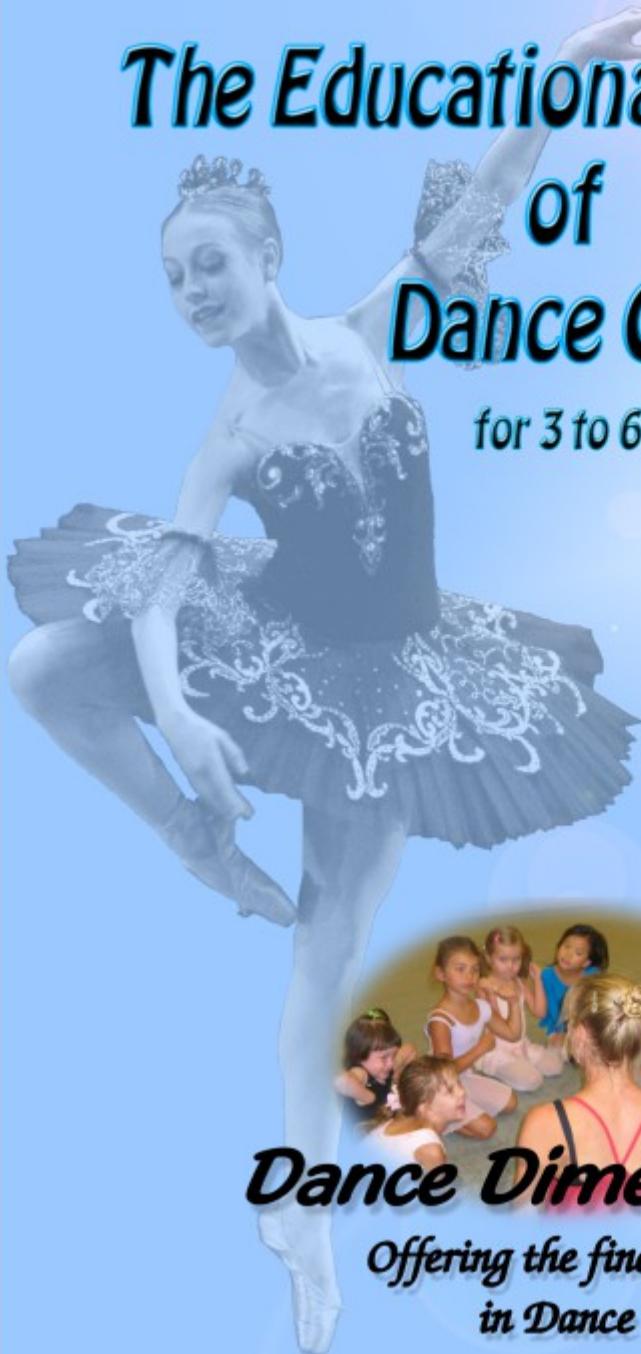


The Educational Value of Dance Classes

for 3 to 6 year olds



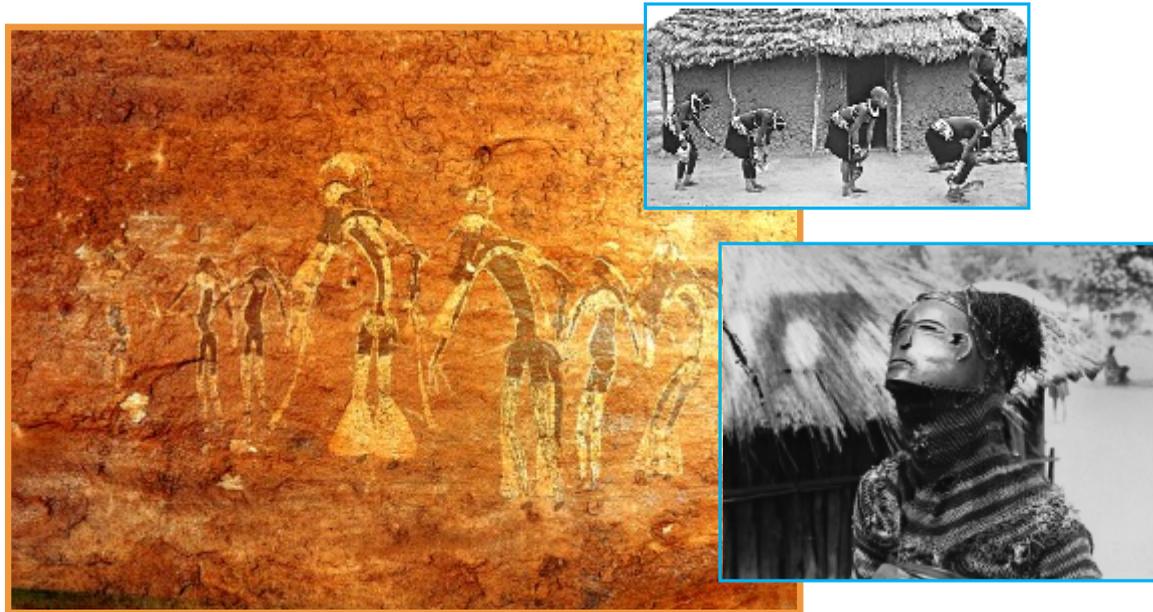
Dance Dimensions

*Offering the finest ...
in Dance Education.*

Dance and the Developing Child

The importance of dance is supported by a long history

Since the dawn of civilization, dance has played a central role integrating the individual with the community, and expressing the spirituality of the culture. There is something about movement that connects us with ourselves and to one another.



Rock painting of dancers, Tassili-n-Ajjer, Alg., attributed to the Saharan period of Neolithic hunters (c. 6000-4000 bc)

**Dance makes a primitive connection with us.
It touches us in ways that nothing else can.**

Dance's value is more than just simple fun.

Most people do not take the time to ask how the study of dance educates the child. The usual perception is "Dance is simply fun." This is true, but dance also teaches a broad spectrum of educational skills when one looks a little deeper. People who think "Dance is fun" usually go on to think "dance is just an extension of simple children's play and therefore of no "real" educational value." This is simply not true, especially when professional dance instructors are providing a planned course of dance education aimed at a specific age level. An honest analysis of what the child is gaining must be acknowledged.

It is also often observed, "Dance builds self esteem." This is agreed upon by almost all parents and educators of young dancers. However basic assumptions that dance classes for children are non-educational for the most part go unchallenged. Still leaving the question unanswered, "What all does the young child learn in dance class?"

Dance gets children's attention.

