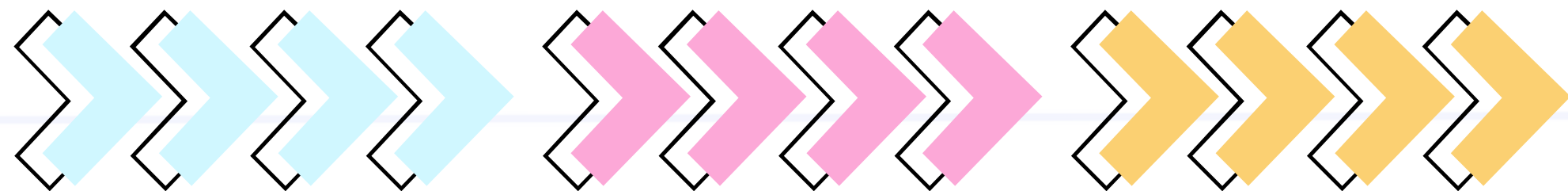


# How to Write an Access Rider

For a Young Performer

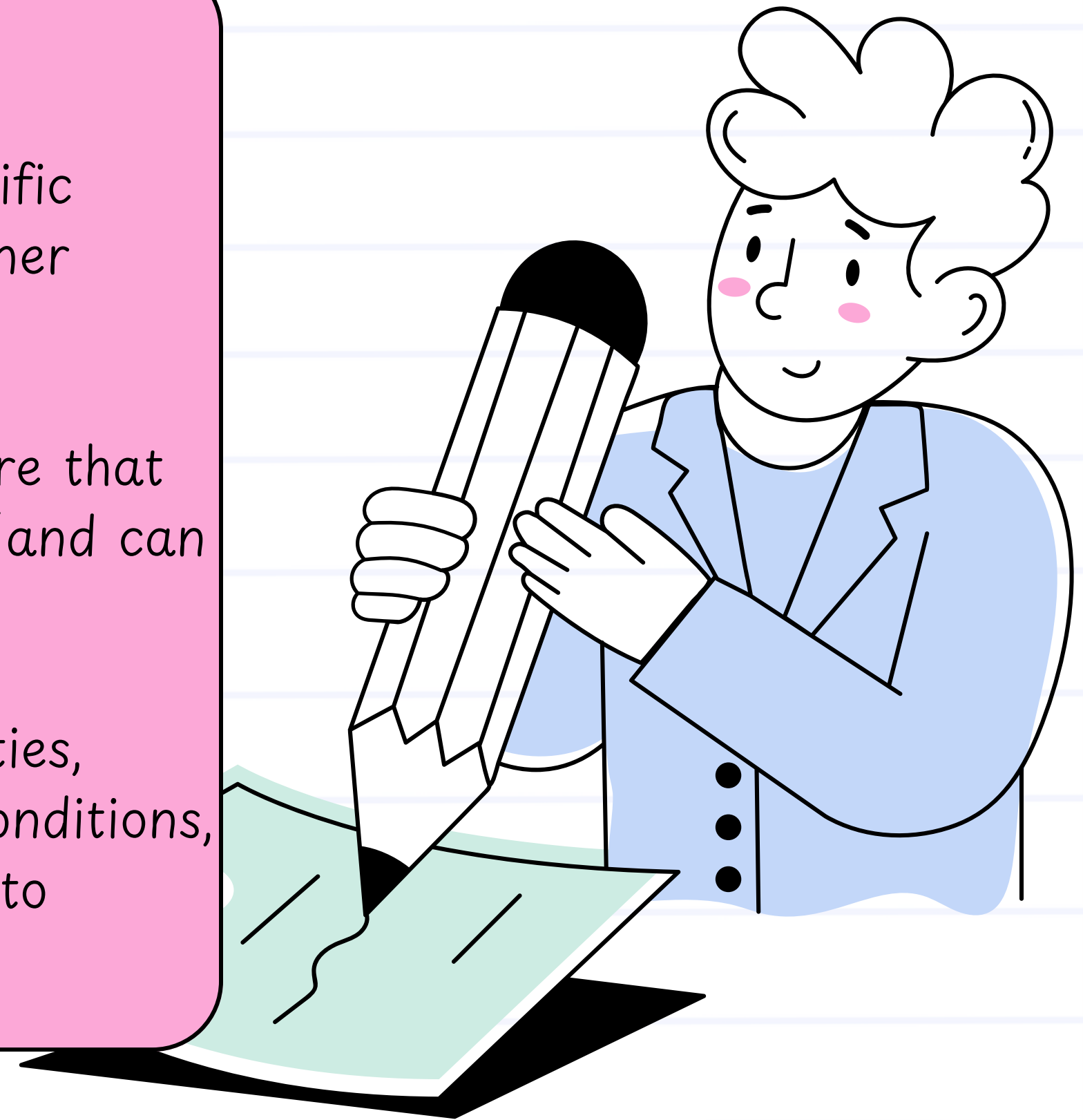


## What is an Access Rider?

An Access Rider is a document that outlines any specific support or reasonable accommodations that a performer might need to do their job effectively and safely.

