

6 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 6 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 the 6 things 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 and 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 is designed to absorb the shock of jumping and in addition, helps to reduce fatigue and prevent injuries. This is superior to other floors, which might be tile, linoleum, or hardwood laid over a cement surface. Our floating dance floors help reduce the risk of injuries and allow students to dance longer without getting tired.

2. Starting at the Right Age – How young is too young/ How old is too old?

Adults can start a dance class at any time. Their success is based on how willing and adult is to commit to practicing. We teach many beginner students in their 30s and 40s. For children, starting at the right age is a key element to the success of their lessons. If a preschooler has a keen desire and wants to start dance, a group

preschool dance class will give them a good foundation in dance basics which will be helpful later. Exclusively at our studio we specialize in combination Ballet/Tap classes for 2 year olds.

3. Can I watch my child's class?

Yes, we love to have parents watch the progress of their children. We have equipped our state of the art studios with viewing doors. However, it is our belief that students work more productively when not being observed constantly. Therefore, we have equipped our state of the art studios with closed circuit viewing monitors. Teachers need the student's full attention without interruption or distraction to teach effectively. For this reason, parents, friends, and family members are asked to enjoy our beautiful waiting area (equipped with TV, VCR, children's movies for siblings, magazines, and books) and observe class on the monitors to see your pride and joy. There will be several designated "Parents Weeks" throughout the year where you may come into the classroom during class time with your cameras and video cameras to full watch your child's class.

4. What are the "extras" required for the year end show?

Most studios put on a year end show in a professional theatre. Students that perform in the show must have a costume for their dance number. Some studios require parents to sew their child's costumes or pay to have someone make the costume for them. This can be inconvenient and frustrating for parents who are busy or do not sew. Our studio orders costumes from professional costume companies, so parents do not have to worry about costume hassles. Our Spring Concert at the end of the year includes all of our students in a professional show held at the Knoxville Civic Auditorium.

5. Can I get immediate assistance and customer service

In many studios the teacher or 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 on costumes and schedules, even when the teacher is occupied in class. Our studio has office staff on hand during all regular scheduled class times so you can get immediate assistance.

6. Are there additional performance and/or competition opportunities available?

Most dance studios offer some additional performance opportunities for their students. However, our studio is home of the famous Angels Kickline, “Knoxville’s answer to the New York City Rockettes”. We exclusively have the only high kick dance team in the East Tennessee area. In addition, our studio is home of the award winning Knoxville Jazz Company. Both performance groups have traveled extensively and performed with many celebrities. Their shows include: Louise Mandrell’s Christmas Extravaganza Show, Royal Caribbean Cruise Line, The University of Tennessee Men’s Basketball Game Halftime Show, The Kodak Film Convention, Goody’s Corporate Christmas Party, The Addy Awards, The Knoxville Realtor’s Halloween Party, The Music City Bowl Game Half-Time Show with Sammy Kershaw, Walt Disney World – Orlando, Florida – Magic Kingdom, For Kids Sake “FUN FEST”, The Knoxville Opera Gala, Fantasy of Trees, area public school Spring and Fall Festivals, WBIR CH. 10 vs. West Hills Elementary School Basketball Game, The Love Kitchen's 20th Anniversary Auction Dinner, and featured performers for the televised coverage of the WIVK Santa Claus Parade and Dogwood Arts Festival Parade.

The Knoxville Jazz Company 2006 Competition Awards:

Applause Talent: Overall Junior Recreational Solo, Overall Teen Competitive Solo, Top Student Choreography Award, Best Interpretation Awards, and The Excellent Energy Award; *Elite*

Dance Challenge: Overall Petite Solo, Overall Junior Solo, Overall Senior Solo, Overall Duet/Trio, Overall Line, Overall Production, and Highest Score of the Day; *NYLA:* Four Dancers chosen for the NYLA Dance Project in NYC, Future Star Awards, Best Smile Award, Sassy Award, Choreography Award, LA Judges' Choice Award, Overall Junior Prop Solo, and Overall Senior Production; *Dance Educators of America Nationals:* 5th Place Overall Teen Duet, 4th Place Overall 13 & up Production, 3rd Place Overall Pre-Teen Duet, 3rd Place Overall Young Senior Small Group, Top Overall Teen Solo, and the Executive Director's Cup Winner.
Have Fun !!

Dance should be something that you enjoy for a lifetime. So, try not to put unrealistic expectations on yourself or your children to learn too quickly. Everyone learns at a different pace and the key is to be able to enjoy the journey.