfolios are required for both models & actors and show off the talent’s look, versatility and previous work to potential future employers. Portfolios are more common in the adult agency world. As kids change and grow so quickly, it is often unnecessary and expensive for parents to pay for a professional portfolio. It is, however, essential to have a talent profile available to prospective clients with a Head & Body Shot that shows your child’s current and natural (not too styled, and minus any filters or photoshop) look and then to keep updating their profile with photos as they change and grow or with examples of past work after they book jobs.

Video Interview – A video interview is an interview undertaken by a team member of a talent agency to decide if your child is suitable for representation. A video interview is often needed before an agency agrees to represent a child. Most agencies switched to video interviews during the pandemic for

safety reasons, and it is likely they will stick around.

Agency Fees – These are fees that may be paid to a talent agent in order for your child to enter the industry. Every industry has entry costs, and entertainment is no exception. Agencies often bundle these entry fees, to make the industry more accessible to everyone. In Australia, fees to enter the child talent industry are extremely common as kid’s pay rates and loadings for jobs are lower than they are for adults, and therefore agencies can’t survive purely on commission from jobs.

Commission – Commission is a percentage or sum of money taken out of the talent’s job payment and paid to the agent for sourcing and organising all aspects of the job on the talent’s behalf. Depending on the state you live in, the commission rate is different. For NSW and WA it is 10% across the board on the talent’s final pay. While in VIC & QLD it’s 15% for TV Series & Films. And 20% for everything else - photoshoots, short video campaigns, and TV commercials.

Self-Test / Video audition – A self-test is an audition that you film yourself from home. Your agent will send you detailed instructions on what you need to record. This can be done on your smartphone or iPad. It doesn’t need to be fancy or edited. With everything happening in the world, these have become an increasingly popular way to cast talent!

Script / Sides – The written text of a play, film or broadcast. A ‘script’ lets the actors know what they have to say and do during the play or filming. Your child might be required to learn parts of a script for an audition or a role. ‘Sides’ is another term also sometimes used by professionals in the industry to refer to a small section of a script used for the audition.

Slate / Chat to Camera – A short ‘Introduction’ video is often requested for self-tests/video auditions, in addition to acting out a scene or performing a script. Generally, they are just looking for the talent to introduce themselves in a short 30-second video by saying their name, age, height and agent. Plus, maybe a short story about themselves.

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About The Fit

What Are Fit Models & Why Are They Needed?

By Rebecca Keith

The modelling world is a fast-paced, unforgiving and remarkable industry to be a part of. When looking specifically at the children's modelling industry, it is definitely just as fast-paced but not as unforgiving. However, while most kids aren't strutting the catwalk at Paris Fashion Week, there are still plenty of jobs that transpire through both areas.

One of the jobs that is required across both the adult and children's modelling industries, is a fit model. Unless you are well versed in the modelling world or are familiar with the other side of creating garments, then you've probably never heard of a fit model.

So, what is a fit model and what exactly do they do?

A fit model is basically a living mannequin. Generally, a fit model is a child who tries on clothing for fashion designers, or clothing brands.

Fit models must meet very specific height bust-waist-hip, arm, leg, and other measurement requirements. This is so that the designers can check the overall fit and drape of the fabric so that it is perfect by the time it reaches the racks of our favourite stores. The specific measurements needed will be different for every brand and clothing line, as the age and size demographic for each will be distinctive to match that specific brand specs. This is why different brands of the same size can result in different fits.

Any child that is selected to be a fit model will see that the job is simple and mainly requires them to stand still while the designers and other company representatives discuss the fit of the clothing item. They may also need to move around, sit, stretch and bend to see where the design needs to be amended. It is not uncommon to have up to four fittings for the same item, to ensure it is perfect before bulk orders are placed. They do get paid for their time of course, but it doesn't involve a photoshoot, and it is likely they won't also be a part of the related campaign.