Access Riders are really useful documents which ensure that anyone working professionally with your child knows (and can meet) their needs.

This document could be useful for people with disabilities, additional needs, neurodivergence, long-term health conditions, and any performer who requires specific adjustments to ensure they can work at their professional best.



## Why write an Access Rider

- By outlining your child's needs up-front, you avoid having to rush a conversation about comfort or safety during a high-pressured rehearsal or on a busy set.
- Access Riders ensure your child has access to essential support, such as predictable quiet spaces, necessary breaks, or specific sensory adjustments, which protect their mental and physical health.
- Access Riders are common practice for people of all ages and abilities. Submitting one is a professional step that helps the production plan for a successful working relationship.

The Equality Act 2010 is the law requiring productions to make "reasonable adjustments" for anyone with a disability (which includes neurodivergent conditions like Autism and ADHD).



# How to write an Access Rider

Access Riders should focus on practical, actionable requests related to the environment and the process.

Your child's agent will help you to write an appropriate and professional Access Rider.

Always remember that YOU are the expert in what your child needs and it's good practice to let people know what those needs are.

You are not asking for special favours; you are simply providing the necessary information so that the production can meet its legal and ethical obligation to protect and support its young performers.

On the next pages there are breakdowns of some key aspects that you might choose to consider and personalise for your own child's Access Rider.

# Sensory and Emotional Needs

- Understanding masking: State clearly that your child may seem fine, but they might actually be struggling ("masking"). This alerts the team to pay attention to non-verbal cues even if the child says "I'm fine."
- Sensory Triggers: List any specific triggers to avoid.
- Lighting: Does your child need extra support or advance warning if there is going to be any strobe lighting or sudden bright flashes?
- Noise: Does your child need noise-cancelling headphones between takes/scenes?
- Smells: Does your child have an aversion to strong perfumes, scented makeup, or catering smells?
- Textiles: Does your child have any specific fabric intolerances for costumes (e.g., need soft linings, avoiding rough wool)?
- Emotional State: Let the team know if your child has heightened anxiety and what makes it better or worse.



