

Port Perry Dance Academy



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 at? 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 and hassles 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 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 specially designed system that absorbs the shock of jumping and reduces/eliminates fatigue.

The top layer of the dance floor is also an important factor. A patented vinyl composite 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, the American Ballet Theatre and a host of others, all use these types of floors as their dance surface. This unique surface 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 these 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 a Rosco vinyl composite top surface that is imported from the United States. Our special floors help reduce the risk of injuries and allow students to dance longer without getting tired or injured.

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 of our classes (ages 6 and up) to a maximum of just 12 students per teacher. With our "creative dance" classes (ages 3-5) we limit all of our classes to a maximum of just 8 students per teacher.

3. HOW DO I ASSESS A TEACHER'S QUALIFICATIONS?

Teachers should have a University or College degree in dance or fine arts with a dance major or equivalent. Teachers should also belong to a governing body that sets criteria for the professionalism, standards and conduct of its members and are continually assessed so you are assured the needs of today's students are being met. There are many such bodies some of which like the Royal Academy of Dance (R.A.D.), the Canadian Dance Teachers' Association (C.D.T.A.), The Imperial Society of Teachers of Dance (I.S.T.D.) and the British Association of Teachers of Dance (B.A.T.D.) have a long history and standards that are continuously upgraded and enforced. It is also important to check that the memberships in these associations are current and in good standing and you should ask for proof of this if you are at all uncertain. Always ask to see bonafide evidence of any claims of teaching qualifications.

4. WHAT DO MY FEES INCLUDE?

When comparing fees it is important to understand what you are paying for. For example, examination entrance fees, examination preparatory classes and accompanist fees are also customary additional fees you are likely to incur. Some fees paid for your end-of-year showcase or recital costume are flat while others are merely a deposit. When paying a deposit you will be asked to pay for additional costs that arise. With a flat fee, there will be no surprises! Determine what the refund policies as some schools have a no-refund policy.

5. 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.