

# 7 Qualities of a Good Dance Studio

## Use These Criteria to Find the Perfect Dance Studio for Your Child

If your child is interested in taking dance lessons, spend some time searching for the perfect dance studio. Your child will be spending a great deal of time at the studio, so you will want to feel good about your choice. Dance studios differ in many ways, so make an informed choice. The following is a list of qualities of a good dance school.

### 1. A Professional Setting.

A professional dance studio will focus on one thing: your child's continued progress in dance. Many dance schools are commercial in nature, focusing more on fun and recreation. Class sizes at these establishments are usually very large. The main focus of a commercial studio is the annual recital. If you want your child to learn proper technique and receive quality instruction, choose a professional dance studio with small classes and serious instructors.

### 2. A Qualified Teacher.

Just as all dance studios are not alike, neither are all dance instructors. Your choice of dance instructor is crucial to your child's future success as a dancer. Bad habits learned at a young age are extremely hard to break. Make a point to check the dance instructor's qualifications. Make sure he or she holds a degree in dance, is certified to teach dance, or has danced with a professional company.

### 3. A Cushioned Dance Floor.

Certain styles of dance can put stress on young bones and joints, especially ballet, with its many leaps and jumps. Look for a professional floor that is well-cushioned to absorb the shock of jumping. Never allow your child to attend a dance class on a concrete floor. Some studios today have portable floors that can be easily moved to performance stages. These floors are tremendously cushioned and provide a non-slip surface for dancers.

### 4. Small Class Sizes.

The fewer students in your child's dance class, the more individual attention he or she will receive. It is easier for a teacher to maintain control over a smaller class, and having a only a few students at a time allows for more personalized instruction. Observe a few classes at the studio to count kids, or simply ask the instructor. Each dancer in the class deserves proper instruction and correction from the teacher.

## **5. A Pleasing Environment.**

The overall environment of a dance studio is key to your child's success. The dance studio should be warm and inviting, as well as the staff. The studio should be clean and well-maintained. The dancing room should be well-ventilated and spacious, with mirrors covering at least one entire wall. Your child should be provided with adequate space to change clothes, and have free access to a water fountain and a restroom. Take a look outside, too. The studio should be located in a safe part of town, as you will probably be dropping your child off at the studio as he or she gets older.

## **6. Realistic Expectations.**

A quality dance studio will not offer serious ballet training to dancers under the age of seven or eight. Experienced dance instructors know that before the age of about seven, the body is not ready for the demands of ballet. Also, a quality dance teacher will have very strict guidelines as to when your child will be able to start dancing on pointe shoes. Dancing on your toes requires tremendous strength and ability in order to prevent injuries to the feet and ankles.

## **7. Reasonable Tuition and Fees.**

You should be provided with a written layout of tuition costs and other fees that you will be responsible for during the year. Most dance studios offer your child the chance to perform in an annual recital, but you will probably be expected to pay for a costume or two. Inquire also about the cost of recital tickets. Some dance studios provide a certain number of "free" tickets, but each additional ticket may cost extra. Finally, ask about possible withdrawal penalties. Your child may be excited to start dance classes, but you never know when he or she may decide to quit. Will you be expected to pay for unattended classes?