

THE GREAT ALL-AMERICAN YOUTH CIRCUS

2025-2026 Circus Class Prerequisite Guide

Expectations:

- All strength/skills must be performed with proper form
- You must be able to perform each strength and skill without help
- If you fail to keep proper form during a strength/skill – it will not be counted

Other class requirements not listed under each act:

- Able to listen, take direction and maintain good behavior during class
- Must be courteous & respectful to Trainers & other participants
- Must be able to demonstrate self-control in class areas and around equipment
- Must be able to learn choreography for show routines

****If evaluating for multiple acts, please remember, you will be asked to do the strength, tricks and skills required at every act station you go to.****

CLASSES THAT DO NOT REQUIRE EVALUATIONS

Mini Acro (class max: 10 per level)

Level I Group: 3-4 years of age
Must be potty-trained
Parent participation is required in this class

Level II Group: 4-5 years of age
Must be potty-trained
Able to support own body weight on hands
Comfortable with having parents out of the room

Level III Group: 5-6 years of age
Must be potty-trained
Able to support own body weight on hands
Comfortable with having parents out of the room

Balloon Art (class max: 20)

Minimum age 9
Must be able to tie a knot in an inflated balloon without assistance
*Will perform as part of Intermission and PreShow

Beginning Ball Juggling (class max: 10)

Minimum age 8

Beginning Unicycle (class max: 20)

Minimum age 7
Must wear close-toed shoes to class
Must purchase own unicycle by January 1st

Beginning Wire (class max: 12)

Ages 7-12

Roman Ladders (class max: 12)

Ages 7-12

Circus Essentials:

Class includes beginning levels of Acro, Balance, Flexibility, & Tumbling.

*Registration is split into two age groups:

Elementary – Minimum age 7 (class max: 10)

Secondary – Minimum age 11 (class max: 10)

CLASSES THAT REQUIRE EVALUATIONS**Beginning Level Ground Acts:****Beginning Stilts (class max 10):**

Minimum age 8

Comfortable with heights up to 10'

10 v-ups

5 push-ups

10 leg raises on each side

Must wear closed-toed shoes in class at all times

Encouraged to purchase own set of Stilts by show-time in May

Beginning Teeterboard (class max: 10)

Minimum age 8

Strength Requirements:

5 Push-ups

10 V-ups

10 Squats

Skill/Trick Requirements:

Demonstrate body control in air and landing by performing a basic jump off the mini tramp

Beginning Risley (class max: 10 pairs)

Minimum age 8

Must have 1 year previous experience in Circus Essentials or Acro

Please come to evaluations with your partner (if expect to perform with someone specific)

*If you do not have a partner, Trainers will partner you according to size compatibility

**NOTICE: The Head Trainers have the freedom to switch partners out for reasons involving safety when performing.

Strength Requirements:

10 v-ups

20 second hollow body hold

20 second plank hold (on hands and feet)

20 second side plank hold (on hand and foot)

Skill/Trick Requirements:

Foot bird with proper form

Back bird on feet with proper form

Side star with 5 push-ups (your preferred side)

10 tacky chair push-ups with proper form

Candlestick with proper form (straddle up)

*Tops Only: Kick up to a wall handstand and hold for 10 seconds

Beginning/Intermediate Acro (class max: 30)

(It is expected that you have already learned these skills. They will not be taught during evaluations)

Minimum age 7

1 year previous circus experience required

Strength Requirements:

25 V-ups

20 push-ups

30 second hollow body hold

Skill/Trick Requirements:

Candlestick (Balance in candlestick with legs together, press down, touch knees of base and press back up with good form)

Climb into a seated 2 high and dismount with proper form

Overhead pike (position before opening to overhead bird)

Clowning (class max: 8)

Minimum age 12

Must perform a 45 second audition

Can include music or not; can use props or not; solo auditions only

Must be willing to take a pie to the face

Willing to not care about what people think about how you act

Must be able to step out of the box

Dance Troupe (class max: 12)

Minimum age: 12

Dance experience preferred

A willingness to work hard to learn and retain choreography

R, L or Center split (or close to)

