



NURTURING TEACHERS, EMPOWERING KIDS

## **Student & Parent Handbook – The Dance Connection**

At The Dance Connection, we believe in more than just dance classes...we believe in creating a space where students feel empowered, supported, and inspired to grow. As a condition of enrollment, students and their parents or guardians agree to follow the policies outlined by our studio, its director, faculty, and staff. We reserve the right to discontinue enrollment if behavior by a student or parent is not aligned with the values and expectations of our community.

### **Welcome to The Dance Connection**

We're so happy to welcome you to our studio family! Whether this is your first year or you've been dancing with us for seasons, thank you for trusting us to be part of your child's journey. Our studio is built on the belief that **nurturing teachers empower kids**, and you'll feel that in every class we teach.

This handbook is your guide to all things TDC, from class expectations to recital details. It is a helpful resource for your family to navigate the dance season with us.

### **Our Philosophy**

We are committed to providing high-quality dance and tumbling instruction in a warm, encouraging environment. Our classes support physical, emotional, and artistic growth, and our teachers are passionate about helping each student thrive.

We believe dance builds confidence, discipline, and creativity. And while we care deeply about teaching strong technique, we care just as much about helping kids feel seen, valued, and part of something special.

Our goals:

- To perform with body, mind, and heart
- To grow confidence, coordination, poise, and grace
- To develop strong technical foundations
- To foster an appreciation of the arts
- And most of all, to have FUN

Our instructors are lifelong learners who continue their education through training, certifications, and workshops—ensuring your dancer receives instruction that is current, creative, and inspiring.

### **About This Handbook**

The Dance Connection has proudly served the Iowa Great Lakes region for over 30 years, and has brought that same heart and excellence to Jackson, MN since 2016. We believe that strong instruction, caring teachers, and clear communication are the keys to our success.

This handbook outlines the core policies and expectations of our studio so that you feel informed and supported throughout the year.

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*Note: All dates and fees listed are subject to change. Please refer to our website and studio emails for the most up-to-date information.*

### **Key Contact Information:**

- Address: Hwy 9 West behind KUOO and Plumb Supply in Spirit Lake
- Phone: 712-339-1152 (Maddie)
- Rec Dance Email: dawnsdanceconnection@gmail.com
- Competition Dance Email: competitionddc@gmail.com
- Website: [www.dawnsdanceconnection.net](http://www.dawnsdanceconnection.net)
- Owner: Maddie Nabuco

### **2026–2027 Key Dates**

- Classes Begin: Tuesday, September 8
- Thanksgiving Break: November 23–29
- Christmas Break: December 20–January 2
- Spring Break: March 22-26
- Last Week of Classes (Spirit Lake): May TBD

### **Recital Dates (Spirit Lake):**

- Picture Day: TBD
- Spacing Day-Dancers: TBD
- Spacing Day-Tumblers: TBD
- Dress Rehearsal: TBD
  - Tumbling Recital TBD
  - Dance Recital TBD
- Performances:
  - Tumbling/Pre-Dance Recitals: TBD
  - Dance Recitals: TBD

## STAYING INFORMED

We work hard to make your family's dance experience smooth, organized, and enjoyable. Communication is a key part of that, and we do our best to keep you updated every step of the way.

**Newsletters & Updates** All important studio news—including reminders, schedule changes, and event information—will be sent to your email. Please make sure your contact information is current.

If you ever have questions or need clarification, feel free to reach out! You can email Maddie at [dawnsdanceconnection@gmail.com](mailto:dawnsdanceconnection@gmail.com) (she tries her best to respond within 1 business day).

Website: [www.dawnsdanceconnection.net](http://www.dawnsdanceconnection.net) — open 24/7 with updated information.

**Facebook Page** Be sure to “like” The Dance Connection on Facebook for reminders, behind-the-scenes peeks, and studio highlights. Please invite your family and friends to follow along!

Note: For specific questions, email is always the best method of contact. Please do not post questions on the public Facebook page.

**Weather Cancellations** We follow the SLCSO School District for weather-related closures. If school is canceled or dismissed early due to severe weather, dance classes will also be canceled. Cancellations will be communicated by email and posted on our Facebook page as time allows.

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## FOR OUR STUDENTS

The first step to becoming a successful dancer is making a solid commitment to your classes. Strong technique is developed through consistency—and class time is where that growth begins. Come prepared to learn and be fully present. Dance class is a time to focus on yourself, so try to leave personal distractions at the door.

True progress is made when you treat every class as an opportunity to grow. Challenge yourself to stretch further, refine your movement, listen actively, and fully engage. Dance full-out—even when it's hard. That's how you become a stronger dancer.

Respect for your teachers is essential. A correction is a sign that your teacher is invested in your progress. Always say thank you when a teacher offers feedback or constructive criticism. Growth comes from those who are eager to learn and open to guidance. Nothing can stop a dancer who works hard, listens well, and brings heart to every class.