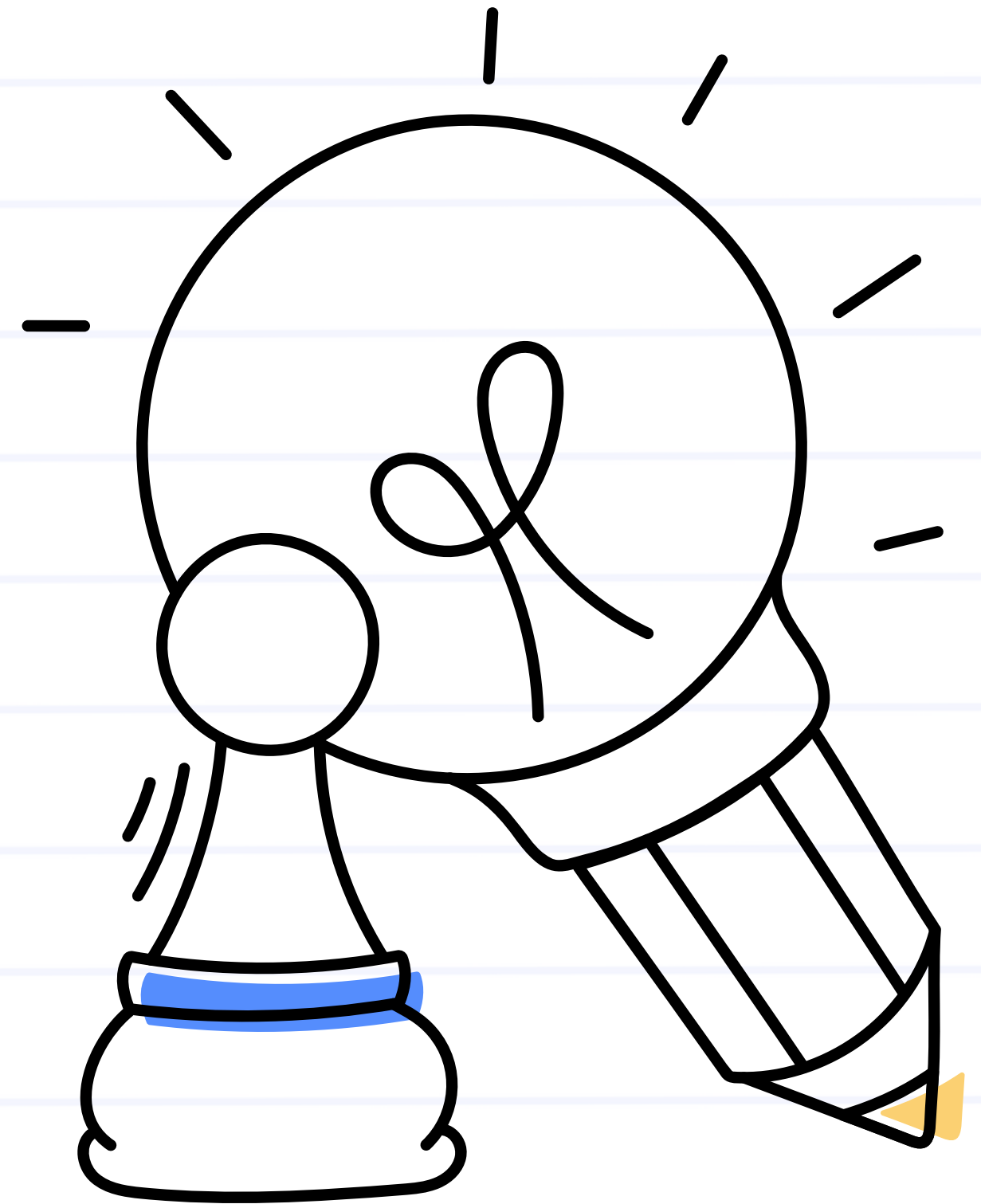
# Communication Style and Learning

- Instruction Preference: Let the team know if your child needs instructions given in a particular way, such as one step at a time, or using visual cue cards.
- Instruction Format: Let people know if your child prefers written notes, visual aids, or any other kind of specific communication support.
- Tone: Let the team know what works best for your child, and also what could upset them.



