

# Here's What to Expect from Your Child's First Dance Class

If your child is about to start a dance class or [summer dance camp](#) for the first time, you might be wondering what you should expect, especially if you don't have a ton of prior experience with the dance world. You probably have a lot of questions, like: What should they wear? When should they arrive at rehearsal? Will they get along with their classmates?

Starting dance classes can be a very exciting yet nerve-wracking experience for kids. As their caregiver, you want to set them up for success as much as possible to ease the transition, especially if your dancer is adjusting to in-person activities. The COVID-19 pandemic altered the way dance lessons run, and many young dancers are acclimating to the flow of in-person classes.

In this guide, we'll review everything you need to know before your child's first dance class. These tips will help you and your dancer prepare for a fulfilling, engaging, exciting dance experience. Let's dive in!

## Preparing ahead of time

There are several logistical considerations to square away before your child's first day of class. Proactively figuring out and completing these requirements will ensure your child doesn't face any hiccups and start out their season on the right foot. These considerations include:

- **Figuring out what to wear.** Your child's dance instructor will likely provide guidelines for what your dancer should wear depending on the type of dance they'll be performing. For example, if your child will be participating in a ballet class, they'll likely need ballet slippers, a leotard or fitted clothing, and tights. A tap class will, of course, require tap shoes. Reach out to the dance instructor if you're unclear about any aspect of the dress code.
- **Figuring out what to bring.** The dance teacher may also recommend bringing a variety of other items to class, such as a water bottle, extra hair ties, a snack, or a towel. Make sure your child is set up with the necessary supplies or that there are extra items at the dance studio they can use.
- **Filling out the necessary paperwork.** Make sure you [fill out any necessary dance studio forms](#), such as the registration form, student information sheet, or [class waiver](#).

Your child will feel more confident on their first day when they have all the necessary attire and supplies with them. Plus, handling all logistical concerns as soon as possible ensures that you'll be in the know about all studio policies and expectations.

## Adjusting to an in-person dance class environment

For many students, [Spring 2022](#) will be their first time returning to all in-person dance instruction. This can be a stressful adjustment for children who aren't used to fully in-person lessons after two years of remote activities.

**Before your child's first dance class, review the studio policies, especially any health-related protocols.** Also, ensure your child has at least some understanding of the style of dance they'll be performing. This helps your dancer visualize what the class will look like and how they'll be moving around in a space with their fellow dancers.

Finally, be sure to drop your student off early, especially on the first day. This allows them to familiarize themselves with the physical dance environment before starting class.

## Engaging with the dance instructor

Your child's relationship with their dance instructor can make or break their first dance class experience, so help them kick things off on a good note. Introduce your child to their dance teacher before the first day of class, if possible.

Additionally, make sure you give your child's dance instructor the space they need to mentor your dancer and help them build confidence. Trust that they have the experience and skills needed to guide your dancer every step of the way. This will make your relationship with the dance instructor go much smoother.

Keep in contact with the dance teacher and ensure you don't miss any updates or reminders from them. Download your [studio's mobile app](#), if they have one, and turn on notifications so you don't miss any important communications about the class or your child's progress.

## Helping your dancer embrace independence

Most likely, you won't be able to watch your dancer as they practice. This can be a challenging transition for young dancers to adjust to. Dance teachers are skilled in making the dance class a warm and welcoming place. Therefore, even if they struggle in the beginning, they should be used to attending the class on their own in no time.

Even older children will have to get used to gaining more independence as they participate in dance classes. They may have to work through certain interpersonal issues with their classmates or manage complex feelings, such as periods of high stress or insecurity.

Help your dancer work through these feelings as they arise and offer suggestions for coping with negative emotions in a healthy way. For instance, you might encourage your student to practice positive affirmations, get them a notebook so they can start journaling, or offer suggestions for working through any conflicts they have with other students or their instructor.

## Interacting with fellow students

Another element that can make or break your child's dance experience is their relationships with other students. If your child makes friends relatively easily, they might not struggle very much to feel at home in their dance class.

However, if they're shy, it might take them a bit longer to feel comfortable in the class. Early on, they might even ask to quit. Encourage your student to give it a chance because most likely, they will eventually make a strong connection with at least one other dancer.

For example, if the dance studio has any additional after-class outings, you might encourage your child to spend extra time hanging out with and getting to know other dancers. Additionally, without encroaching on your child's sense of independence, check in regularly with them to see how they're adjusting to their new environment.

Also, your dancer may be at a different level than other students in their class. This can be difficult, especially if they feel left behind by their peers. If your dancer gets stuck in this mindset, remind them that everyone has to start somewhere and that they're doing a great job.

## Supporting your dancer at home

You might not have realized how much of a dancer's success depends on practicing healthy habits at home. To help your dancer perform to the best of their ability, support them in creating a well-rounded lifestyle that helps them feel their best. This includes helping them:

- **Get proper nutrition.** Dancers require plenty of carbohydrates to maintain energy and protein to help build and restore muscles.
- **Practice healthy sleep habits.** The right amount of sleep varies for every child, but it's generally recommended that elementary-age children get [between 9 to 12 hours of sleep per night](#).
- **Have honest conversations about social media.** As your child starts participating in the dance world for the first time, they will likely also start seeing dance content on social media. Have frank conversations with your child about the distorting effect of filters, the dangers of cyberbullying, and how to engage with social media in a healthy way.
- **Practice conditioning/stretching.** Cross-training and stretching are two things dancers can do at home to stay flexible, build strength, and help prevent injuries. Clear a small space for dancers to practice yoga, pilates, or other forms of conditioning at home. Help them find YouTube videos to guide them through these exercises.

When you stick to these healthy routines every day, you'll start to see positive changes in your dancer's mindset and performance during classes and recitals. Plus, you'll be helping them build positive habits to last a lifetime!

Every dance class and studio is unique, but these are the general elements to expect from your child's first dance experience. With these considerations in mind, your child should have a positive first dance class with minimal surprises or hiccups. This can set them up for a long-lasting, fulfilling dance career!

## MEET THE AUTHORS

**Author: Laura Cole**



For more than 15 years, Laura Cole has focused on strategic planning and project management for SaaS organizations. Laura became the CEO of DanceStudio-Pro in 2020. Laura is a wife, mom, yogi and volunteer.

**Author: Olivia Mode-Cater**



Olivia Mode-Cater is an industry leader in dance education and dance entrepreneurship, having presented on these topics on a national and international level. Olivia's work draws on her experiences as a veteran dance educator in all teaching settings: higher education, PK-12 schools, and studios. Olivia proudly joined the DanceStudio-Pro team in 2021 as the Sr. Marketing Manager.

**Author: Tiffany Bellah**



Tiffany has been involved in the dance world at many levels – as a dancer, a dance mom, a studio manager, a virtual assistant to studio owners and now as the Customer Service Manager for Dance Studio Pro. She is the mother of 4 and lives in Southern California where she enjoys working remotely to support the users of the World's Best Dance Studio Software.

A decade ago, when her girls wanted to dance competitively she went to the studio owner to offer her skills in administration and knack for setting up and managing apps that would make that Studio Owner's life easier.

After researching all the options she discovered DSP and became an expert user – fast forward to the present, she has been with the company for a year and a half and she is thrilled to be a part of the constant improvements in technology that help us all connect around the art of dance.