

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. EDUCATION OR COMPETITION?

It is important to ask the question of a studio, is your emphasis on education or competition? Dance originated as an art form, and when dance schools compete for trophies and "places" then it becomes a sport.

Our dancers' classical training is showcased in performances for the community as artistic entertainment. This allows our students to gain confidence through personal and physical growth. At our school, competitions do not define our students as "winners or losers". Our dancers are equipped with the technique and knowledge to continue their study of dance at a higher educational level if they so choose.

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 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 "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, the Royal Academy of Dance in 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.

All of our studio locations have floating floors that have over 700 high density foam blocks under the floor surface and a marley top surface. Our special floors help reduce the risk of injuries and allow students to dance longer without getting tired.

3. WHAT TYPE OF PERFORMANCE DO YOU HAVE AT THE END OF THE YEAR?

Is the emphasis of the recital the technique that has been taught over the year or is it a dance that has been practiced for the entire year? We don't start our recital dances until the beginning of February, with an emphasis on technique throughout the year. We choose tasteful and age appropriate costumes and choreography for all of our dancers. We want parents to feel comfortable and proud of what their children are presenting on stage. We feel the focus of the performance should reflect what the students have learned throughout the year. In addition, each family is given two free recital tickets for the show!

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 studios have office staff on hand during regular class times, so you can get immediate assistance.