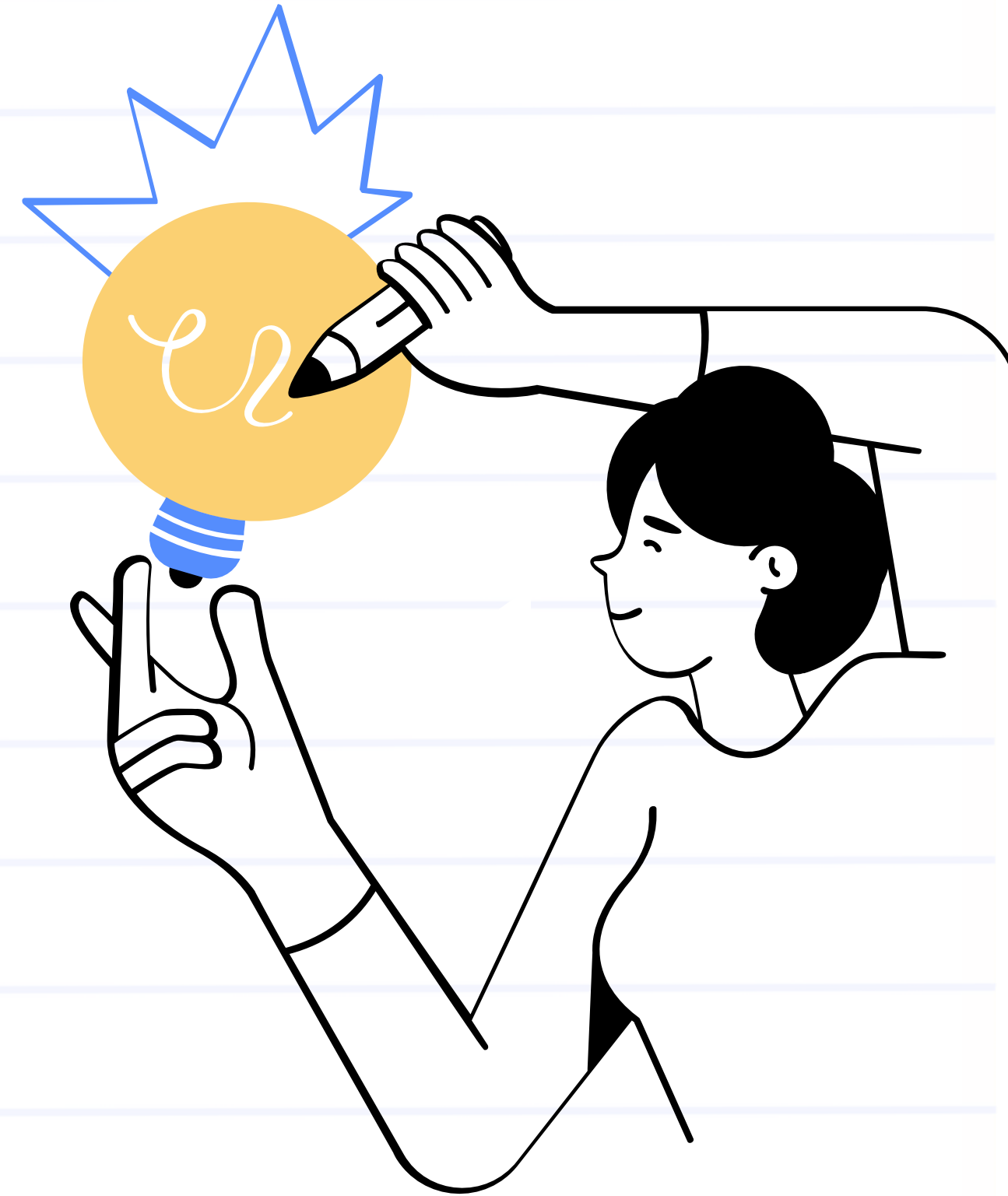
# Schedule, Routine and Breaks

- Rest Breaks: Request that your child is allowed regular quiet moments through the day to recharge and avoid burnout (separate from legally required breaks).
- Routine Consistency: Detail the desired notice period required for any changes to the schedule or routine (e.g., 30 minutes notice) and that a designated person should talk those through with your child AND you.
- Fatigue Management: If your child has a condition that increases potential for fatigue, request longer breaks or shorter working hours when necessary due to avoiding fatigue or joint pain.