This is nothing personal to your child if they aren't selected to participate in the associated campaign or photoshoot for the clothing lines they are trying on. In fact, often brands haven't even started casting models for campaigns when the line is still in the fit model stages.

If your child is selected to be a fit model, it is important that you explain to them exactly what the job entails, so that their expectations meet reality. The modelling world isn't all glitz and glamour, and this is a good example of that.

Fit modelling is still a great experience for any child, where they can learn skills that they can use at future auditions or jobs, such as interacting and working within a new environment with people they have never met before. Once brands find a fit model, they will often use them multiple times, so it is normally a repeat job, which is great for the child. It is still a great achievement for anyone in the industry and should be taken with pride just like any other opportunity your child might come across.

Fit models are an important part of the fashion cycle that is often not mentioned. However, many adults actually build careers out of becoming professional fit models for brands, and just like any other job in the industry it requires patience and persistence.

If your child is lucky enough to be selected as a fit model, make sure you manage their expectations, but allow them to soak up a great opportunity, as in this industry, any opportunity is a good one.



Asked & Answered

The Entertainment Industry's Most Frequently Asked Questions

By Kara Oakes

Navigating the entertainment industry can be tricky for even the most seasoned parents, and there will always be tough questions that have to be asked. Here we answer some of the most frequently asked questions by parents about the entertainment industry.

Why do agencies charge fees?

First and foremost, children's talent agencies charging fees in Australia is very common. There is a lot of information out there that suggests otherwise. However, we can assure you that it is incredibly normal for an agent to charge fees to represent your child.

Agencies that represent children have a lot of responsibility in ensuring that all clients are suitable to work with children, and all rules and regulations are being followed when working with and employing children. A lot happens behind the scenes, and that is where many of the costs come into play. Just like any business, agencies need to pay their staff, overheads, and any third parties involved in managing your child. It would be unrealistic to expect agencies to source work, maintain and service client relationships, keep abreast of all legalities, and onboard new talent at no cost.

How do I know an agency is reputable?

If you're unsure whether an agency is reputable, it's always best to do your research. Check out their websites, social media pages, and any testimonials you can find. These usually showcase what sort of work their talent has done and will answer any questions you may have. Look for things such as a regular client (they work with Cotton On Kids or Target frequently), an active social media presence, and how easy they are to contact.

Checking out their online reviews is another option, however it is always best to take them with a grain of salt. Many bad reviews online come from disgruntled customers, or in this case, parents, who are often disappointed about the lack of opportunities their child received. Keep in mind that there are no guarantees in this industry and that your agent acts as the 'middleman' only. They cannot create work nor decide what talent gets chosen.

If still in doubt, you can always ask around or contact an agency directly through phone or email and have a chat with them about any concerns.

What about commission?

Agent's will take a commission from any paid work your child undertakes. This is all part of the industry and to be expected. Depending on the state where you live and what the job is, the commission can range from 10-20%. Your agent will always discuss this with you prior to accepting a job.

Is my child guaranteed work?

Unfortunately, no agent can guarantee work as the decision is simply not up to them! Agents act as the 'middleman' between clients and talent and cannot create work, nor can they decide what talent gets booked. But rest assured, whichever agency you go with will submit your child for all suitable briefs that come through.

Do kids have to have a certain look to apply?

Definitely not! The industry is very diverse and always looking for children of all different ages, sizes, and ethnicities. Agents and clients alike want kids who look like kids!



Isn't there more work in Sydney and Melbourne?

Many big clients (think Kmart, Myer, Country Road, Best & Less) are based in either Sydney or Melbourne, so naturally, there will be more work in these states. Both Sydney and Melbourne are Australia's media hubs. In saying that, there is always work happening across the country, and it will always depend on whether your child fits the brief. Some good news is that recently there have been a number of big clients who have expanded their work to both Queensland and Western Australia, in particular the Gold Coast. The Gold Coast and south-east Queensland is quickly becoming a hotspot for the entertainment industry with a lot of film and TV work happening there as well as a growing number of familiar clients opening head offices in the region. Hopefully, this can increase the commercial presence in these states and create more work for the industry.

