

# Selecting A Dance Program For Your Child



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## **How To Select A Dance School For Your Child**

Do you have a child who is interested in dance lessons? And you do not even know where to start in the process, right? There are several things that are important when considering dance lessons for your child. Selecting the best dance school is key for an enjoyable dance experience not only for your child but also for you as a parent. The list below provides some important questions that you should ask when searching for a dance school in your area.

### **Can I Watch My Child During Class?**

One of the most important things to consider when selecting a dance school is how transparent the studio is with parents. You should be able to observe how your child is being taught, how the teacher interacts with students, and how your child is progressing.

Although most dance schools do not allow parents in the classroom, some dance schools offer video monitors in the waiting area. This allows you to watch the class in real time without entering the studio. Other places have viewing windows for observation of dancers. These are both excellent options that keep classes focused while still giving parents visibility.

If the studio does not offer weekly observation options, find out whether they host designated parent observation days during the year. At a minimum, you should be invited to watch your child's dance class at least twice per season.

When selecting a dance school, choose an environment where you feel welcome and included in your child's learning experience. Frequent observation builds trust between parents and teachers, and it ensures that your child is in a class that is both safe and productive.

### **What Is the Class Size?**

Class size plays a significant role in your child's dance education. Smaller classes allow for more individual attention, better classroom management, and improved learning outcomes. This is especially important when working with younger children.

For preschool and early elementary-aged dancers, classes should ideally be limited to 12–15 students. In this setting, the teacher can ensure that every child is mastering fundamental skills, building confidence, and receiving the guidance they need to grow.

As dancers get older and more experienced — typically in middle and high school — slightly larger class sizes can be appropriate. For this age group, classes may include up to 20 students, especially when learning choreography that involves more complex formations and staging. However, even with older dancers, a class that is too large can result in missed corrections and slower progress.

When evaluating a dance school, ask:

- How many students are typically in each class?
- Is there a class assistant or second instructor for larger groups?

- How does the teacher ensure all students receive attention?

A well-managed class size ensures that your child is not overlooked and that they are learning with quality, not just quantity, in mind. It also helps them feel connected and confident.

### **Are Classes Taught by Adult Instructors?**

When evaluating a dance school, it is essential to ask who will actually be teaching your child's classes each week. While it may seem harmless or even charming for older students to assist with younger dancers, teenage dancers should never be responsible for leading weekly classes on their own.

Teenagers, no matter how talented, are not qualified dance educators. They typically lack the training, maturity, and classroom management skills needed to conduct a successful class, provide proper technique instruction, and ensure student safety. Dance instruction requires more than just performing skills — it demands a deep understanding of anatomy, developmental stages, injury prevention, and appropriate correction methods. These are competencies that only come with experience and adult-level education.

Unfortunately, some dance studios cut corners by allowing teenage assistants to run full classes unsupervised. This is a major red flag! A studio that prioritizes your child's safety and development will ensure that adult instructors are always leading classes.

When choosing a dance school, ask directly:

- Who will be teaching my child's class?
- Will a qualified adult be present and actively instructing during every session?
- Are teenage assistants used, and if so, what is their role?

Your child deserves to learn in a structured & safe environment, and under the guidance of a responsible & educated adult. Choosing a school that holds this standard is one of the most important decisions you can make in your child's dance journey.

### **What Qualifications and Dance Experience Do Instructors Have?**

Choosing a dance school with qualified, experienced instructors is another important factor in ensuring your child's success and safety.

A quality teacher should have extensive training in dance technique, as well as experience working with children. The best dance instructors have a background that includes ongoing professional development, such as:

- Regular training with master instructors
- Attendance at dance conventions and workshops
- Exposure to current styles, trends, and teaching methods

This type of continued education ensures your child is learning up-to-date, age-appropriate material from someone with a deeper understanding of dance as both an art form and a discipline.

Degrees in dance performance and/or education are helpful, but these qualifications are usually not indicative of someone being a good dance teacher. Being a good performer and/or schoolteacher and the ability to teach children dancing are very different skills sets. A great dancer is not always a great teacher. Dance instructors must be able to break down complex movements, explain them clearly, and guide students in how to safely and correctly train their bodies. They also must connect with students and manage classroom dynamics while still maintaining a fun and engaging class. Knowledge and strong communication skills are especially important when working with young dancers, and the best teachers do a good job of helping their students feel confident and proud of their progress.

If your child is taking classes involving gymnastics, tumbling, or acrobatics, be especially cautious. These styles carry a higher risk of injury when taught incorrectly. Instructors in these areas should be certified or professionally trained, and they should be teaching proper technique, body alignment, and safety measures — not just "cool tricks."

Before enrolling your child, ask:

- What training and experience do the teachers have?
- How do they continue their education?
- Are they trained in injury prevention and anatomy?
- Have they worked specifically with children in the age group your child falls into?

Ultimately, a qualified dance teacher will not only teach dance but will also inspire, motivate, and protect your child as they grow in skill and confidence.

### **Now What?**

You may have questions in addition to those listed here. If that is the case, do not hesitate to ask them when investigating options for your child. Dance schools are happy to assist you in your decision-making process, and having clients who are comfortable with the school's program is a benefit to the dance studio. If you feel that you are not getting the answers that you are looking for, keep looking. You will eventually find a program that meets your needs.

Once your child is enrolled in a program, remember to sit back and have fun! Your child should be enjoying the process of learning how to dance, and you should be enjoying giving them the gift of dance lessons. By providing your child with dance training, you are giving them an appreciation and understanding of this wonderful art form they will cherish for years to come.

Good Luck, and Happy Dancing!