Before anything can be taught to a child, one must first get the child's Attention. Dance is immersive. It surrounds the individual. Few activities naturally and fundamentally engage the individual, especially the young child, with such completeness and immediacy as does dance. This fact is borne out by T.V. programs strongly using music and dance to connect with children. Take a tip from the pros. To get your child's attention, give them dance. We build on this by selecting teacher personalities that connect with children.



The Wiggles



Burt, Big Bird and Ernie
of Sesame Street

Dance is immersive. It fills the senses.

The senses engaged in dance education is literally all except taste and smell.

Hearing: (listening with an educated ear to the music to synchronize.)

Sight: (seeing other dancers so as to coordinate motion.)

Kinesthetic: (literally the entire body is called into action - both large and small motor skills - a high level of body awareness.

Dance may literally connect the child with themselves and exercise them in ways that may not have occurred until dance.)

Tactil: (touch - with self, the floor and others)

Dance fully surrounds the individual. Few activities naturally and fundamentally engage the individual, especially the young child, with such completeness and immediacy.

There is no other school activity that provides the focused, intense and broad experience for coordinating the senses and the self as completely as dance. What other school activity requires the movement of the entire body to learn the actual material being taught - requiring the coordination and the integration of sight, sound, body and spirit in a real time precision situation - all the while exercising imagination, memory, synchronization and both fine and course motor skills? It is a fact that many learning techniques meant to enhance efficiency and efficacy for learning standard school subjects introduce elements found naturally in dance. It is also a fact that cross touching, left to right and right to left help to self organize the brain. Sports at the early ages is not involved with fine motor skills, esthetics or creative imagination and visualization.

