

# STARTING DANCE CLASS

## A GUIDE FOR PARENTS



### Choosing & Starting Dance Class

Starting dance lessons is an exciting time for children as well as parents. Dance is a wonderful activity for kids, capable of teaching a child confidence, poise and grace. A child introduced to dance at an early age will likely develop a love of the arts and a passion for rhythm and movement. Most importantly, dancing is lots of fun!



### Deciding When To Start:

For many parents, dance lessons are a logical choice for active children who show an enthusiasm for moving to music at home, sometimes as early as two-and-a-half years old. Preschoolers should begin with a "creative movement" class like Time For Dancing which introduces them to a range of dance styles. Consider your child's emotional maturity and personality. If she is extremely shy, forcing your child into a class situation with other children too early may discourage her from dancing altogether. However, if your child is ready, an early start will give her a tremendous boost.

### Dance For Preschoolers & Beginners:



Research has shown that before the age of eight, children respond best to creative and imaginative teaching styles and activities, rather than a structured dance class, rote-learning or studying exam syllabi. The Time For Dancing curriculum brings together the combined experience of early childhood teachers, music experts and dance teachers to make a programme that is fun to learn for ages 2-8.

Check the minimum age recommendations for classes you are interested in. Because dance is a social environment as well as a learning one, children will do best in a class suited to their age group and experience. Teachers will let you know if your child is ready for the next level.

### Choosing A Dance Style:

Which dance class might your child be interested in? For little ones, Time For Dancing preschool classes incorporate lots of themes, props, colours and creative movement to music. Four-year old children can also enjoy ballet and jazz / hip hop classes geared to their age levels. Ballet Time classes are wonderful for posture and a solid foundation for all dance, and if your child continues their dance training into higher levels it will help them immensely. Or your child might enjoy the unique mix of jazz, hip hop and singing in our Star Time classes.

Consider your child's favourite music and what really gets them up and moving. Do they like pop music or songs with a great beat? Try Star Time. Do they love Barbie & The Sleeping Princesses, fairy dresses and classical music? Try Ballet Time. Maybe look at videos or read about the different styles of dance with your child to see which they might enjoy.



### Preparing For The First Class:

After choosing a class and registering your child's place, it's time to get ready to dance! Finding dance shoes and dance wear and talking about the first class will create a sense of anticipation for your child as they imagine what it will all be like. Most classes require dancewear to be worn, appropriate for the type of dance that is being taught. Dance clothes and shoes are differently sized to normal street wear, so see a dance shop to ensure the right fit. Talk about the class with your child. Explain that the class will have a teacher and other dancers. The class will take place to music and sometimes use props or stories to add interest. Get everything ready for the first class in a dance bag, and try to arrive five minutes before the class starts.



### Becoming A "Dance Parent":

Keep informed about the important dates, events and policies at the dance school. The most important things for you to do to encourage your child's learning is to get them to class on time and make sure they have the correct dance shoes and attire. If your child is preparing for a certificate presentation you can also encourage them to practise at home. They will be given a list of steps in their learning folder. Attend viewing weeks so you can see how your child is progressing, and take note of any teacher comments or recommendations you receive.

### Having Fun!

When your child is young, dance classes should be viewed as a fun way to learn new skills and be entranced by dance so they have the foundation and motivation to continue. As well as exercises, classes should involve fun elements such as mime, dance games and mini-routines. If a child displays a certain level of dedication and excellence as they approach eight years old, teachers may suggest joining a performance team or other more "serious" means of study. Probably the highlight of the year will be performing on stage in a demonstration or performance party. This lets students gain a little stage experience in a stress-free way and show off their moves!



Taking dance classes is a truly beneficial and unforgettable experience for kids.

We would love to hear from you about your child's dance learning. For parent Q&A, testimonials and a range of information about our classes, please visit [www.timefordancing.co.nz](http://www.timefordancing.co.nz) or give us a call, text or email.



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