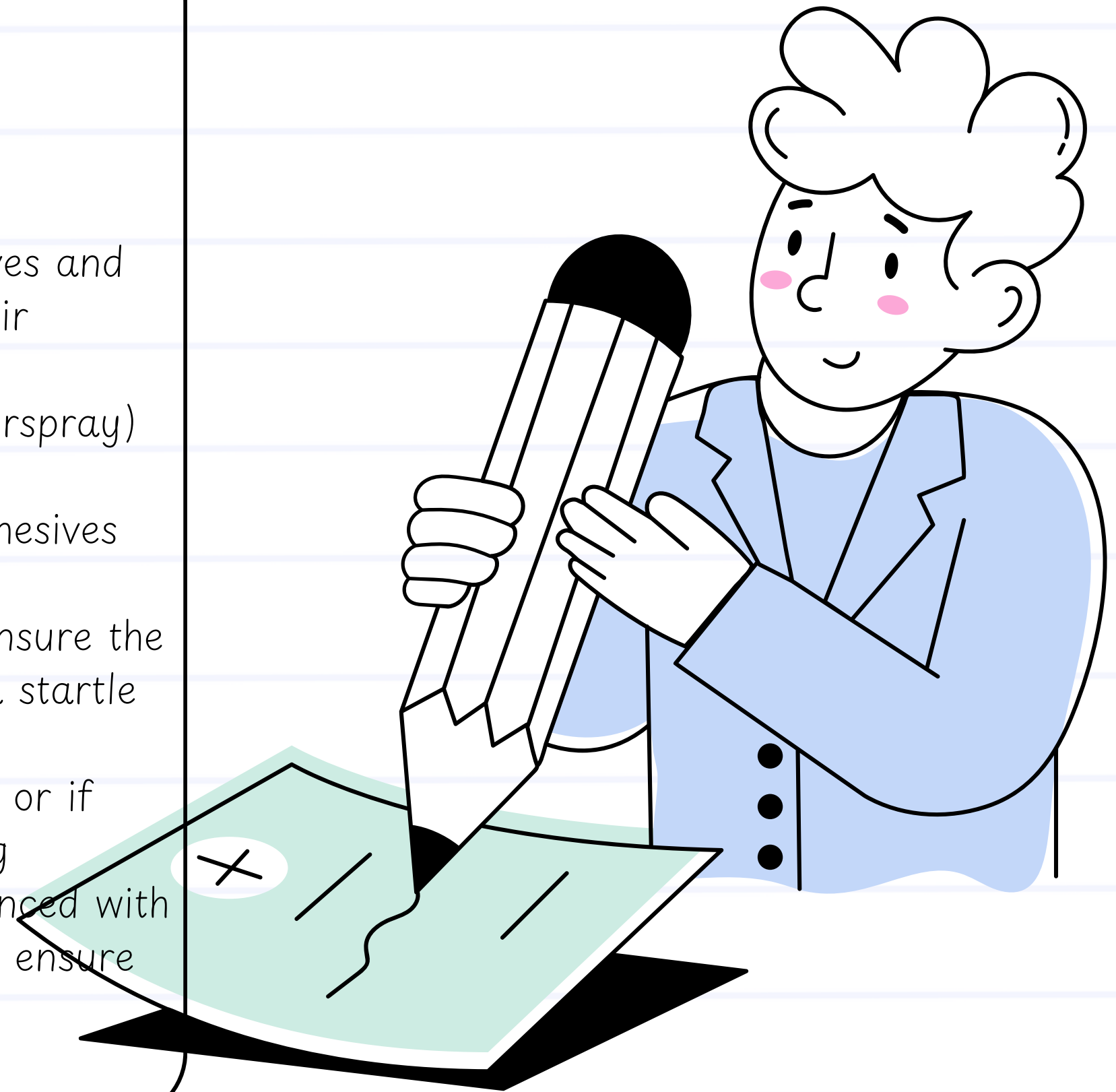
## Health and Safety

- Comfort Space: Identify the need for a designated, low-sensory quiet space that your child and Chaperone can access immediately if the need arises.
- Medical Needs: Include instructions for dealing with minor but common issues (e.g., nosebleeds, minor accidents, specific allergy medication protocols).



# Hair and Make Up

- Physical Boundaries: Request that staff always introduce themselves and seek verbal consent before touching the performer or entering their personal space.
- Sensory Sensitivities: List any aversions to specific smells (like hairspray) or textures (such as rough wool or synthetic wig caps).
- Skin and Hair Care: Note allergies to specific makeup brands, adhesives (for prosthetics or tape), or removal products.
- Startle Response: For performers with anxiety or hypermobility, ensure the team makes their presence known before starting work to avoid a startle response.
- Mirror Usage: State if the performer prefers to see their progress or if constant self-observation feels overstimulating or anxiety-inducing
- Inclusive Styling: Specify if the performer requires stylists experienced with non-white skin tones and Afro-textured or protective hairstyles to ensure authentic, professional representation.



# Identity and Interaction

- Preferred Pronouns: If applicable, state your child's preferred pronouns and politely request that all team members use them.
- Physical Boundaries: Ask that anyone entering the child's immediate space always introduces themselves and seeks consent before touching or bodily moving your child.
- Professional Boundaries: Request that crew/cast keep the information on the Access Rider confidential.
- Primary Contact: Clearly designate the parent/guardian and their phone number (or your child's agent if you prefer) as the point of contact for any questions related to the Rider.