How much can my child earn?

The amount of money your child could earn depends on a number of variables, including the client, the job, and how long your child has been in the industry. The starting rate for children is usually about \$80 per hour for print work (photoshoots) and goes upwards from there. Some larger jobs, such as TV Commercials, can pay well into the thousands, especially if the advertisement is rolled over or continued for

longer than originally planned. For example, a global release of a TV advertisement would equate to about \$20K earnings, whereas an advertisement that is only aired in Australia might only garner about \$14K for a family of 4.

Can I work without an agent?

While it is possible to receive work without an agent, many clients will only source talent through agents. Agents have direct contact with clients and usually long-standing relationships, which in turn gives your child more exposure. Agents also ensure the safety of the child on-set and at castings by only working with clients who have complied with any necessary permits and checks and provide ongoing advice and support to both parents and children.

The industry is very diverse and always looking for children of all different ages, sizes, and ethnicities. Agents and clients alike want kids who look like kids!



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Where To From Here?

Stepping out from the shadows of the children's entertainment industry. *By Kara Oakes*



Most children's talent agencies only represent children up to the ages of 16 or 17; after that, the industry would classify them as adults. If they wish to continue in the industry, they will either need to find new representation or delve into the world of freelance.

Children's agencies will generally represent children who are models, actors, and performers, submitting them for any and all work that they are suitable for. However, as they begin to outgrow children's agencies, you and your child need to make the decision on what pathway is best. Adult agencies can operate quite differently, and some may only represent a certain part of the industry, such as models or actors.

As your little one grows into a young adult, many parents in the industry are left asking, where to from here?

If your child is looking to further their modelling career, it's best to directly approach well-known modelling agencies and organise meetings with them. Their agents will discuss how they work, what the requirements are, and if your child is a good fit for their agency. Some agencies will be looking for 'high-end' (think runway and editorial) models, while others want to see more 'commercial' looks. It's important to discuss this with your child beforehand and decide which side of modeling they would be best suited to.

While children's agencies will often bundle or subsidise fees, adult agencies still require upfront costs such as an online listing and professional portfolio, which can be costly if you don't have existing professional images or copies of previous work. Adult agencies will be able to point you in the right direction to organise a portfolio or test shoots. However, it is usually up to the talent to arrange this.

If your child wants to focus more on acting, singing, or dancing, finding them a creative talent agent may be the best way to go.

These agents will only pitch your child for performance work, and there may be more opportunities as the performing arts industry can offer different types of work such as theatre, film and TV, and dance. Many young stars start with children's talent agencies before moving on to specialist acting agents and becoming the super stars we see across our screens today.

The adult modelling and talent industry can be more brutal than what they are used to. Rejection is even more common, and many clients want adults of very particular looks, sizes, and skills. Clients and casting agents in the adult world may not hold back in criticism and expect professionalism at all times. While the children's industry is very accommodating and understanding and wants kids that look like kids, the adult modelling world can still be behind in many aspects. However, we are seeing far more inclusivity in the industry across Australia. As the Australian media becomes more diverse, there is an increased demand for people of all ages, sizes, and ethnicities in the talent industry. But as always, it's not the agencies who set the tone; they are still just the middleman who will try to meet clients' demands.



Freelance is another popular pathway to go down, especially in the age of social media. Once children are no longer minors, there are far fewer restrictions around working with them, and some clients and brands will not have any issues reaching out through casting platforms or directly through social media. Even as an adult, freelance work in the industry should be taken with caution.

Freelance actors and models are always advised to only work with reputable clients and brands and negotiate pay rates before accepting a job.

Although freelance may seem like the 'cheaper' option, there are still the same costs involved, such as portfolios and casting platform subscriptions which you will still need to be prepared to pay for and organise yourself.

