

## 5 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 5 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 5 things that every parent should consider before deciding on a dance studio for their child.

### **1. Can you tell me about your facility?**

Most studios will only let you observe your child a few times during the year. Some studios have a small space to take class. Most students only have one chance to perform during the year and that's the end of the year recital. A lot of studios have teachers that took dance from local studios a few years and opened a dance school. (Remember anyone can open a dance school. No license required) Most studios offer only combination classes.

Our studio has observation windows so that you can watch your child every lesson. We have a 7400 square foot facility that is designed for every type of dance giving each child space to work across the floor and practice performances on the same size dance floor. Our studio gives each child the opportunity to perform on stage as much as they want. We not only have recreational dance, we also have "Starz Artistic Performing Company" which is a professional company with opportunities to travel to California, Las Vegas, New York City, Showtime at the Apollo, Showtime in Harlem, competitions and auditions. Our studio has professionally trained teachers in their field that study each month for a higher education in dance. We have helpers to assist the teacher. Our studio only combines tap and ballet for our pre-school classes. We feel that you need separate classes to gain the knowledge that one needs to learn to dance. You cannot learn 3 or 4 different forms of dance in 45 minutes. You would be paying for a lesson for your child to learn how to change their shoes.

### **2. 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 do 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 "Floating Floor". A floating floor is a dance floor that rests on a system of high-density foam, to absorb the shock of jumping. A high-density foam base is superior to a "Sprung" floor, which usually consists of a wood structure built on the regular floor.

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 Royal Winnipeg Ballet, Royal Academy of Dance \r\ London, England, and Riverdance-the Touring Show, all use marley floors as their dance surface. A marley floor allows dancers to slide, with a-degree of "controlled slip", but is 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.

### **3. 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 all of our classes (ages 6 and up) to a maximum of just 16 students per class. With our "preschool" classes (ages 3-5) we limit our classes to a maximum of just 8 students per teacher.

### **4. What are the "extras" required for the year-end show?**

Most studios put on a year-end show in a professional theatre. Students that perform in the show must have a costume for their dance number. We select and purchase all class costumes and provide parents with all of their child's accessories for the show like, shoe ribbons, hair bows, etc. Most studios also require parents to purchase tickets for the recital performance night. Our studio gives each family 2 free tickets for our year-end show. This way you as a parent will not be faced with any extra work or expenses. We also plan a big end of the year party for all of our students that they may attend with their families.

### **5. Can I get immediate assistance and 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 studios have office staff on hand during all regular class times, so you can get immediate assistance.