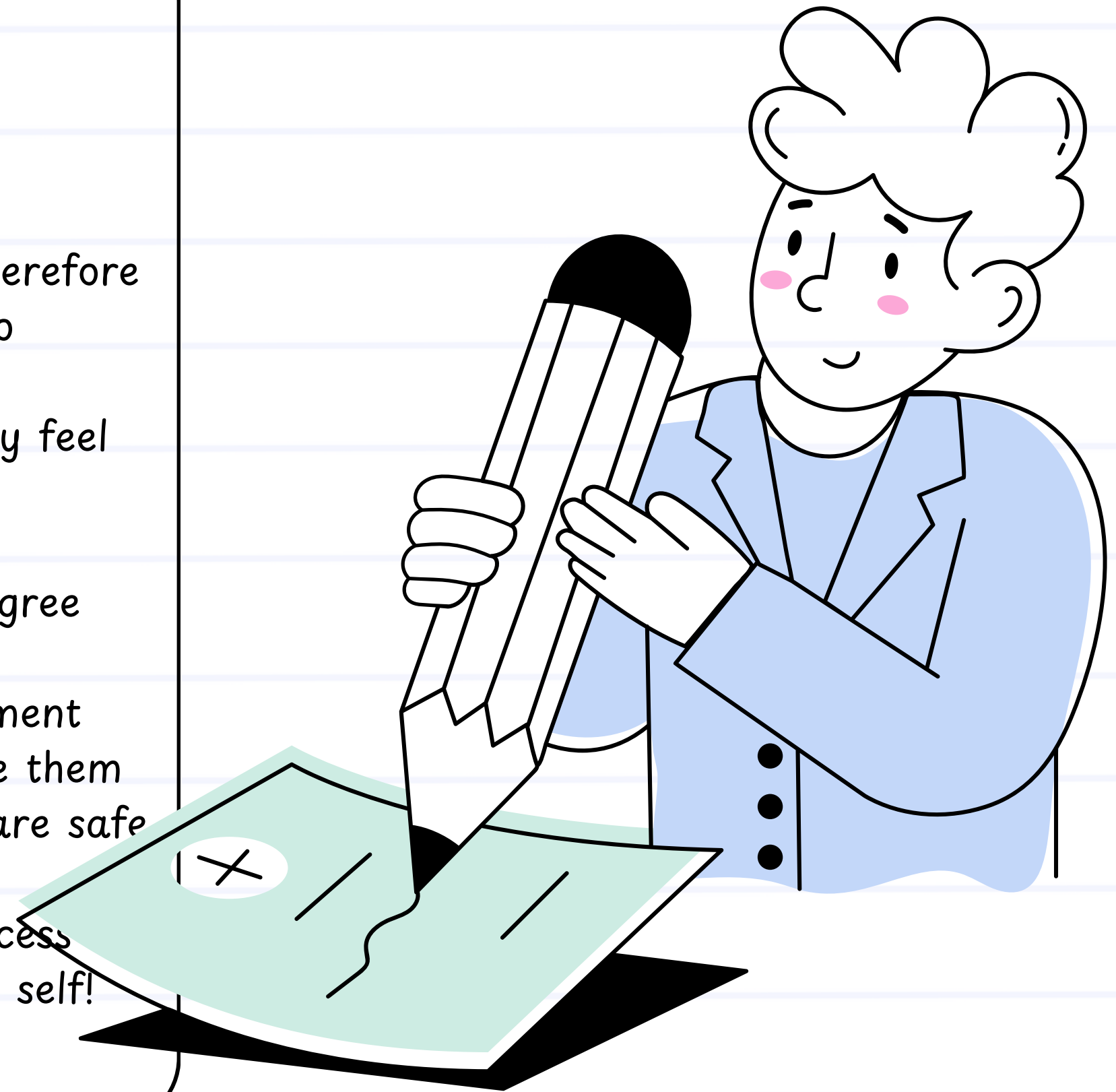
# Audition Access Rider

- Material Preparation: Request audition scripts ("sides") or music well in advance to allow extra time for processing. If cold-reading is required, state if your child needs a reader or a few minutes of quiet prep time.
- The Waiting Room: Audition waiting areas are often high-stress and sensory-heavy. Request access to a quieter, low-sensory space or permission to wait nearby until called.
- Time-Specific Slots: If your child struggles with unpredictability, anxiety, or fatigue, request a specific audition time slot rather than an open casting window.
- Format Flexibility: State if a self-tape is preferred initially if an in-person open call presents significant barriers. For recalls, ask for a brief overview of who will be in the room.
- First Impressions: Remind the panel that your child may mask anxiety with over-enthusiasm or appear detached. Let them know what a welcoming interaction looks like to help them deliver their best work.



## Your Child's Input

- This document is for and about your child and their needs, therefore it's important to discuss it with them and take their input into consideration.
- Find a quiet time with no distractions and ask them what they feel would be useful so that they can do their best work and feel comfortable at work.
- Read through the document with them and check that they agree with what's written about them.
- If they feel uncomfortable or anxious about sharing the document with anyone (which is perfectly understandable) then reassure them that grown-ups are legally responsible for making sure they are safe, respected, happy and comfortable at work.
- Remind them they are talented, unique individuals and an Access Rider means they will be supported to be their true, awesome self!