Whichever avenue you decide to go down, your child's involvement in the children's entertainment industry will provide them with the foundations for a successful transition into the adult world. Whether that be modelling, acting, performing or a combination of all, the interpersonal skills they have learned and experience they have gained will be invaluable and stick with them throughout their careers.





Summer Loving ☀️

Stylish and sun-safe swimwear for your little beach babes

By Kara Oakes

After a long, cold winter, the weather is finally heating up, and it's almost time to make the most of the weather and spend long lazy days at the beach.

Sun safety has always been top of mind for parents, especially in the Australian sun. However, in recent years we've seen an increase in the demand for cute, colourful, yet sunsafe swimwear and beachwear. Traditionally children's swimwear has always been more 'safety focused' and more practical than adults, with full piece suits and rash vests remaining popular throughout the years. This summer, we're seeing plenty of fun, bright colours and prints for both boys and girls, with matching accessories ensuring your kids will be looking stylish and sun-safe!

The girls are having all the fun this summer, with plenty of 70's inspired florals and prints being the patterns of choice for this season. Design-wise, there are plenty of frills, ruffles and ruching to add detail and texture to the more traditional styles. Many designers have utilised fun design features to add interest. Bright feminine colours feature predominantly, with pretty pinks and shades of coral, lilac, and baby blues popular across childrenswear.

For boys, we're seeing a lot of cute 'sea life' themed prints, with sharks, crocodiles, and crustaceans adorning board shorts and rash vests. Designers have steered further away from dark and dreary colours for boys this summer and are instead focusing on soft

pastel hues of green and blue, which mimic the colours of the ocean. The combination of prints and ocean-inspired colours creates a fun and exciting range that is not often seen in boys swimwear.

One of the best ways to protect your child from the harsh UV rays of the Australian summer is to cover up as much as you can. Long sleeves and one-pieces are popular once again for both girls and boys, with brands such as Cancer Council Swim and Cotton On showcasing that sun-smart can be just as adorable. This year many designers and brands have also brought out coordinating accessories like hats, beach coverups, and towels. Many more have continued with the 'mini me' trend, which was popular during the Autumn/Winter collections, with both adult and children-sized designs, so the whole family can be coordinated.

Whichever trend you get on board with this summer, don't be scared to embrace the bright colours, bold prints, and fun design details and ensure that your little one will be the best dressed at the beach.

It's All Online

Are Online Drama and Modeling Classes Worth It?

By Rebecca Keith



Most of us spent the majority of our childhoods being told to go and play outside, and if we had access to any sort of technology, we were often told to get off it as a result.

However, for Gen Z and the newest generation of young people, Generation Alpha, they are instead being told to come inside and use the technology available to them to play. This is essentially a result of the pandemic, and we are sure that their parents would much rather be able to tell them to go and play in the street with their friends.

Now that everything's online, should we be taking advantage of the opportunities in the online world?

When we look at the modelling and entertainment industry, many of the children involved in the industry have at one point attended a class or workshop to help improve the skills needed to succeed in the industry. So, what are you meant to do now if you can't do that?

The answer is online classes. However, we can't guarantee that it will be worth it or replicate an in-person experience.

When looking at the costs vs the benefits and the opportunities that an online acting or modelling class can have, it all depends on the source. You want to be looking for a reputable company or individual who has had vast amounts of experience in that particular area. Not everyone can teach a class like this.

Often you want the teacher to not only have years of experience in the industry but years doing the specific job that your child wants to do. There is no point in having a class run by a talent agent unless that agent has previously spent years working in the industry.



Secondly, the costs of the class must be in line with the person running the class, what their experience is worth, and what your child will get out of a class. The cost must align with the ultimate benefit.

This is where online and zoom classes can become a grey area. A lot of acting and modelling involves using body language and teaching your children to pose, make certain facial expressions, read lines and act out parts, things that need to be or should be done in person. This is mainly because your child will get more out of an in-person class than out of an online class. So, then what are the real benefits of online classes?

