



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? 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 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. 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 the 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 or cushion, to absorb the shock of jumping. A high-density foam or cushion 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. Hardwood maple floors are accepted worldwide as the best surface layer for recreational to professional dance. Wood floors are absolutely essential for tap dancing, turns & leaps and breakdancing. Very few studios use professional wood floors because of the expense involved, and usually opt for a regular floor tile for a studio floor.

All of our studios have floating floors and help reduce the risk of injuries and allow students to dance longer without getting tired.

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 all our classes (ages 6 and up) to a maximum of just 12 students per class. We limit our Intro to Dance through Pre-Dance classes (3-5 yrs.) to a maximum of

10 students per class and our Creative Movement classes (2 _3 yrs.) to a maximum of 6 students per class.

3. What are the “extras” required for the year-end show?

Most studios put on a year-end show (recital) in a professional theater. Students that perform in the show must have a costume for their dance number. Some studios may require parents to sew their child’s costume or parents must find their own seamstress to do the sewing. This can be inconvenient and frustrating for parents who are busy or can’t sew.

Our studio uses our own professional seamstress to sew and alter costumes, so parents do not have to worry about any costume hassles.

4. 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 studio has office staff on hand during all regular class times, so you can get immediate assistance.

5. How do I know if my child is progressing in class?

At many studios, you simply drop off your child for dance class and you do not see them again until after the class. You eagerly ask “What did you learn today?”, only to be told “I don’t know.” In many cases, parents are not aware of the skills students are being taught and what qualifies a student to be placed at a certain level.

In our studio we use a video monitor system so that parents may stay and watch the class via the television set. This allows parents to see the teacher/student interaction and monitor the level of participation.

We also provide each student with an evaluation at the end of the session that shows the skills that were taught, what skills have been mastered, what skills are being developed and what skills still need work.

This evaluation is helpful to the teacher because it provides us a terrific way of leveling students. It is helpful to the student because it shows them exactly what skills they still need to work on to get to the next level. And it is helpful to parents because it shows them what the students progress has been and takes the guess work out of class leveling for the next session.