## Who to Share It With (and When)

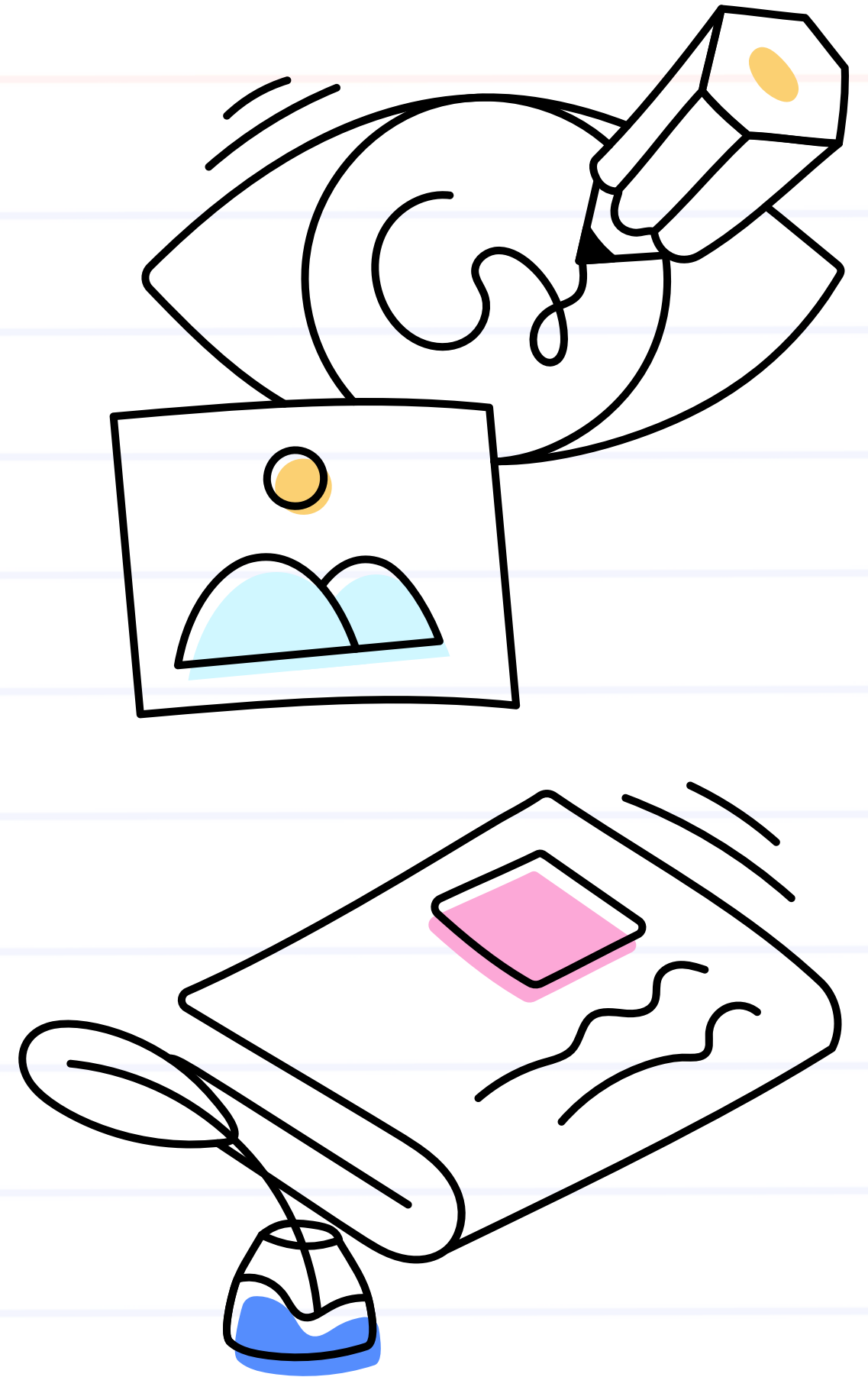
The Access Rider should be provided early in the professional process, ideally:

- To the agent: Your agent should have a copy to share confidentially during the contract negotiation phase.
- To the production team: Specifically the Chaperone and Stage Manager or Production Manager (for theatre) or the 1st AD (for Film and TV).



## Remember

**You are not asking for special favours;** you are simply providing the necessary information so that the production can meet its legal and ethical obligation to protect and support its young performers.



# SAMPLE RIDER

## Professional Guidelines for Working with YOUNG ACTOR

Introduction: This document outlines the specific support and reasonable accommodations required for [Performer Name] to work effectively, safely, and professionally.

### 1. Sensory and Emotional Needs

- Please be aware that [Name] may appear to be "fine" while actually struggling with fatigue or high emotions. Please pay close attention to their non-verbal cues.
- [Name] requires access to noise-cancelling headphones between takes to manage sensory input. Please provide advance warning for any strobe lighting or sudden bright flashes.
- Costumes should avoid rough wool; soft linings are requested where possible to prevent sensory distress.

### 2. Communication and Learning

- Please provide instructions one step at a time or via visual cue cards.
- Written notes or visual aids are preferred over purely verbal directions for complex tasks.
- A calm, considerate approach is best; sudden loud directions or a harsh tone may cause significant upset in [Name].

### 3. Schedule, Routine, and Breaks

- [Name] requires at least 30 minutes notice for any changes to the schedule or routine.
- Changes should be discussed with both [Name] and their parent/chaperone.
- Beyond legal requirements, [Name] needs regular "quiet moments" throughout the day to recharge and avoid burnout.

### 4. Health, Safety, and Physical Boundaries

- [Name] and their Chaperone must have immediate access to a designated, low-sensory quiet space if the need arises.
- Anyone entering [Name]'s immediate space (especially Hair, Makeup, and Wardrobe) should introduce themselves and seek verbal consent before touching or moving them.
- Due to hypermobility, [Name] may experience joint pain. Please allow for longer rest periods or shorter hours if fatigue becomes evident.

