

Tiny Stars Parents

We are all so excited for the start of another amazing year at Joy of Dance! We wanted to send along a helpful article if you have a dancer who might be a little nervous to start their first day of dance. As always, please let us know if you have any comments or concerns as we would love to help!

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.

What do I do if my child is crying or having a hard time going into the studio?

There's no one magical method of helping your child through separation anxiety. The best thing to know is that we are ok with the tears if you are! Usually, once class gets started, he/she is off running. Let her know it's ok to sit and watch for awhile too with no pressure to join unless she is ready. Each dancer is different, but if a shy dancer is participating even a little bit, then she is gaining from the experience!

Below are some things you can do to help ease the anxiety:

- Come early to look quietly around the school and transition into the studio (let us know ahead of time if you'd like to do this so we can make sure to chose a time that is actually quiet!)
- No need to sneak away, even when there are tears. Your positive enthusiasm and confident goodbye is reassuring.
- Set a time for hugs, smiles, and kisses before and after class.
- Encourage your child to teach YOU after taking the class.

- Let your child tell you what will make the class feel safer - a teddy to stand in for you, or a special outfit to make them feel stronger, for example.
- Mention beforehand that you will not be properly dressed for class, so you will not be allowed inside the studio
- If all else fails, and he or she will not enter the room without you, you may bring your child into the room and sit by the door.

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 from 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.

Resource- DANCEADVANTAGE.NET