30 second plank

1 pirouette any direction

1 high kick, any leg

30 second movement piece of your choice, choreographed to music

Beginning Level Aerial Acts:**Beginning/Intermediate Lyra (class max: 14)**

Minimum age 10

Must be comfortable w/ heights up to 10ft

3 pull ups

10 scissors

1 straddle up

1 toe touch

2 tuck ups

20 second hang from hands

Get from hanging to sitting on Lyra with ease

R or L split

Show middle split

Beginning Aerial Anchors (class max: 12)

Minimum age 10

Must be comfortable with heights up to 12'

2 pull-ups

2 straddle-up

2 tuck-ups

10 scissors

R or L split

Beginning Hammock (class max: 12)

Minimum age 8

3 pull-ups

2 straddle-ups (with straight arms)

10 scissors (with straight arms)

R or L split

Show your bridge

Beginning Swinging Ladders (class max: 22)

Ages 7-12

Comfortable with heights up to 15ft

Comfortable with swinging upside down

1 pull-up

Hold a bridge for 15 seconds

Hang from hands for 15 seconds

Perform and hold a double knee hang for 5 seconds

Must be able to tuck-up and get to sitting position on bar in pike position

Get to a standing position on Ladder with ease

Intermediate Level Ground Acts:**Chinese Pole (class max: 22)**

Minimum age 10

MUST bring shoes to evaluate (rubber bottom shoes)

Must be comfortable with heights up to 20ft

3 pull ups on a bar

Perform 2 consecutive climbs on pole

Perform 1 monkey climb on pole

Able to perform the following (in order & hold for 8 counts): *sit *1 leg sit *side flag

German Wheel (class max: 8)

Minimum age 13

1 yr. previous experience in tumbling, acro or handbalancing preferred

Must be tall enough to fit in the wheel with bent arms

Must wear close-toed shoes in class at all times

15 decline push-ups

10 side v-ups (on each side)

30 second handstand against wall

Perform a cartwheel on a straight line

Intermediate Ball Juggling (class max: 12)

Minimum age 8

*Must be self-motivated to work

Able to perform at least 20 consistent catches with 3 balls or 3 rings

Intermediate Club Passing (Juggling) (class max: 10)

Minimum age 12

**This class will juggle clubs and rings. Juggling balls will only be used during testing to allow intermediate jugglers to demonstrate their knowledge of passing patterns.

Able to juggle 3 clubs (10+ seconds)

Able to pass every others with juggling balls (10 passes)

Able to pass 'every's' with juggling balls (10 passes)

Must have a good start on passing clubs

Must be willing to participate in a group class setting and learn to juggle rings

Intermediate Diabolo (class max: open)

Minimum age 8

1 yr. previous Circus experience preferred

Must be self-motivated to work

Toss & catch the Diabolo 3 consecutive times @ heights up to 6' w/o dropping

Able to spin the Diabolo for 2 mins. without dropping

Intermediate & Advanced Risley (class max: 14 pairs)

Minimum age 8

1 year previous experience Circus Essentials, Risley or Acro preferred

*Please come to evaluations and register into class with a partner

**Preference will be given to participants that tryout with a partner

Strength Requirements:

30 second side plank hold – both sides

30 second hollow body hold

10 push-ups

3 side-star presses (Advanced Only)

Perform the following flow with good form:

One tick-tock to reverse bird, to trap door, to back straddle, step up to star, down to foot to hand, dismount any way you'd like.

*You have 3 attempts

**A video of the pre-requisite flow will be available on the Do_Circus Instagram page for reference

Intermediate Unicycle (class max: 15)

Minimum age 7

Must wear close-toed shoes in class at all times

Must have & bring your own unicycle at all times

Able to mount unicycle unassisted

Ride forward for the full length of basketball court with control and good form

Able to hover with at least one foot

Able to ride a figure 8

Attempt to ride backwards for ½ the length of basketball court

Intermediate Flex & Tumbling (class max: 16)

Minimum age 9

Must have at least one year of acro, flex or handbalancing

Must be willing to try new tricks

TOPS:

20 V-ups

25 second hollow body

25 second plank

20 push ups

Show right, left and middle split, must have at least two out of three splits

Show front and back leg over split

Bridge down to elbows

Demonstrate front and back walk over with good form

15 second handstand off the wall with assistance

Perform a round-off with good form

Demonstrate shoulder flexibility (will be shown how to do this at evaluations)

Must be able to touch toes while sitting and standing

Must fly a tacky chair (seated position) on base during 'tacky chair squats'

Perform a tumbling/flexibility trick of your choice

BASES:

30 V-ups

35 second hollow body

35 second plank

30 push ups

Show right left and middle split, must have at least one

Back bend or press into bridge

15 second handstand off the wall with assistance

Demonstrate shoulder flexibility (will be shown how to do this at evaluations)

Must be close to touching toes either while sitting or standing

10 squats with top seated on your shoulders

Base a tacky chair and perform 10 'tacky chair squats'

Perform a tumbling/flexibility trick of your choice

Backwards roll

Cartwheel

Intermediate Handbalancing (class max: 15)

Minimum age 10

1 yr. previous Circus experience preferred

Strength Requirements:

20 push ups

20 v-ups

20 second hollow body hold

30 second plank

Skill/Trick Requirements:

30 second handstand on the wall

10 second chair-stand on chair

10 second plange on chair

Intermediate Stilts (class max 12):

Minimum age 10

Comfortable with heights up to 10'

Must wear closed-toed shoes in class at all times

Must bring knee-pads, these are required

Encouraged to purchase own set of Stilts by show-time in May

Able to put on Stilts in less than 3 minutes

Comfortable walking forwards, sideways and backwards

Able to turn right and left on Stilts

Able to take 'giant' steps with high knees

Able to step and move to rhythm and follow 3 different rhythm patterns given to them at evaluations

Intermediate Teeterboard (class max: 10)

Minimum age 10

Must have at least 2 years of Teeterboard experience

Must be willing to learn to hit and spot as able

Must be comfortable working on a timer board

*Must demonstrate a single back flip, in the belt, with good form, control, and landing

**Priority will be given to performers committed to the act in previous years

Pyramid Bike (class max: 10-12)

Minimum age 10

Must have 1 year previous experience in Pyramid Acro

Unicycle experience preferred

Must wear converse-type shoes to every practice – No exceptions

*Run/skip for 3 minutes

Intermediate Level Aerial Acts:**Intermediate Silks (class max: 8)**

Ages 10-17

*Evaluations will be performed on a silk – Must be able to grip both silks together safely.

4 pull-ups

3 in and outs

3 straddle-ups

1 climb

R or L split

Intermediate Aerial Cube (class max: 12)

Minimum age 12

2 years beginning aerial experience required

4 pull-ups

4 in and outs

4 toe touches

4 beats

3 pull-overs

R or L split

Balance Perch Pole (max: 5 tops, 5 bases)

Minimum age 10

At least 1 yr. experience in Beg. Aerial, Acro & Handbalancing preferred

Flyers: Must be comfortable with heights up to 30ft

3 straddle-ups

3 tuck-ups

3 pull-ups

R or L split

Timed pole climb on pole

Timed handstand on practice perch or floor

****If chosen as a top, we may ask you to find/provide your base**

Bases: Please let the Head Trainer know of interest in being a pole base.

Multilane Cradle (class max: 10 flyers, 9 bases)

Must be comfortable with heights up to 20'

BASES:

Minimum age 14

Must be willing to spot during classes

45 second dead hang from hands

4 pull ups

10 sit-ups on Cradle

1 rope climb

FLYERS:

Minimum age 9

1 year beginning aerial or intermediate aerial experience

3 in & outs on cradle base

4 pull-ups

3 toe touches

30 second dead hang

1 rope climb

Intermediate Multiple Trapeze (class max: 12)

Ages 8-14

1-2 year beginning or intermediate level aerial experience required

Must be comfortable with heights up to 20'

3 pull ups

30 second dead hang

3 straddle ups

3 toe touches

Tuck up to sitting position on bar, continue up to standing, and sit back down (with proper form)