This immersion provided by the dance experience surrounds the child in activity and sensory input that engages the child, the total child, in the area of his or her natural activity. Dance meets the child in the natural conceptual space of the child. Much of communication for the child is in the form of physical expression. "Complaint" is a physical cry. "Love" is a simple hug. "Want" is a pointing finger. The very concepts are understood and expressed by the child in physical terms. Dance is about physical movement and the coordination and refinement of that movement for the communication of emotion, imagination and concept. Dance exercises, organizes and develops a holistic and natural approach for developing the total child.



Showing Ballet First Position: While focused on the teacher, the students are placed in formations that draw attention to their fellow classmates. Dancers for the most part do not dance alone. They must become attuned not only to themselves but to the other dancers. Many educators believe that developing synchronization skills is absolutely necessary for future success in learning.

Specific Benefits for the Young Child

The most specific and observable benefits of Dance instruction for the young child are most often expressed as:

- 1 an increasing of self esteem, self confidence and self image
- 2 desensitization to crowds and overcoming shyness
- 3 increased concentration and memory
- 4 increased motor skills and balance
- 5 higher and more refined awareness of music
- 6 better socialization
- 7 better ability to coordinate with others
- 8 satisfaction of achievement

And finally all these benefits, gained by the child, lead naturally to follow up successes which create a tide of success that builds on itself. The child that is not too shy to be called on will gain both peer and teacher recognition and will be naturally drawn into participation. Not being afraid of a crowd means your child concentrates on the material being presented not on overcoming his or her fear of the crowd.

Almost all parents report a positive noticeable change of improved self-esteem for the young preschool dance student. Many state that the improved positive self-image has made an important change that helped their child overcome hesitation and uncertainty in public situations. While some report that the change was like night and day. Starting with painful withdrawn detrimental shyness that was transformed into strong self assurance.

Levels of Engagement in the Learning Process

Dance and dance instruction teaches and engages on many levels. Dance while being advanced, sophisticated, refined and avant-garde; is at the same time primitive. When observing primitive cultures it is nearly universal that dance emerges as a central and early feature as the culture coalesces and integrates. Typically distinguishable dance emerges at about the same time as primitive percussive drums. However even before that, ritualized movement occurs. Just as primitive cultures find the innate value of dance, the young child is drawn to dance. Turn on music and watch even infants start to move. It connects with something that is instinctive, natural and formative. Dance naturally integrates and develops the individual, especially the young, at a primitive and foundational level.

Dance also involves all of the higher aspects of the individual:

- 1 The expression of emotions and imagination ("Imagination is more important than knowledge...", Einstein);
- 2 The unifying effect of becoming one with the surroundings, which would be the music of the dance and the other dancers;
- 3 Dance is also a part of the arts and as such carries the torch of beauty and culture;

All of this says that indeed dance carries some of the highest cognitive, expressive and yes spiritual aspirations of mankind.

This is some very sophisticated material being addressed by an activity that is, for the child, simply fun.



Pictures are from Dance Dimensions spring dance concert dress rehearsal at Vance Brand Auditorium.

For the very young student, dance instruction involves:

- a) socialization;
- b) increasing concentration and the exercising of memory;
- c) refining physical motor control and exercising that control ;
- d) anticipation and sequencing skills;
- e) spatial awareness;
- f) music appreciation and fundamental music introduction;
- g) synchronization with others - experts say of key importance to later learning ;
- h) the sense of rhythm - temporal awareness;
- I) exercising the fullness of the imagination;
- j) esthetic introduction and understandings - introducing the Child to the connection between the emotional and the esthetic;
- k) simple learning of the left and right;
- l) and there is more.

