

HOW CLASSES ARE STRUCTURED

Classes in the Pre-School Program are grouped into age-specific levels (3 - 5 years old). These classes meet once a week and last either 45 or 60 minutes, depending on the age.

Class structure for all levels is essentially the same, with the content based on appropriate developmental skills for the specific age. Each class begins with a brief sharing time. Students take turns moving around the room using an age-appropriate traveling step. Class continues with a center warm-up that includes all of the major muscle groups and is the basis for the barre work taught in ballet classes at a later date. From this, students learn correct posture and the placement of the body over the legs. (this is very important for both dancers and non-dancers!) The exercises in this section also teach balance, port de bras (arm movements) and include various types of jumps that are the building blocks for the allegro (jumping) steps of classical ballet.

Following the center warm-up comes stretching. These gentle exercises progress in difficulty as students gain flexibility over the years.

The next section of class develops the locomotor skills that form the basis for all ballet steps that travel.

A portion of class is based on different objectives geared to the age of the students. Concepts such as classroom etiquette, musical awareness, dance relationships to others, relationships to working space and the stage, and expressing emotions through movement are explored during the year. Students participate in a variety of exercises that teach listening skills (responding to the tempo of the music), levels (high, medium, low) and directions (forward, backward, sideways). Young dancers who are consistently exposed to this type of activity in class are consistently freer in their movement styles as they develop. Besides, it's just plain FUN!

EXAMPLES OF DEVELOPMENTAL SKILLS AS TAUGHT IN OUR PRE-SCHOOL PROGRAM

It is important to remember that physical skills that often seem quite simple to us as adults are very difficult and complicated for young children.

3 YEAR OLDS

Three year olds are quite new to learning how their bodies move as well as how to behave in a classroom. Children in this program are gently introduced to the classroom environment. Because this age child loves and needs repetition, the same class is repeated several times before being changed.

Some of the concepts taught are stretching the feet (the foundation for a balletic Battement tendu), balancing on one leg (an essential skill for the dancer), weight transfers from one foot to the other (the basis of Balance), jumping, simple arm movements, stretching, and moving across the floor. Many types of movement characterizations are used to develop both movement quality and imagination. During the year, skipping is introduced.

4 YEAR OLDS

The program for four year olds builds on the work done the previous year. Students at this age now learn to further control their movements. Weight transfers are done not only forward and backward, but also from side to side. Balances are more sustained. Jumps are now done in basic patterns. Traveling steps are often done with partners, and skipping is learned both forward and backward. Students also start learning the concepts of counting music and opposites.

5 YEAR OLDS

Five year olds continue to work on the same concepts, but in greater degrees of complexity. Their ability to count the music is developed. They utilize opposite arms and legs while skipping, galloping and balancing. Weight transfers are taught in more complex patterns, and traveling steps across the floor are done on half pointe.

6 AND 7 YEAR OLDS

At ages six and seven, children move into the pre-ballet level, a transition class between the pre-school program and the study of classical ballet technique (which begins at age eight)

Essentially, the pre-ballet class takes the concepts learned in the pre-school program and begins to put them into the format used in formal ballet class. By the time students are eight, they are ready both physically and mentally to begin studying the beautiful and disciplined art form that is Classical Ballet.

Students who train exclusively with School of Dance typically excel beyond curriculum expectations.

These students often move into advanced classes earlier than students new to our school.

If you have any questions about this program or any other aspect of our school, please call us. We will be happy to talk to you.



INTRODUCING OUR PRE-SCHOOL PROGRAM

Our Pre-School Program is designed to provide children between three and five years of age with a strong foundation in movement and dance. It teaches the young dancer the basic elements of movement and dance, space and how we relate to it, both as an individual and as a member of a group; the eight basic locomotor movements; musical rhythm, beat and time; opposites and directions; some elementary positions of ballet. Integrated with these physical concepts are the intellectual concepts of self-awareness, creative expression, imagination, teamwork, and basic body/health awareness.

Through participation in these classes, students also learn the basics of classroom behavior and maintenance, which remain the same throughout their dancing years. These concepts include learning how to take turns, following another dancer or leading the way, waiting patiently, working together with others, and having a positive attitude.

Educators now know that training young children in the concepts of movement sequencing, patterning and spatial relationships lays a strong foundation for the development of reading, mathematics and other educational skills. Children in our Pre-School Program work actively in all of these areas.

LOCATION

COVENIENTLY LOCATED ON THE GREEN IN WEST HARTFORD CENTER. THE STUDIO OF DANCE IS HOUSED IN THE MASONIC TEMPLE AT 11 SOUTH MAIN STREET, WEST HARTFORD, CONNECTICUT.

PARKING:

AMPLE PARKING IS AVAILABLE IN THE LOT ADJACENT TO 11 SOUTH MAIN STREET. METERED PARKING MAY BE FOUND DIRECTLY IN FRONT OF THE STUDIO.

STUDIO ADDRESS:

11 SOUTH MAIN STREET, WEST HARTFORD,
CONNECTICUT 06107-2407

MAILING ADDRESS:

STUDIO OF DANCE
P.O. BOX 370576
WEST HARTFORD, CT 06137-0576

TELEPHONE:

(860) 242-1144

EMAIL: BLIBIN@SNET.NET

STUDIO OF DANCE

BETTE-ANN LIBIN
ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

PRE-SCHOOL
PROGRAM

