

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 where you decide to enroll? 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 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 "sprung-wood floor". A sprung-wood floor is a dance floor that rests on a system of high-tension cables, to absorb the shock of jumping, similar to a trampoline though without as much give.

Our special floors help reduce the risk of injuries and allow 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 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 young children's classes (ages 2 ½ - 4) to a maximum of just 8 students per class. For dance classes (ages 5 – 6) we limit our classes to a maximum of just 12 students per class.

3. WHAT ABOUT THE YEAR END PERFORMANCE?

Most studios put on a year end performance; some are even in a professional theatre. Students that perform in the show usually must have a costume for their dance number and pay a participation fee. Some studios may require parents to volunteer their time backstage. Most have disorganized rehearsals leaving dancers with nothing to do but still being required to be there. And many studios combine all classes into one show making for a very long day!

Our studio's year end performance is held at the Centre East Theatre at the North Shore Center for the Performing Arts in Skokie. This theater is among the top in the Chicagoland area with professional staff and top-notch facilities. Our dancers are required to purchase a costume, however we DO NOT mark-up our costumes and we DO NOT charge a participation fee. We also put on two different performances each year which minimizes the length of the shows and your participation as a parent. We have professional staff backstage and never ask for volunteers. Our rehearsals are organized and maximize each dancer's time, with little to no down time.

4. WHAT KIND OF DANCE STUDIO IS RIGHT FOR MY DANCER?

Every dance studio has a different environment and "personality" and it's important as a parent to determine the environment that best fits your dancer. Some studios are big and impersonal and the owner is never around. Others are small and focus only on a certain type of dance. Make sure the studio will allow you to try a class without obligation and receive a refund if your dancer decides to drop from the class. Make sure the instructors have college degrees in dance and experience teaching. And most importantly, make sure you and your dancer are comfortable with the instructors, the studio environment and the class. This will ensure a rewarding experience for both your dancer and your family.

At Kaleidoscope, we pride ourselves in our community-based environment. We are a true boutique dance studio, with a variety of styles and class offerings available; all while keeping an optimal class size. We maintain a small faculty of instructors because that gives them the opportunity to teach multiple classes and get to know each family personally. Any prospective dancer can try a class to make sure he/she is comfortable. We offer refunds for the unused portion of tuition because we know once your child has tried a class at Kaleidoscope, they'll want to stay all year long!