### 5. Identity and Interaction

- [Name]'s preferred pronouns are [Pronouns]. We kindly ask the team to use them.
- We request that all information in this rider remains confidential among the core production team.

Primary Contact for Rider Queries:[Parent/Guardian Name] — [Phone Number]

These guidelines will help foster a supportive and inclusive environment for [Name].

# SAMPLE RIDER FOR AUDITIONS

Audition Access Guidelines for [Young Performer Name]

Primary Contact: [Parent/Guardian Name] - [Phone Number] /  
[Agent Name] - [Contact Details]

Introduction: This document outlines specific, actionable adjustments and reasonable accommodations required for [Performer Name] to manage the audition process safely, comfortably, and effectively, enabling them to deliver their best work.

## 1. Material Preparation & Formats

- **Advance Materials:** Please provide audition scripts ("sides") or musical score sheets well in advance to allow extra processing time.
- **Format Flexibility:** If an in-person open call presents significant environmental or sensory barriers, we request the option to submit an initial self-tape.
- **Cold-Reading Support:** If a cold-reading is required on the day, [Performer Name] will need [a reader provided / a few minutes of quiet preparation time before entering the room].
- **Recall Clarity:** For any recall auditions, please provide a brief overview in advance of exactly who will be present in the audition room.

## 2. Scheduling & The Waiting Environment

- **Time-Specific Slots:** To help manage [unpredictability / anxiety / fatigue], we request a designated, specific audition time slot rather than an open casting window.
- **Low-Sensory Space:** Audition waiting areas can be high-stress and sensory-heavy. We request access to a quieter, low-sensory space, or permission to wait nearby/outside with a chaperone until called.

## 3. First Impressions & Interaction

- **Understanding Responses:** Please note that [Performer Name] may instinctively mask anxiety. This can manifest either as extreme over-enthusiasm or appearing somewhat detached or quiet.
- **Welcoming Environment:** To help them feel at ease, the panel can support them by [e.g., offering a calm greeting / clearly stating what will happen next before beginning].
- **Physical Boundaries:** Anyone entering [Performer Name]'s immediate personal space during the process should briefly introduce themselves and seek verbal consent before touching or adjusting them.

## Confidentiality Note

We kindly request that all information contained within this rider remains confidential among the casting and core production team. Thank you for your time, consideration and commitment to creating an inclusive casting environment.

# REAL WORLD EXAMPLE

## Professional Guidelines for Working with YOUNG ACTOR

Introduction: XX is a young actor. These guidelines have been created with XX to help ensure a productive and supportive working environment.

### **Hypermobility**

XX can sometimes experience periods of joint pain and fatigue.

People who are hypermobile also have an increased startle response and feel heightened anxiety.

### **To help:**

- If necessary, allow longer breaks when necessary to ensure rest.
- Maintain a respectful and considerate approach to avoid startling XX. Anyone stepping into XX's personal space should first make sure that XX is aware that they are there. This will be especially relevant for the Hair, Makeup and Costume departments.

### **Social Support**

XX can exhibit some neurodiverse traits that can affect social interactions and make them highly sensitive. XX identifies with the term, 'neurospicy'.

Masking is common in neurodivergent people and XX excels at seeming fine whilst actually struggling with emotions and fatigue.

### **To help:**

- Allocate quiet moments throughout the day where XX can spend time alone to recharge their social batteries.
- If they deem necessary, encourage everyone, including other child actors, to promote kindness, empathy, and acceptance of differences.
- Foster a knowledge of masking among the team and check in with XX a couple of times a day (not too often) reminding them that it is okay to not be okay.

These guidelines will help foster a supportive and inclusive environment for XX.

We thank you for reading this rider, XX would prefer it if you did not draw attention to any of the requests on here, unless they bring it up first. If you have any questions then please talk to me (Mum)- I can be reached on xxxx.

## Links to Further Information

- Triple A Performer has a fair access pack on their website specifically for ND performers
- Unlimited's guide to creating your own access rider
- NNCEE (National Network for Children in Employment and Entertainment).
- AYPA (Agents of Young Performers Association)
- Spotlight
- UK Government (Child Performance Regulations)



# This Resource is supported by



"This resource is fantastic. Our chaperones support lots of young people with additional needs and now we can support parents in talking about what their kids need to feel happy and comfortable at work."

**SPOTLIGHT**

"Congratulations on the development of the Access Rider resource. This will be useful for parents, performers, agents and production companies alike. Any resource that informs and empowers advocates for young performers is a step forward for their safety and engagement and we look forward to seeing what Sensible Creative does next."



**This Resource was made by**



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This resource has been made available for free. If you'd like to thank the creator then please consider buying her a cup of tea! (She'd be very grateful!)



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