

# *The Andover School of Ballet*

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## ***Progression Through Our Dance Levels***

The *Andover School of Ballet* takes pride in the professional and expert dance education that we offer. We have designed our leveled curriculum very carefully to assure that our students learn this very physical art in a safe and proper manner.

Our Early Childhood Curriculum classes for preschool through first grade students consist of PreBallet with Creative Movement (& also including basic Tap for Primary Dance 1, 2, and 3 levels). This curriculum is based on the appropriate childhood developmental skills of each specific age group. It is specially designed to provide the children with a strong foundation in dance and movement from which they can move on to our leveled technique classes in different types of dance. Find more information on this curriculum on our website under "Studio Information"... "Parent Information"... "ASB Early Childhood Curriculum for ages 3 – 7"

For students aged 7 and up who are enrolled in our leveled dance classes, each level's curriculum must be mastered before advancement to the next level is achieved. Progression through the dance levels is an individual process ~ every year our instructors make assessments of each student's progress and recommend dance level placement for the following year. Our dance levels are numbered and increasing numbers indicate increasing difficulty in technique level. Once past Ballet level 1 +/or Jazz & Tap Level 1 (the beginner level), each dance level may require two years or more to master. As a student advances in technical mastery, taking classes more frequently will help with their progress.

*It is highly recommended that **Ballet** students who wish to maximize their progress take Ballet classes twice per week at minimum.* This concentrated training is necessary to prepare students for the complexities of more advanced dance technique and to prepare for pointe work, and usually begins with students who are entering the Ballet 3 level, although students may begin to take more ballet classes per week at any level to increase progress! We usually recommend that students entering their first year of Ballet 3 also take a Ballet 2 class which will reinforce their basic technical skills, while second year Ballet 3 students usually take two Ballet 3 classes per week. Continuing forward, students will typically be recommended to one ballet level which will challenge them plus one lower-level class that will reinforce their technique through their weekly practice.

**Ballet technique** is a very complex form of movement. As a student progresses, the technique becomes more challenging and taking more than one class per week becomes crucial. Because of the turn-out from the hips needed in ballet, constant repetition of the correct technique is necessary for muscle memory to be engaged, progress to be made, and the chance of injury to be lessened. Each new level of dance builds on the foundation of technique and muscle conditioning practiced and mastered in the previous level.

**Pointe work** is not a different technique from ballet technique; it is ballet technique brought to a very high level. All students must have permission from their instructors to begin and continue demi-pointe and pointe classes. A student taking demi-pointe or pointe classes **MUST** attend two Ballet technique classes each week to also enroll in demi-pointe/pointe classes. Readiness for pointe work is determined on an individual basis according to strength and technical mastery.

Students in higher levels of Ballet should consider taking a minimum of three Ballet classes per week. Jazz & Tap students in Level 4 and above are required to attend a weekly ballet or lyrical class in addition to their leveled Jazz & Tap classes. ***Remember, the more you practice, the stronger you will grow as a dancer!***