

The Dance of Independence

Dance class may be the first time your child is separated from you.

New places and people can be frightening at first. Until your child becomes comfortable in the class, he/she may take the first few classes to watch or participate minimally. Some children may take several weeks to settle in and fully engage.

Though your child may feel safer with you in the room, remember that other children may be shy in your presence. It is best for you to wait outside the dance studio while class is in session.

If your child is feeling uncertain or refuses to participate, here are some things you can do to help:

- Come early to look quietly around the school and transition into the studio.
- No need to sneak away, even when there are tears. Your positive enthusiasm and confident goodbye are reassuring.
- Set a time for hugs, smiles, and kisses before and after class.
- Encourage your child to teach **YOU** after they take class.
- Let your child tell you what will make class feel safer - a teddy to stand in for you, or a special outfit to make her feel stronger, for example.

As important as you are to the development and learning of your dancer, as he/she grows your child also benefits from this time apart you.

Your son or daughter gains confidence in his ability to make choices, learn new things, form ideas all on his own, and then proudly share them.

As you witness these developments, enjoy! Watch as they learn to appreciate dancing with and without you.

And value this dance of independence.