

4 Things to Consider When Choosing a Dance Studio

Most dance studios appear the same. They have qualified, friendly teachers with experience teaching children and they have a big recital at the end of the year.

If all studios are the same, then does it really matter where you decide to enroll your children?

YES!

There are 4 main factors that can effect how you and your child enjoy the dance experience. You should consider these points carefully before you choose a dance studio for your child.

1. Does the Studio Have a Professional Dance Floor?

Dance is a physically demanding activity that involves jumping and can place a lot of stress on bones and joints. Dance footwear is not designed to absorb the shock of a dancer's movements. Jumping, the repetition of jumps and other movements can put a lot of pressure on a dancer's knees, ankles and back over time. The best way to prevent possible injury is by finding a dance studio that is equipped with a professional floating floor. A floating floor is a dance floor that rests on a system of high-density foam that helps to absorb the shock of jumping. The foam base under the floating floor absorbs the force created when dancers land on the surface after jumping.

Another important component of a quality dance floor system is the top layer of the floor. The universally accepted superior dance floor is a specially manufactured vinyl composite "Marley" dance floor. Marley flooring is used for dancers at all levels of dance experience – from recreational to professional dancers. A few of the dance companies that use Marley flooring are:

- Royal Winnipeg Ballet (Winnipeg, Canada)
- Royal Academy of Dance (London, England)
- Riverdance (touring production)

The reasons these and other professional companies use Marley flooring are that the surface lets dancers move with graceful ease without either dealing with a slippery or sticky surface.

At Epic Dance Complex, our studio has a floating floor with over 1000 high density foam blocks under the floor surface and has a Rosco Adagio Marley surface. Our floor allows our students to dance longer with out getting tired and helps to reduce the risk of injury.

Many studios opt out of installing professional Marley and sprung floors due to how costly it is to install. Instead, they choose sports court floor or regular floor tiles over a concrete base – which will prove to be detrimental to your child's joints and back over time.

2. Will My Child Get Individual Attention?

It stands to reason that if there are fewer students in a dance class, each child will receive more attention from the dance teacher. In addition, the children will have the ability to learn more quickly and the class will be more fun from them as well.

Our smaller class sizes help to make sure that nothing is being missed:

- No essential concepts are overlooked
- No bad habits are developing

Our class sizes are capped according to the age of the students:

- Ages 1.5 to 2.5 years: 8 (with assistance from parents)
- Ages 2.5 to 5 years: 10
- Ages 5 and older: 12

Smaller dance classes are especially important for younger children because the teacher will be better able to maintain control of the class. As well, it will ensure that every child has a good grasp of the concepts being taught and that they understand the instructions being given.

3. What Extras Will Parents Have to Pay for During the Year?

All dance studios put on a year-end recital in a professional theatre. Part of the recital experience is a choreographed group number with a costume that suits the music and style of dance. At some studios, parents are expected to sew their child's dance costume – or they must find a seamstress to do the sewing for them. What a hassle! Not every parent has the skill set to sew or they are way too busy to find time to sew a costume. Also, some studios charge an initial costume deposit at the beginning of the year then parents are required to pay the balance of the costume cost later on in the year.

At Epic Dance Complex, we have a no-hassle approach to recitals. As part of the monthly cost for dance class, students and parents receive the following benefits:

- Costumes are purchased for the dancers and delivered to them right in their class, with any alterations taken care of without extra costs
- Each family receives a special code to order 2 free tickets online for the recital performance
- Each family receives a professionally recorded DVD of the year-end recital
- Each dancer receives a fun swag bag and a certificate acknowledging their progress over the past year

With these cost-effective benefits, parents can enjoy watching their child dance on stage without the worry of any extra costs looming over them!

There will be additional fees for competitions and exams. Additional fees include: competition entry fees, exam entry fees, exam extra classes, solo, duet, trio and small group choreography.

4. What Foundations Are Taught at the Studio?

Our teachers are either qualified or certified in the style of dance they are teaching. They are also expected to continue to improve the quality of their dance teaching knowledge by attending regular yearly teacher training seminars and workshops.

With the guidance of national and world-renowned dance syllabi, our classes are designed to engage your child at their particular age and developmental level so they can build their successes one step at a time. At Epic Dance Complex, we utilize the following syllabi:

- Royal Academy of Dance (RAD) Ballet
- Canadian Dance Teachers Association (CDTA) Tap and Jazz
- Associated Dance Arts for Professional Teachers (ADAPT) Tap and Jazz
- Acrobatique Acro Dance

Having a qualified or certified dance teacher is especially important for the younger dancers (ages 10 and under) because the younger age groups are where the foundations of dance technique are being established. Many studios have their youngest and most inexperienced teachers teaching the younger dancers. Expert studio owners say that most qualified and experienced teachers should be teaching the younger dancers because these teachers have a well-trained eye to spot even the smallest thing that could potentially become a problem when the dancer gets older.

By working through each successive level of dance, the students are motivated and challenged to set and achieve goals and further their growth as a dancer.

What Else Can I Expect?

At Epic Dance Complex, we are totally focussed on providing a fun and enriching child-based environment – not only for our dancers, but their siblings as well! Our waiting room has everything:

- children's books
- activity boards
- colouring pages and crayons
- snacks and coffee for purchase
- water cooler
- television with close-circuit feed of the class room

Throughout the year, we have parties and events for our students and their friends on the following occasions:

- Halloween
- Christmas
- Valentine's Day
- Bring-a-friend Day

Parents are invited to watch their child during Parent Viewing Weeks.

This year, we held Summer Dance Camps for dancers from 3 to 6 years and 6 to 9 years. We also had two days of mini-camp for dancers from 1.5 to 3 years. New for 2017 – dance camps during school breaks.