

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 instructions 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?

Since dance is a physical activity that requires a lot of jumping, it is very important to have the proper surface. For young students, a slip resistant surface is critical to protecting them, especially in tap shoes. As students get older it becomes more important to protect them when jumping, turning, and traveling. The best way to prevent against potential injury is by choosing a studio with a sprung floor installed. This is a floating floor surface that allows a small amount of 'give'. It will protect dancers when jumping and landing in all forms of dance. It will help prevent shin splints so common in dancers that dance on a concrete or tile surface.

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, 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. 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 dance rooms have wood, sprung sub-floors and a marley top surface. Our special floors help reduce the risk of injuries and allow students to dance longer without fatiguing their bones and joints.

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. A smaller class size also allows our teachers to ensure that students are not developing bad habits or improper technique.

We take pride in limiting class sizes. Ages 18 months – 6 years old (Baby, Tiny & Mini classes) will have a maximum of 10 students per class. A maximum of 14 dancers is scheduled for ages 7 and up (Primary classes), with the exception to our intermediate-advanced teens class. Once this number is reached, we will close enrollment for the class or split the class in half. Typically, we average 8-10 students in a class. Each class has one main instructor and one or two assistant teachers (high school students studying to graduate) and/or demonstrators (pre-teens helping with class).

3. Can I get immediate assistance & Customer Service? How do I stay informed?

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.

Of course, providing a quality dance education is top priority. Keeping you informed is our 2nd priority. You will receive the following notices through out the year:

- ❖ Brochure & Policies – given out at registration.
- ❖ Monthly newsletters – given out the first week of each month.
- ❖ Revue Fee Info sheets – given out at registration.
- ❖ Revue Book Pictures and Ad Contest – given out in January.
- ❖ Revue & Rehearsal Info sheets – given out in May.

We also have a website (www.CreativeDanceStudio.com) that is updated frequently with the newsletters, schedules, calendars, general info, photo gallery, etc. Plan to visit it often.

4. 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 for their dance number(s). Some studios may require parents to sew their child’s costumes, or find a seamstress to sew them. Some studios charge you separate fees throughout the year for the revue fee, costume fees, props, T-shirt, DVDs, etc. Most studios also require parents to purchase tickets for the revue performance night.

At our studio, you pay one Revue Fee that includes the 2-3 costumes necessary for your child’s numbers, as well as the proper tights for the costumes. The fee also covers costs of auditorium rental, scenery, lighting, security, sound, and includes props, hats, neckpieces, a Revue T-shirt, 3 tickets to the show, and a DVD of the show. All costumes are ready-made. If you require slight alterations, we have someone that can do them for you. We also have a group of volunteer parents & students that handle the extras like adding sequins, trim, headpiece fasteners, rhinestones, etc., - the nice touches that make our costumes extra special on the stage.