

Step-by-step: talent show

Great for: Everyone **Fun factor:** ★★★★★ **Effort:** ★★★★★ **£ potential:** ★★★★★

Talent shows work for both primary and secondary schools, and children of all ages will have something to offer, whether that's singing, dancing, acting or other skills you may have never seen before.

Step-by-step

1. **Two months before:** Agree dates for the main show and auditions. Book a venue and recruit your team - you will need about 15-20 volunteers to assist with the auditions and to help on the night. You will also need some 'personalities' to act as judges and comperes.
2. **Six to seven weeks before:** Send letters and registration forms out to all pupils, and specify that primary-aged children must be accompanied by an adult. Allocate time slots of two minutes for each audition over a couple of afternoons. Agree rules, e.g. whether pupils can perform as a solo act and again as part of a group. Encourage teachers and parents to enter, too - if only to allow the judges to 'buzz' them!
3. **Four to five week before:** Establish what equipment you will need - microphones, CD player, lighting, amps, etc. Create posters to promote the event, and send letters home with reply slips for families to preorder tickets. Remember that the more acts you have, the more parents will attend, so get your performers to encourage their friends to come along to show their support! If you're planning to provide refreshments, state this on your tickets.
4. **Two to three weeks before:** Organise the running order and send out invitations to performers with instructions, including their time slot, arrival time and where to get ready. Have a contingency plan in place for any no-shows. Provide your PTA volunteers with a more detailed running order, indicating what equipment (microphone, chair, etc) is needed for each act. Seek sponsorship or raffle/silent auction prizes from local businesses, such as dance schools, music shops, etc. Finalise what refreshments will be provided and who will be in charge of these on the day. If supplying alcohol, you will need a TEN.
5. **On the day:** Arrive early to set up and decorate your venue. If you're running a raffle or auction, encourage guests to buy tickets or place bids when they arrive, then announce winners at the end of the event. Congratulate your performers for their efforts and distribute certificates to all those who took part.
6. **After the event:** Have a post-event debrief to discuss what worked well and what may need tweaking for next time. Thank your acts, judges and volunteers after the event, and ask for feedback. Give details about how much the event raised and how this will be spent.

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Tips & advice

Licensing: If selling or supplying alcohol at your event, you will need a TEN (England and Wales). Submit an application to your local council at least ten days before your event. If playing music and your event is held on school premises, your PTA will not require a separate music licence as you will be covered by the school's licences.

Prizes: Ask local businesses to provide prizes for first, second and third places, as well as prizes for the raffle and/or silent auction. Your event doesn't have to be a competition - it can also work as a way to engage parents, boost community spirit and celebrate the range of talents at your school.

Photos and videos: Consider raising additional funds by selling DVDs or photographs of the event. When filming or taking photographs of children you should get consent from a parent or guardian, in writing, prior to the event. Explain what you intend to do with the photograph/footage, including whether it is to be published, and where. For more information, visit ico.org.uk.

Boost profits: A raffle or silent auction is a good way to raise funds from a captive audience. The benefit of an auction over a raffle is that your audience can bid on items based on their particular preferences, and will undoubtedly shell out more than the £1 they might have spent on raffle tickets. Sell refreshments to boost profits further - buy from a wholesaler such as Booker and return unopened packs of non-perishable goods if unsold. Increase revenue by producing a programme.

Judges: Brief your judges beforehand to ensure that feedback is kept light and positive. You don't want any children to be left in tears or traumatised by the experience! Use this as an opportunity to build pupils' confidence, and as an opportunity for them to share their talents with the rest of the school.