Close to having right or left split

Intermediate Aerial Chair (class max: 8)

Minimum age 12

1-2 years of intermediate aerial experience required

4 pull ups

3 toe touches

4 straddle overs

4 beats

Both L and R splits

Close to one over-split

Perform a bridge

Spanish Webs (class max: 8)

Minimum age 12

2 years aerial experience required

Must be comfortable with spinning

Must be comfortable with heights up to 25' feet

Must be comfortable hanging upside down in foot loop

2 consecutive pike climbs

3 pull ups

3 straddle-overs

3 toe touches

R or L split

Static Trapeze (class max: 10)

Minimum age 13

2 years of aerial experience required

Comfortable with heights up to 25'

4 pull ups

2 toe touches

1 pullover

3 in and outs

45 second hang from hands

L or R split

Advanced Level Ground Acts:**Advanced Diabolo (class max: open)**

Minimum age 8

1 yr. previous Circus experience preferred

Must be self-motivated to work

Toss & catch the Diabolo 3 consecutive times @ heights up to 6' w/o moving feet

Perform a magic knot

Perform a double cradle

Perform 3 suns

Any of the following tricks (suicidal bridge, suicidal sun, infinite suicide, etc.)

Any advanced trick (around a body part, waltz, hurricane, etc.)

Advanced Ball Juggling (class max: 12)

Minimum age 8

*Must be self-motivated to work

Must be able to juggle 3 balls for 20 seconds with control

Must be able to pass smoothly with a partner

Demonstrate a couple 3-ball juggling variations (of your choice)

Advanced Acro (class max: 21)

(It is expected that you have already learned these skills. They will not be taught during evaluations)

Minimum age 9

Previous Pyramid Acro experience required

TOPS:

Strength Requirements:

35 V-ups

20 push-ups

1 minute hollow body hold

Skill/Trick Requirements:

Pop-up with 2 foot landing, stand without base holding legs for 15 seconds

15 second L support hold (bases laying on back, hands in hand-to-hand position & hold above head)

Press straddle up handstand (toes pointed under when leaving the ground, no jumping)

Climb up to a standing 2-high

*Strength and skills must be performed with excellent form

MIDDLES & BASES:

Strength Requirements:

35 V-ups

25 push-ups

1 minute hollow body hold

Skill/Trick Requirements:

Pop-up with 2 foot landing, stand without base holding legs for 15 seconds

Hold overhead bird OR overhead star for 20 seconds

Hold flyer in L support for 15 seconds (hand to hand position as base lays on the ground)

Climb up to a standing 2-high

*in some instances new middles may perform skills listed for tops

Advanced Unicycle (class max: 15)

Minimum age 12

Minimum 1-2 yrs Intermediate Unicycle experience

Able to perform 180 degree turns (without pivoting)

Able to performed controlled backwards 90 degree turns

Able to perform 90 degree turns on giraffe unicycle

Able to perform one foot riding

Able to perform wheel-walking or progression to it

Able to perform figure 8 backwards

Able to perform tight U-turns on normal and giraffe unicycles

Perform 1 specialty mount (rider's choice)

Perform running mount in controlled manner

Hover 360*

Advanced Club Passing (Juggling) (class max: 10)

Minimum age 12

******This class will only juggle clubs and rings. Juggling balls will only be used during testing to allow intermediate jugglers to demonstrate their knowledge of passing patterns.

Able to juggle 3 clubs (30+ seconds)

Able to pass every others with clubs (10 passes)

Able to pass 'every's' with clubs (10 passes)

Able to walk/move while juggling clubs (15 seconds)

Must be willing to participate in a group class setting and learn to juggle rings

Advanced Icarian Risley (Pops & Throws) (class max: 8 pairs)

Minimum age 9

*Please come to auditions and register into class with a partner.

Strength Requirements:

30 second plank hold

30 second hollow body hold

15 V-ups

10 push-ups

Skill/Trick Requirements:

5 Bird pops

5 Perch pops

Jump into Reverse Star with flyer hands on bases legs

20 second Reverse star hold with flyer hands on bases legs

*Connect any five different risley poses or perform any washing machine (for instance ninja star: side star, back straddle, side star, reverse bird, side star) - You have 3 attempts.

