Name: _____ Date: _____

The Rulebook Behind a Child Actor's Day

Reading level 13 · 1745 words

Every credit on a young actor's list stands on a second document that viewers never see. It is the rulebook that decides how many hours the performer may work, who must be on the set, and when school happens. This book reads one such rulebook, California's, beside the dated record of Millie Bobby Brown's work. How is a role won? What governs a day on a set? How is a look built? What do the lists of roles and prizes show? The dated record in this book runs from a screen test in 2015 to a film released on Netflix on July 1, 2026.

The record starts in 2015. By her own recollection, reported by TVLine on November 8, 2025 from an interview with Empire, she flew from London to Los Angeles for a screen test around June or July of that year. She was handed a cardboard box of clothes and told, in her words, "Do whatever you feel like with this box of clothes." The task was to act as if she had never seen clothes, and she said she knew nothing about Eleven. The creators, Matt and Ross Duffer, offered her the part the next day, she recalls. Netflix lists the Duffer Brothers as the show's creators. Shawn Levy and Dan Cohen are executive producers. The report names Levy and the Duffers as the people who gave her the exercise.

Some actors audition by self-tape, a recording sent to casting. A tape usually opens with a slate, in which the actor says who they are, and a friend or teacher may read the other half of the scene off camera. One film school describes tapes as "allowing actors to submit audition tapes remotely," and its guidance for tapes suggests recording at least three takes, so the actor can pick the best one. Netflix dates the series' first release to July 15, 2016. It sums up season one in a sentence: a strange girl appears soon after a 12-year-old boy goes missing.

Hiring a minor starts a paper trail. California's summary chart for the entertainment industry says permits to work and to employ are required, citing regulation 11751 for that rule. Regulation 11755.2 says an employer must provide a studio teacher on each call for minors from fifteen days old up to age sixteen. The ratio is one teacher for each ten minors or fraction thereof, and one for each twenty on Saturdays, Sundays, holidays and school vacations. For ages sixteen to eighteen, a teacher is required when needed for the minor's education. These are state rules, and the rules differ in other states.

The teacher is a credentialed professional with a legal role. Regulation 11755 requires one California credential from the elementary list and one from the secondary list. It requires certification by the Labor Commissioner for at most three years. It also requires a written exam on the labor rules and a twelve-hour course, with three more hours of instruction at renewal. Another regulation adds a power: the teacher may refuse to allow the engagement of a minor on a set, and may remove the minor, if conditions present a danger to health, safety

or morals. Regulation 11757 adds that a parent or guardian of any minor under sixteen must be on the set, within sight or sound.

The clock is set by age. In regulation 11760, minors aged two to under six may be at the workplace for at most 6 hours, with no more than 3 of work. For six to under nine, the limit is 8 hours, with no more than 4 of work and at least 3 of schooling when school is in session. For nine to under sixteen the figures are 9, 5 and 3. For sixteen to under eighteen the chart gives 10 hours at the site, 6 of work and 3 of school. For nine and older, the studio teacher must see that there is at least an hour of rest and recreation. By this book's count, a 9-hour day with 3 hours of lessons and 1 of rest leaves 5 hours for work, which matches the regulation.

Other limits sit outside the day itself. Twelve hours must pass between a minor's dismissal and the next day's call time; the chart says no exceptions. California's chart also fixes when lessons may happen. Tutoring must occur between 7 a.m. and 4 p.m. for grades one to six, and between 7 a.m. and 7 p.m. for grades seven to twelve. Meal periods are not work time, but travel between the studio and a location is. A young performer's day, in other words, is a schedule of limits, and the camera works inside them. Each limit comes with a regulation number, so anyone can look it up.

Hair and make-up count against the same clock. Regulation 11763 says that time spent in make-up or hairdressing in a minor's home, with the help of other people employed on the project, counts as work time. No make-up person may work on a minor at home before 8:30 a.m. Twelve hours must pass between dismissal and the start of the next day's hair or make-up. The rule covers hairdressing as well as make-up done at a minor's home. That makes a look that takes hours a scheduling matter as well as an artistic one. The stylist's account of season four of Stranger Things shows how a minor's clock reaches the hair department. That season was filmed in 2020 and 2021, in several places, and each age has its own row, so the figures above are examples, not a claim about that set.

In season four, Eleven's short hair from season one was rebuilt as a wig. Hairstylist Sarah Hindsgaul told Awards Radar that a punch cap, a latex bald cap with hair set into it, is a very time-consuming process. The team did not have time for it, she said, "because Millie is a minor," so she chose a wig instead. Netflix says the wig was made to fit over Brown's own long hair. Hindsgaul cut it with clippers to the length of season one. Netflix's account, which quotes Hindsgaul, adds two conditions. The Duffers would try a wig only if it could be done in 30 minutes, and only if the screen test did not show that it was a wig.