In the industry currently, video auditions are so common they are almost replacing in-person castings. So online classes can allow the kids to get used to the format they might have to audition in the future. It teaches them how they can get their emotions and confidence projected through a screen. However, most other aspects of a class should be undertaken as an in-person experience. Another benefit of doing classes is that a 'live' in the moment performance in front of peers, helps kids to lose that layer of nervousness and practice, ready for when they do an online audition. This way, the child can reap the utmost benefits.

During the pandemic, there were an array of people trying to jump on board and host online acting and modelling classes, mainly as a quick cash grab during a hard time. However, it is likely that these classes don't actually provide a benefit equal to the cost. Be careful when selecting classes for your child to take. You want to ensure the costs and benefits align while ensuring it is being held by a reputable individual or business.

Classes are a great way to help your child feel more comfortable, but you don't want to waste your money, so keep your eyes peeled for in-person classes becoming available again as restrictions across the country ease. We are sure that the kids are just as excited as you are to do something fun again!



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Tik Tok:

The New Era Of Social Media

By Rebecca Keith

Tik Tok has taken the world by storm since it rose to global fame at the beginning of 2020. While the app existed before then, it really gained traction when the pandemic began.

As one of the fastest growing platforms across the world, naturally, it has caught the eye of the younger and social media savvy generations. While the app does have age restrictions, there are many ways around this, and kids are easily finding them.

So, since Tik Tok is clearly the next generation's social media of choice, here is everything you need to know about the popular social media platform.

Tik Tok was first launched in China in September 2016. The app allows users to film and share short videos. The app only saw huge growth once it became available on the Apple store and Google Play. By utilising the apps editing, music, filter and video features users have been able to create videos that have

gained millions of views, and then gain millions of followers as a result. The top ten most followed accounts on Tik Tok have over 20 million followers, and many of them have evolved into social media stars and are now celebrity personalities.

Now nearly 5 years on, the platform has almost 700 million active users per month and ranks in the top 5 most popular social media platforms, with the expectation that sooner rather than later it will reach one billion users.

Since millennials tend to prefer Instagram, Tik Tok has become the platform of choice among Gen Z. So, why is it so popular?

There are many reasons, but mainly the appeal of Tik Tok challenges and trends, and the app is proven to be far more addictive than social media platforms such as Facebook. Users spend much more time scrolling on Tik Tok than any other social media app. Tik Tok trends range from dancing, lip syncing, pranks and tricks. Users put their own take on trends



The top ten most followed accounts on Tik Tok have over 20 million followers, and many of them have evolved into social media stars and are now celebrity personalities.

by making their own videos, and this ability to personalise the videos really appeals to the younger generation who are using the app as a self-discovery tool.

