



How do I Choose a Ballet School?

When choosing a ballet school you may have many questions. Asking the right questions and knowing what answers to look for will help you make an informed decision as to which school is best for your young dancer.

1. Are all dance schools alike?

Training schools focus on technique. All good ballet schools follow a syllabus when training young students. These students are then well prepared for professional dance careers or acceptance into college dance programs. Other dance schools are geared towards dance simply as a recreational activity.

2. I don't know whether my child will want to pursue dance as a career or during their College years, how do I decide?

It is not necessary to decide right now. What is important is knowing that proper early training is essential if your child does decide to pursue dance or the arts in the future. Proper training instills dance students with more than just dance training.

Discipline, time management skills, patience, dedication, and the ability to work as a team are just a few of the lifetime skills that well-trained students acquire during their years of training.

3. Can I start my child at my local neighborhood school and then switch to a more intensive program later on?

Although this may sound like a logical plan, it is much better to start the young student at the right school so that the training, discipline and skills needed will be developed according to the dance syllabus and the dancer's age. If your child is showing the talent and desire for dance, it is important to find the best school before the age of 12. After that, it is much more difficult to re-train or break bad habits.

4. I'm hesitant that a training school will not be fun or will put too much pressure on my child.

A serious dance school maintains a sense of order and structure at the school while providing a warm, welcoming and fun-filled atmosphere, with nurturing and patient instructors. As a result, students gain many benefits: poise and grace, physical health, the excitement of performances, self-confidence, a sense of pride, goal-setting skills, self-motivation and self-discipline.

5. I'm afraid that my child's academics will be affected if they devote time to dance.

The study of ballet not only builds strong bodies, but it produces *smart dancers*. The dancer is constantly challenged to think on many different levels: from remembering combinations to memorizing variations and learning musicality. These are all skills that will assist the student in their academics. Many studies have shown that students involved in the arts achieve higher in their academic testing scores than their peers who are not involved in the arts.

6. What should I look for in a good dance school?

Do your homework. Talk to parents of dancers. Ask questions. *Visit the school.* Dance teachers should be able to tell you about their students and their accomplishments. Ask for information on the instructor's background and professional career. Ask to see what syllabus they use and what their mission is. Look for a school with a strong ballet program, since ballet is the basis of all dance forms. Stay away from schools that only teach recital routines. Learning a routine is only one part of dance. Training the body (and mind) should be the main goal. Choose a school that offers performance opportunities as this will help the child gain the confidence to perform in public. Go to see the year-end performance or ask to watch a DVD of a performance. This will give you a good idea of how the school develops the dancer as they progress from early dance education through the teen and more advanced programs.

Ask to watch an advanced class. Beware of schools that restrict parent observation. Most schools are proud of the way they train their students and are happy to let parents observe classes. Pay close attention to the older students. This will provide a good indication of what your child will be expected to accomplish at that age.

At the **Woodbury Ballet**, our mission is to instill the love of dance in each of our students and to train each student to the best of their ability, providing them with the tools and training needed to achieve their goals once they graduate from our program.

If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to call us: 203-263-0313!

Woodbury Ballet

Training Today's Young Dancers *for Life.*