The wig itself is a piece of engineering. The wig maker set the hair in one strand at a time so the knots would be stronger. Lace gave no resistance, so the cutting had to be done by hand, about eight to ten hours per wig, and tiny pieces of silk inside the wig simulate skin, giving the illusion of a visible scalp. Hindsgaul said the hardest step was the wrap that holds Brown's own long hair flat, tight enough that it completely melts away. A good effect, here, is one that

nobody notices. The hours it takes are part of the production's schedule.

Acting opposite an effect is a different skill. In The Electric State, directed by Joe and Anthony Russo and released on Netflix on March 14, 2025, the robot Cosmo was played on set by motion-capture performer Devyn Dalton, in a motion-capture suit, while Alan Tudyk provides the voice. Anthony Russo said, "We have these motion-capture performers actually in the scenes with us." Such performers stand in the scene, so the other actors work with a real person's movement, which a computer later turns into the robot's. Brown played Michelle in the film, which Netflix describes as a young woman's journey across a retro-futuristic America with a mysterious robot and an eccentric drifter.

A few dated credits show the range of the work. Godzilla: King of the Monsters, 2019, listed in one reference work as her feature film debut, and Godzilla vs. Kong, 2021, in which she returned to the same role. Damsel, Netflix, 2024, with Brown as an executive producer. The Electric State, Netflix, March 14, 2025. Enola Holmes 3, Netflix, July 1, 2026, 1 hour 48 minutes, directed by Philip Barantini, produced by Brown according to Netflix. Netflix's page for Enola Holmes 2 also lists her among the producers. The 2019 and 2021 entries rest on a reference-work list; the later ones are from Netflix's own pages. Stranger Things season five arrived in three parts: November 26, December 25 and December 31, 2025.

Recognition has its own record. The Television Academy lists two Primetime Emmy nominations for Brown, both for Outstanding Supporting Actress in a Drama Series as Eleven, in 2017 and 2018. The page marks each as "Nominee". It shows no win and no later nomination, as of November 2026. On January 29, 2017, the Stranger Things cast won the Screen Actors Guild Award for best ensemble in a TV drama. An ensemble award belongs to the cast as a group. TIME's editor wrote in 2018 that the TIME 100 list included its youngest designee ever, actor Millie Bobby Brown. Whether a later list has passed that is not stated here.

UNICEF announced on November 20, 2018 that Brown was its youngest-ever Goodwill Ambassador, and its profile page lists her as an ambassador since 2018. The release called her an "Emmy-nominated actress". The job was to raise awareness of children's rights, and she had supported its work since 2016, hosting its 70th anniversary celebrations at the United Nations. UNICEF's profile records later activities: in 2019 she visited its supply hub in Copenhagen and helped test and pack emergency supplies; in a 2021 World Children's Day video she asked children to "not give up on adults"; and in 2025 she gave a keynote about its Power4Girls initiative.

What remains open is practical. The screen test comes from Brown's memory, the wig from the stylist's interviews, and the hours from the state's own text. Each is a different kind of evidence. The California rules above are exact and public, and each regulation can be read in full on the state's website. But which rulebook, or which union agreement, applied to any one

set is not something these accounts say, and other states and countries write different limits. SAG-AFTRA, the actors' union, publishes its own young-performer guidance. A reader who wants the rule for a particular place should read that place's labor department. What the record supports is narrower and firmer: a screen test in 2015, a first season in 2016, the lists above, and a job organized, hour by hour, around a school day.

Questions

1. Under California regulation 11760 as described, how many of a 9-hour day for a 9- to 15-year-old can be work?

A. Three
B. Nine
C. Five

2. What power does the regulation give a studio teacher?

A. Choosing the actors
B. Removing a minor from a set in danger
C. Editing the film

3. In the book, why does hair and make-up time count as a scheduling problem?

A. It costs the most money
B. It counts as work time for a minor
C. Directors dislike it

4. As used in the book, "certification" means

A. a payment in advance
B. a young age
C. official approval

5. What does the book say is different from state to state?

A. The names of the actors
B. The length of a screen test
C. Hours and teacher rules

6. Who owns an ensemble award?

A. One lead actor
B. The cast as a group
C. The director

Words to know

regulation: official rule
certification: official approval
ensemble: whole cast

slate: actor's introduction
designee: person chosen

Answer key: The Rulebook Behind a Child Actor's Day

1. C. Five
2. B. Removing a minor from a set in danger
3. B. It counts as work time for a minor
4. C. official approval
5. C. Hours and teacher rules
6. B. The cast as a group