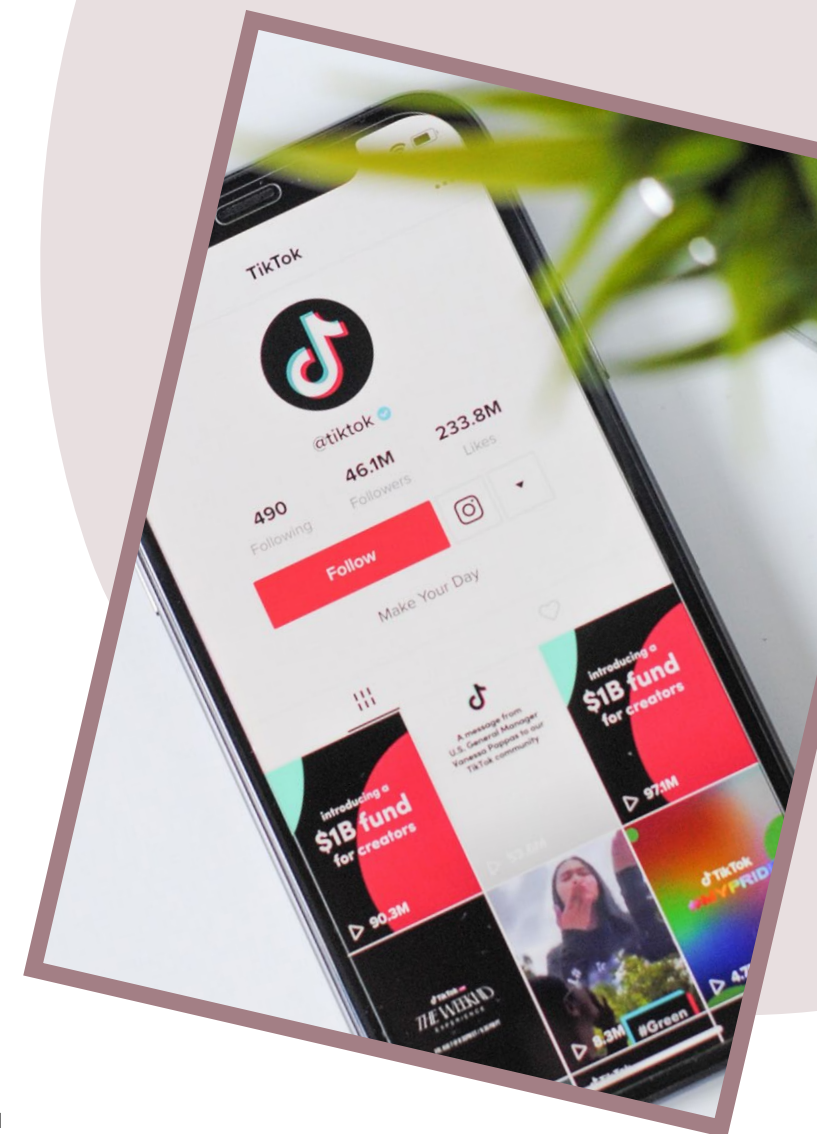
Interestingly enough there are actually a few trends that involve parents and children making videos together. This has naturally led to the creation of accounts dedicated to parents and their children doing videos together, such as Australian pair @benandzara, and a range of American YouTubers, who often use their children for their youtube channels and are now moving onto Tik Tok to create videos with their kids.

However, just as with every social media platform there is a downside to every app. While Tik Tok is a source of fun, it does put pressure on the younger generation to blindly follow trends and compete for social media popularity, which can create some unhealthy habits. The app however does have some parental controls that can be implemented, to avoid encountering any inappropriate content. Lastly, just like any other social media app, comment features can lead to cyberbullying on the platform.

Don't fret, as a parent, the best way to keep your kids safe is to be informed. The app has since rolled out new safety features for teens that will help you to keep them safe. Alongside the new safety features and parental controls on the app, you can monitor your child's usage of the app as you feel is appropriate.

It is also important to discuss the dangers and usage of social media with your child so that they have the ability to identify if a situation is inappropriate and they need to report it.

Clear and open communication can go a long way in the trust you can share with your teen, especially as they are growing and learning to find their own way in the world. While social media and apps such as Tik Tok aren't going anywhere, as long as you are informed, and aware you can help to keep your child safe and allow them to still have fun and just be a kid.



The Show Must Go On

How COVID-19 has changed the entertainment industry By Kara Oakes

When the pandemic struck in 2020, many industries were hit hard and were forced to either shut up shop or scale back operations. The entertainment industry, on the other hand, had no other choice but to keep going and learn to adapt as quickly as they could.

As we live in a digital world with many devices at our fingertips, there is a constant need for new media and entertainment, and as people begin spending more time at home the entertainment sector is needed now more than ever.

The industry had no choice but to keep going when much of the world shut down. Casting directors and agents learned to adapt to new ways of meeting and auditioning talent. Zoom, Skype, and other video call services were on the rise within other industries, so it was only natural that they crossed over into entertainment as well. We have seen almost every single big brand and client adapt to video auditions and virtual castings over the past 2 years. Both of which we hope is here to stay. Video auditions give the talent much more flexibility and time to prepare. Virtual castings mean no more running around from one side of the city to the other, all for a 15-minute meet and greet. Having castings and auditions at home also provides children with a comfortable and familiar environment, which will surely help settle some nerves.

