



4 THINGS EVERY PARENT SHOULD KNOW BEFORE CHOOSING A DANCE STUDIO

If most dance studios seem to have qualified, friendly teachers, experience teaching children and a big show at the end of the year, aren't they all pretty much the same? Does it really matter which place you decide to enroll at? Yes. There are 4 main things that can make a huge difference in the quality of instruction your child receives, the amount of extra work and hassles the parents must deal with and the overall enjoyment and satisfaction of being involved with a dance program. Here are 4 things that every parent should consider before deciding on a dance studio for their child.

1. What type of dance floor is used?

Dance is a very physical activity that requires a lot of jumping, which can put stress on bones and joints. Most dance footwear does not provide any cushioning or support, so the shock of dance movement can place a lot of pressure on the knees and back of a dancer. The best way to prevent against potential injury is by choosing a studio with a professional "sprung floor". A sprung floor is a dance floor that consists of 2 layers of plywood which rests on 2 inch sections of neoprene.

The top layer of the dance floor is also an important factor. A vinyl composite "marley" floor is accepted worldwide as the best surface layer for recreational to professional dance. Facilities such as the Pacific Northwest Ballet, Boston Ballet and San Francisco Ballet, all use Marley floors as their dance surface. A marley floor allows dancers to slide, with a degree of "controlled" slip, but it not slippery so there is less risk of slips and falls. Very few studios use professional marley floors because of the expense involved, and usually opt for a regular floor tile for a studio floor.

2. What is the size of the class?

If the dance class has fewer students in it each child will receive more personalized attention, learn more and have more fun. With younger students it is easier for a teacher to maintain control over the class and make sure each student understands the concepts and instructions. Our smaller class sizes make sure that no fundamental concepts are being missed. A smaller class size also allows our teachers to ensure that students are not developing bad habits or improper technique.

Our studio limits most all of our classes (age 6 and up) to a maximum of just 12 students per class. With our preschool dance classes, we limit classes with 3 year olds to 6 per class, 4 year olds to 7per class, and 5 year olds to 10 per class.

3. What are the "extras" required for the year end show?

Most studios put on a year end show in a professional theatre. It can be a very hectic time for students and their parents. Parents are often required to help out at rehearsals and backstage during the performance. We offer a "Hassle Free" performance experience for everyone. Students are only asked to attend a small amount of extra rehearsals in order to prepare for their performance. In addition; we have staff members and community volunteers for each rehearsal and performance. This gives the parents the opportunity to come, relax, and watch their child's performance, without having to worry about the "details". Our parents are also kept very well informed with emails, website documents, phone calls and personalized handouts.

4. What about customer service?

In many studios, the teacher or the studio owner conducts classes and does the administration. By trying to do two jobs at once, the class may suffer as the teacher has to use class time for customer service issues, or the studio may have no customer service available if the teacher is in a class. To have a good experience it is important to choose a studio that can assist you with details like costumes or schedules, even if a teacher is occupied in a class. Our studio has office staff on hand during all regular class times, so you can get immediate assistance.