Advanced Handbalancing (class max: 15)

Minimum age 10

1 year previous experience Intermediate or Advanced Handbalancing

Must be willing to balance on various equipment of differing heights

Perform 3 - 30 second handstands off of the wall

Attempt a straddle press to handstand

Must have L, R or center split

Advanced Teeterboard (class max: 10)

Minimum age 12

Must have at least 2 years of Teeterboard experience

Must be willing to learn to hit and spot as able

Must be comfortable working on a timer board

*Must demonstrate a double back flip, in the belt, with good form, control, and landing

******Priority will be given to performers committed to the act in previous years

Advanced Adagio (class max: 12)

Minimum age: 14

Minimum 2 years of Acro experience required

*It is preferred that you attend this evaluation with a partner

TOPS:

20 push-ups

35 second hollow body with hands over head

R or L split (or both)

Perform a good bridge

Skill/Trick Requirements:

Perform a pop up to 2 high into Y-scale on bases shoulders

Perform an overhead bird

10 second L-sit hold on base

Attempt a hand to foot (base on floor)

BASES:

30 push-ups

35 sec hollow body with hands over head

Skill/Trick Requirements:

Base a pop up to 2 high into Y-scale

Base an overhead bird (attempt pressing top)

Base top in 10 second L-sit hold (on floor)

Attempt hand to foot (on floor)

Advanced Level Aerial Acts:**Advanced Hammock (class max 8):**

Minimum age 14

1 year intermediate aerial experience required

Comfortable with heights up to 20'

5 pull-ups

5 straddle-ups with straight arms

10 low scissors (legs at 90 degrees) into 5 high scissors (toes up to hands)

Demonstrate a whoopdy-doo drop

Demonstrate a bridge

L or R split (flat with squared hips)

Advanced Silks (class max: 9)

Minimum age 14

Previous intermediate aerial experience required

Comfortable with heights up to 25'

2 consecutive climbs

4 consecutive foot knots – right, left, right, left

4 in and outs

5 pull ups

5 toe touches

4 consecutive hip keys – right, left, right left

L or R split

Advanced Duo Cradle (class max: 5 flyers 5 bases)

Minimum age 16

2-3 yrs Advanced Aerial experience required

Comfortable with heights up to 30'

FLYERS:

Both R and L split

Must have a right-side Americana

Must have a good bridge

Perform a 30 second wrist hang

For the 6 exercises below, you get 2 turns to perform all 6 skills by doing them in groups of 3.

You get to choose which 3 are performed in your 2 turns, but all 6 exercises must be shown.

- 5 in and outs (120 degrees or greater at shoulders)
- 8 upside down pull-ups
- 5 pull-ups
- 5 toe touches
- 5 high scissors (15 degrees at hips)
- 5 low scissors (90 degrees at hips)

****Max weight limit of 130lbs (to help prevent shoulder injuries of the cradle bases).**

BASES:

Prefer 2 years of multilane cradle base experience

15 consecutive pull-ups with a flyer (approx.120 lbs)

15 consecutive sit-ups hanging off Cradle

60 second dead hang from Cradle by hands

Climb rope to Cradle with no feet

5 inverted rows with a flyer (approx. 120lbs)

Advanced Lyra (class max: 8)

Minimum age 14

1-2 years advanced aerial experience required

Must be comfortable with heights up to 15' & spinning

5 pull-ups

5 high scissors into 5 low scissors

5 toe touches

4 consecutive pull-overs

30 second dead hang

5 continuous beats

L or R split

Advanced Straps (class max: 6)

Minimum age 12

1-2 years intermediate aerial experience required

Must be comfortable with heights up to 20' & spinning

7 pull-ups

7 toe touches

5 beats (with hips up)

4 in and outs (as low as possible)

1 muscle-up attempt on trapeze

Perform a one hand meathook – Hold for 3 seconds (either side)

L or R split

Advanced Hanging Perch (class max: 12)