Working with children there are always a number of risks involved, but none more important than ensuring their health and safety on set. Agents and clients have always worked together to provide the best environment for

children to work in. As we open up our economy once again, clients are taking every precaution they can when booking talent. State and federal governments are bringing in a raft of protocols for hospitality and retail, so it only makes sense that entertainment will be similar. We have seen clients request full vaccination details of parents and talent, or must return a negative COVID test in the days before the job. Which in reality, is a small price to pay for the health and wellbeing of everyone on set.

We are also seeing frequent requests for real families in the industry, with many agents now opening family divisions because of the demand. Real families can help clients navigate some tricky situations, as booking talent that all reside in the same household can minimise many of the health risks involved with COVID.

Besides that, real families have a genuine connection and chemistry, which shines through on camera and can rarely be replicated by individual talent.

While it can be disappointing for both parents and children to not be able to meet clients in person and show off their personalities and skills, these changes are an important part of the evolution of the entertainment industry. Changes that make it more efficient and inclusive, giving children and their families opportunities to film their own auditions or attend castings online.

As Australia works towards a new COVID normal, the entertainment industry will continue to adapt to these new changes. The days of face to face castings and auditions may be a thing of the past with video auditions and virtual castings becoming the new norm. While there may be some teething issues as we all become accustomed to these new ways of living, many of these are welcome changes and can help the industry further evolve in the digital world.



Casting directors and agents learned to adapt to new ways of meeting and auditioning talent.

Meet Natalie Harvie from Citizen Jane Casting

By Elle Cecil

Citizen Jane Casting is a specialised casting agency, casting actors, extras, dancers, models and others in a variety of jobs throughout the talent and entertainment industry. Based in Redfern, New South Wales, Citizen Jane Casting provides services across Australia and internationally.

With a focus on casting the perfect fit for the job, Citizen Jane has been operating for 10 years and has cast talent for the likes of Uber, Bonds, McDonald's, Deakin University, Telstra and Google, as well as a range of banks and car brands.

Natalie Harvie is the director and owner of Citizen Jane Casting and was kind enough to chat with one of Aspire Magazine's writers, Elle.

Thanks so much for chatting with me today, Natalie! To start, could you give me a brief description of your role as a casting director?

As a casting director for TVCs, we quote talent fees based on media usage when the job is at the treatment stage. We usually quote with a director or production company.

Typically, between three and four directors will bid on each job and each may quote with a different casting director. Once the job is awarded, if our director wins the bid, we then brief out the roles to agents and/or on our socials, depending on role requirements. For example, if there is a special skill involved such as skateboarding, we will usually also street cast.

We then cast and/or request self-tests which are shared with the director. The director will shortlist five to six talents per role to come for a recall, which we then action. From there, the top two or three talents per roll are presented to the agency and client for final selection.

Once we have confirmed the talent, we supply a deal memo and then we are done! It usually all happens VERY fast!

We curate the selection of talent who come to a casting and will be seen by the director. Sometimes it is very hard to narrow down to a reasonable amount of people to see per role so that is often the challenge – would love to be able to give everyone a go!

That sounds pretty interesting, are your days generally super busy?

Crazy! I am usually up by 5 am at the latest as I like to do an hour of work without emails flying in before the day really starts. Depending on the week, we will be in the studio for at least a couple of days – sometimes we have two studios running.

I have great staff who all work super hard, all day every day. I am pretty much attached to my computer quoting new jobs, briefing jobs to agents, Zoom castings, scheduling studio castings, requesting self-tests, etc. I then also often work a few hours at night when we are super busy!

5 am? Wow. So how does your role as a casting director compare to that of a talent agent or management business?