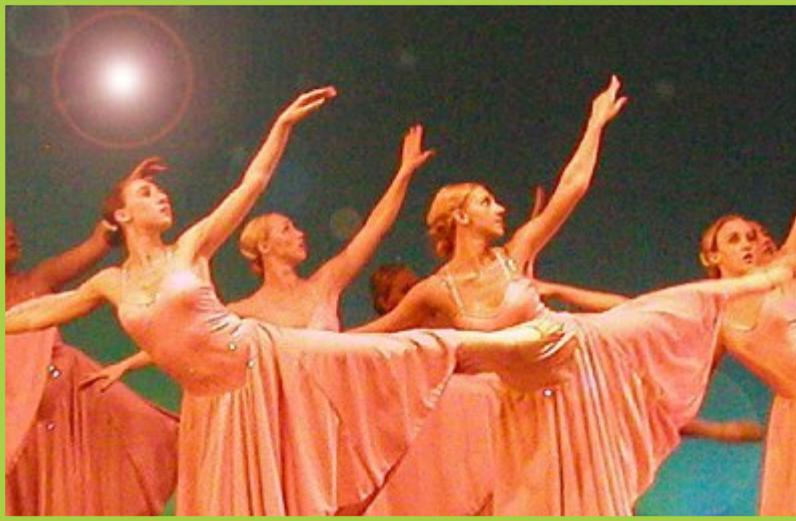
Much of what is being worked on with the child are pre-linguistic or non-linguistic concepts. Extremely important in preparing the child for other "higher-level" learning experiences. Also important as it integrates the individual with themselves and with the group. The holistic foundation put in place by dance is not formally presented to the child in all these aspects by any other modern-day class available. It is not a stretch to say that dance instruction for the young child, when provided by trained professionals with a focused instruction plan, is on the leading edge of education and education theory. At the same time it is a primal connection with our primitive core.

By engaging the total child, dance class creates a tangible focused experience of learning, where the child is naturally drawn in by the compelling immediacy and integration of the learning experience. Children, drawn into full activity, experience their natural ability to learn in this new formal environment. The rewarding successful experience moves the child to the point of "getting it" and experiencing first hand the rewards of learning. This experience shows the child what the rewards are and the amount of focus necessary to achieve an educational goal. This sets the stage for a head start advantage that multiplies as the school years unfold. Every child should experience dance for at least a few years in those crucial formative years of 3 to 8. It will pay ongoing dividends in the child's life and school career. Not only is dance a seminal learning experience it is a fun learning experience. This is as true for boys as it is for girls. Don't let thoughtless biases rob your son of an experience that will add to all aspects of his life. Those aspects include his athletic life, his educational career, his relationship with himself and others, and his understanding and participation in art.

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Dance Dimensions
Longmont CO

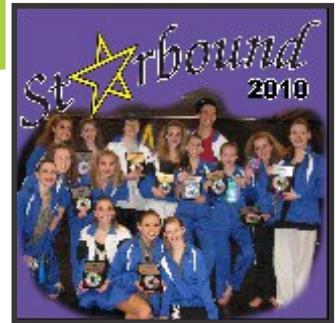
Starbound is Dance Dimensions award winning performance company. Over the years **Starbound** has received national recognition and produced professional dancers and teachers. We are proud of the many young people who have been a part of the **Starbound** experience. Dance Dimensions has changed lives and built dreams. In short we have produced and **we have a proven consistent track record.**



Where you study does make a difference.

When picking a place for your child to be introduced to dance or to study dance, it is important to understand the differences you are faced with. Just because a preschool or dance business has a dance class does not mean your child will have a competent class, much less a premium experience. The difference is whether your child will actually receive a highly meaningful experience worthy of your child's and your time or something far less. Dance Dimensions understands that the real difference is provided by the teacher, the mind set of the studio, the facility and the continuing opportunities offered. 30 years in business, Dance Dimensions has always and will always put a high priority on the classes for the very young! Some child specialists have been with us for more than 25 years. We select our very young student's faculty very carefully and all of our teachers are highly qualified and truly valued.

Yes, we have produced professional dancers, college dance scholarship recipients, teachers, professional sports dance squad dancers - however we do not overlook or take for granted our baby classes. Whether you and your child are with us for 15 years or just a class or two, we are passionate about dance and what it can do for everyone!



Starbound Company 2010



A Dance Dimensions

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All dancers pictured have been or are students of Dance Dimensions.

The Ballerina on the front cover is Cara Cooper, a former Dance Dimensions student. She danced with the English National Ballet, rated in the top 5 world wide ballet companies, and for many more years with the Colorado Ballet.