

How to Get Your Kids Off the Couch and Out of Their Shells This Summer

Summer is just around the corner and one thing is on every parent's mind, including my own: what do I do with my kids once they're out of school? As a mother of two, this is my annual dilemma. The fees I paid for swim team two summers ago were repaid with moans and groans. The year before that, my kids Anna, fourteen, and Troy, 7, were thrown in archery camp—yes, archery. It wasn't until last year that a fellow mom gave me a tip that I now give to you: consider enrolling your child in a summer theatre course. Theatre classes not only give your kids the chance to be creative, but it is also statistically shown to improve other aspects of their lives. Did you know:

- Participation in drama activities can improve reading comprehension as well as verbal and non-verbal communication skills
- Those who participate in the arts are three times more likely to be awarded for their school attendance than students who do not
- Performing and acting can help youth recognize their potential and boost their confidence

I went to the first place I could think of to find such classes: The Denver Center Theatre Academy. The Denver Center for the Performing Arts has a full website of classes that are held throughout the year. I found that the Denver Center Theatre Academy offers a wide variety of classes for ages four to adult. Whether you or your child have been acting for years or have never stepped foot on a stage, there's something for everyone.

We signed Anna up for a class called “So You Think You Can Improv,” an acting class on improvisational acting for teens. The instructor had her and a dozen other teens playing structured improv games and doing character work. Even though Anna had never done any acting before, she found it was a fun way to try her hand at it. I was admittedly worried that my shy Anna would feel intimidated having never set foot on stage. But on that first day that I picked up the kids, I was happily stunned to find Anna bouncing off the walls with energy. After a couple weeks of the class, I noticed an amazing change in her attitude, her confidence and her communication skills. She made new friends in the class and has overall been more outgoing in her day-to-day life.

Troy was enrolled in a musical theatre class called “Broadway Now!” This one was only a week long and introduced kids between the ages of five and six to age-appropriate musicals. At the end of the week, they had a small performance for the parents showcasing the song and dance numbers they had learned that week. Like Anna, Troy was almost instantaneously brought out of his shell (though he had less of a shell to begin with). Always the center of attention, I've noticed that Troy is now a spotlight-grabber in a positive way. Think less temper tantrums and more begging to put on mini performances after dinner.

Not only did the theatre classes get my kids out of the house for a few hours, but it also affected them in ways I couldn't have anticipated. Their creativity and open-mindedness greatly increased through the Denver Center Theatre Academy's professional guidance. So if you're wondering what to do with your kids this summer, I would highly recommend looking into the many theatre classes out there. You and your child will be pleased with the results.

For more information regarding Denver Center Theatre Academy classes contact (303) 446-4892 or academy@dcpa.org.

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What are your kids doing this summer? See how one mom got her kids off the couch and enrolled them in classes that positively impacted their lives: [link to blog]

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What are your kids doing this summer? Boost their confidence and get their creative juices flowing: [bit link to blog] #denver #soundadvice