The main commonality would be that we always have an eye out for fresh talent and love discovering someone new. [However] we don't make a commission off talent fees.

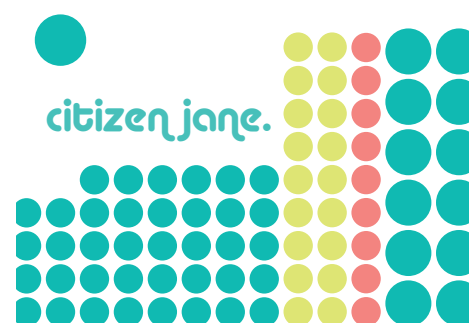
Are you often mixed up by talent and clients with talent agents?

It does happen a bit, but we just politely explain the difference and from there they can decide whether they want to pay for our services.

You work with both adults and children in the entertainment industry. How does working with kids compare to working with adults?

There is not a huge difference apart from the hour's kids are allowed to work and the fee structures. Other than that, we treat casting adults and kids about the same. At the moment, with COVID, we prefer to self-test kids more as it is less pressure on our waiting areas with numbers.

Thanks so much for your time Natalie. Thank you!



Meet Nick Hamon from Nick Hamon Casting

By Elle Cecil

When people enter the talent and entertainment industry, the vast array of terms and concepts can be very confusing. One of the most basic yet crucial concepts is the difference between talent agents and casting directors.

With over 20 years of experience, Nick Hamon Casting is one of the industry's leading casting companies.

The director of the business is its namesake, the one and only Nick Hamon. Nick has been in the industry since 1989 and has continued to have a positive impact since the establishment of his own business in 1998. Nick also pioneered the formation of the Casting Guild of Australia (CGA) and held the position of CGA Vice President from 2013 to 2016.

Nick Hamon Casting has worked with clients such as Mercedes Benz, Worksafe, Qantas and Australia Post. The business has also cast for movies such as I Love You Too (starring Peter Dinklage and Yvonne Strahovki) and Red Hill (starring Ryan Kwanten and Steve Bisley), as well as Channel Ten's hit TV show How to Stay Married (starring Peter Helliar and Lisa McCune).

With such a broad range of impressive clientele, Nick's expertise and understanding of the entertainment world is exceptional and expansive. He encourages new and existing players in the industry to brush up on their knowledge of common terms and concepts.

"Often, what a casting director does is misunderstood or confused with being an actors' agent. The job of a casting director is to consult and advise with the producers, directors and creative team on who we believe should be considered for a role," Nick explains.

"Our job is to know actors – not just the actors that are already established, but also up and coming performers."

Though both vital to the industry and with common similarities, the roles that casting directors and talent agents play differ greatly. Where talent agents take commission for the roles their models or actors are booked for, casting directors make money a different way.

"The main difference is that we do not manage, represent or take a commission from actors. We work for and are paid by the producers," says Nick.

Where talent agents have a range of people represented on their books, casting directors are the bridge between the talent or representative and the client (usually a business or production company). Nick and his team receive job details from clients, including shoot dates, requirements for roles and any related fees.

"We then consider all the agents' suggestions along with using our own database and book the auditions, send scripts or scenes, run auditions days (of sometimes up to 60 actors a day), negotiate actors' fees, prepare deal memos, book wardrobe calls, send call sheets and manage all types of egos (or lack thereof)," he says.

The matchmaker between talent and jobs, casting directors have a huge range of responsibilities within the industry.

"If we have jobs on we can be viewing hundreds of submissions for a role which includes viewing photos, resumes and video reels, booking auditions, speaking with agents about their actors, speaking with producers about an upcoming project and providing quotes that will include suggested fees for the actors required. On quieter days, we will watch auditions from previous jobs so we can add any new actors to our database," Nick says.

At the heart of the talent industry, casting directors are responsible for bringing a role to life with the right talent. Working with clients, agents and talent, casting directors play a crucial role in the promotion and development of Australia's entertainment industry.



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