

## **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 put a lot of pressure on the knees and back of a dancer. The best way to prevent 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 falls caused by slipping. Very few studios use professional Marley floors because of the expense involved, and usually opt for a regular tile for their studio floors.

Our Studio has a floating floor that has over 700 high density foam blocks under the floor surface and a Marley top surface that was imported from England. Our special floor helps reduce the risks of injury and allows 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 will ensure that no fundamental concepts are being missed. Our smaller class sizes also allow our teachers to ensure that students are not developing bad habits or improper technique.

Our studio limits all of our classes (ages 6-8) to a maximum of just 12 students per class. Ages 9 and up are limited to a maximum of 16 per class. With our Kindergarten dance classes (ages 3-5) we limit our classes to a maximum of just 8

students per class. We also offer a mommy and me class for children younger than age 3 that allows only 6 children to participate per class.

**3) What are the “Extras” required for the year end show?**

Most studios put on a year end show in a professional theater. Students that perform in the show must have a costume to perform in that dance number. Some studios may require the parents to sew their child’s costumes, or pay extra and the parents must find their own seamstress to do the sewing or general alterations. This can be inconvenient and frustrating for parents who are busy and who can’t sew. Most studios also require parents to also purchase tickets for the recital performance night.

Our studio uses our own professional seamstress to sew and alter our student’s costumes. This means that the parents do not have to worry about any costume hassles. Our studio also gives parents 2 free tickets for our year end show. As well as making sure that there are class helpers to help your student while she is backstage so the parent may sit and watch from out front. This way you as a parent will not be faced with any extra work or expenses and can enjoy the show they have waited all year to see.

**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 due to the owner being in 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 class. Our studio has office staff on hand during all regular class times, so you can receive immediate assistance.