1 year intermediate aerial experience required

Comfortable with heights up to 30'

FLYERS: Minimum age 13

1 rope climb

3 pull ups

3 ins and outs

3 straddle-overs

3 toe touches

R or L split

BASES: Minimum age 16

1 rope climb

4 pull ups

4 ins and outs

4 straddle-overs

4 toe touches

R or L split

Shoot Thru ladder (6 flyers, 6 bases)

Minimum age 16

1-2 years intermediate/advanced aerial experience

Flyers:

4 pulls up

4 toe touches

4 pull-overs

R or L split

Bases:

Climb to the cradle

On cradle, hang from hands for 45 seconds

Sit back up on the cradle from hanging position

6 balanced squats on bosu ball

*Demonstrate either a basic juggling skill, chair plange or other comparable trick suitable to perform on the shoot thru ladder

Elite Swinging Lyra (class max: 5)

Minimum age 15

2 years of advanced aerial experience required

Must be comfortable with heights up to 15'

Must be comfortable with spinning

6 pull ups

6 ins and outs

6 toe touches

5 continuous beats

4 consecutive pull-overs

R or L split

*******Registration Information*******

Circus participants must be facility members of the Redlands Family YMCA in order to register for Circus classes. Participants will not be permitted to continue in any Circus classes if their class fees have not been paid by the 25th of the month. Financial assistance is available for those who qualify; you can pick up a financial assistance application at our Front Desk.

Class Evaluation Schedule

Evaluations will be held on August 19, 20 and 21 from 5:00pm–7:00pm each day

- Tuesday, August 19th – Advanced Unicycle, Advanced Lyra, Beginning Hammock, Intermediate & Advanced Clubs Passing, Pyramid Bike, Advanced Acro, Intermediate Aerial Chair, Intermediate/Advanced Risley, Advanced Duo Cradle, Advanced Icarian Risley
- Wednesday, August 20th – Dance Troupe, Elite Swinging Lyra, Advanced Teeterboard, Beginning Stilts, Advanced Silks, Beginning/Intermediate Lyra, Multilane Cradle, Advanced Adagio, Balance Perch Pole, Chinese Pole, Hanging Perch, Intermediate Teeterboard, Intermediate Flex & Tumbling, Advanced Straps, Intermediate Handbalancing, Static Trapeze, Advanced Handbalancing
- Thursday, August 21st – Intermediate Unicycle, Beginning Risley, German Wheel, Aerial Anchors, Intermediate Aerial Cube, Advanced Hammock, Intermediate & Advanced Diabolo, Beginning/Intermediate Acro, Multiple Trapeze, Advanced Ball Juggling, Beginning Teeterboard, Intermediate Silks, Swinging Ladders, Spanish Webs, Shoot Thru Ladder, Intermediate Stilts, Intermediate Ball Juggling, Clowning

Circus classes that do not require evaluations prior to registering: Mini Acro 1, Mini Acro 2, Mini Acro 3, Beginning Unicycle, Beginning Wire, Circus Essentials, Balloon Art, Beginning Juggling and Roman Ladders.

No participant will be allowed to register for 2 classes during the same time on the same day. Participants are encouraged to “try out” for as many classes as they qualify for during skill evaluations. Participants are encouraged to prioritize their classes in order of preference during skill evaluations if classes are held at the same time period during the season.

You may register for up to five classes if you have met the prerequisites for those classes. You will receive an email, after all evaluations have taken place, stating whether or not you were accepted into the class(es) you evaluated for.

ALL registrations will open on August 25th at 7:00am. There will not be registration for non-evaluation acts prior to skill evaluations.

When registering for any circus classes, participants must meet the minimum age requirement by the first day of registration.

If a class reaches its maximum capacity, your name will go onto the waiting list. If a space opens up in a class that has a waiting list, we will offer the open space to the first person on the list. Please do not call the YMCA to inquire of your Wait List status; please email the Circus Director for that inquiry.

Payment for the first month of all classes will be taken at registration. Circus fees are then required to be placed on EFT and will automatically draft on the 10th or 25th of each month.