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## FOR OUR PARENTS

We wholeheartedly believe that the success of every child depends on the support of their family. Your encouragement, presence, and partnership make a tremendous difference—not just in your child’s growth as a dancer, but in the overall spirit of our studio community.

We ask all families to help us maintain a positive, respectful environment—one where students, parents, and teachers feel supported and connected. How you speak about dance, other students, or instructors in front of your dancer truly matters. Your child is watching, and you are their model for how to navigate relationships and commitments.

Dance is a team activity. Every dancer’s presence matters, and we so appreciate the effort you make to have your child attend consistently and on time.

At times, parents and teachers may see things from different angles—but we always share the same goal: doing what’s best for your dancer. If a question or concern arises, we welcome a conversation. The best progress happens when home and studio work hand-in-hand.

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### **Information for Parents of Pre-Dance Students (3–4 Years, Not Yet in TK/K)**

Our Pre-Dance program is designed to be a joyful introduction to movement and classroom structure for our littlest dancers. These early classes are focused on creating a nurturing, imaginative environment where students can develop confidence and independence.

In the first few weeks, your child will be getting used to their teacher, the classroom space, and a new routine. Our curriculum supports physical, emotional, and social development through music, movement, basic ballet, basic tumbling, and creative play.

We emphasize coordination, musicality, listening skills, and imagination more than memorizing dance steps. While some movement basics will be introduced, it is perfectly normal if your dancer doesn’t immediately replicate choreography at home. We promise they are learning and growing every time they step into class!

**Recital Participation** Pre-Dance students typically perform one routine in our annual recital. It’s a milestone moment that celebrates their growth and builds early confidence on stage.

**Separation From Parents** Separation can be a big milestone at this age. In order to help your child adjust, we ask parents to drop off promptly and give space for your child to bond with their teacher and classmates. Children thrive when routines are predictable and boundaries are clear.

By stepping into class independently, your child is learning to:

- Develop trust in new adults
- Participate in group settings
- Understand that parents leave and come back

- Feel proud of doing something “on their own”

If your child resists class or cries at drop-off, don't panic. It's normal! Many young children experience this and adjust over time. That said, if we find that after several weeks your child still isn't ready, we may suggest waiting until next season. We want their first experience with dance to be positive, and sometimes a year of growth can make a big difference.

**Helping at Home** If your child is hesitant, you can help by:

- Emphasizing what they'll do in class instead of what you're doing while they're gone
- Keeping goodbyes short and confident
- Asking the teacher for help if needed
- Repeating and reviewing class activities at home in a playful way

Repetition builds confidence, so encourage your dancer to practice—but never force it. Most of all, celebrate their bravery and progress!

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## **FOR ALL PARENTS & STUDENTS**

### **Understanding Dance Education**

As a parent, your support is essential—not just financially, but emotionally. Dance is a unique blend of athleticism and artistry, and each dancer's journey is personal. Not every student will progress at the same pace, even if they're in the same class. That's okay. What matters is consistent effort, a willingness to learn, and a positive attitude.

While not every dancer will pursue dance beyond high school, we believe the life skills learned in class—resilience, teamwork, discipline, creativity—are truly invaluable. We're here to build confident movers and thoughtful humans.

### **Class Placement**

At The Dance Connection, we put a lot of thought into class placements. Assignments are based on a variety of factors: student ability, age, instructor availability, and studio space. There are many moving parts, and we appreciate your trust as we build the best possible schedule for our entire community.

When registering, families should sign up for the classes they're most interested in. Once registration closes, we finalize our master schedule and place dancers in the classes best suited for their age and ability.

If the class time doesn't work for your family, we are often able to suggest an alternate option—or the student can drop the class without penalty. We do our best to be flexible and make dance work for your schedule whenever we can.

## **Class Observation**

We welcome you to stay connected with your child's learning experience. While we do not designate specific observation weeks, you are always welcome to check in through the observation windows at your convenience.

To maintain a calm, focused learning environment, we ask that parents and visitors refrain from entering the classroom or interrupting class. Please do not call out to students or instructors through the doorway or observation glass, as it can disrupt the flow and safety of class.

## **Studio Etiquette: Dos and Don'ts**

We strive to foster a kind, respectful, and focused learning environment—for dancers, families, and staff. Here are some helpful reminders to ensure a positive experience for all:

### **Do:**

- Encourage your dancer to do their best, not be the best.
- Celebrate effort and progress more than perfection.
- Support other dancers with kindness and grace.
- Talk directly with instructors or Maddie if you have concerns—we're here to help!

### **Don't:**

- Compare your dancer's progress to others.
- Speak negatively about other students, teachers, or parents—especially in front of dancers.
- Share or post full routines online (our choreography is protected).
- Use class time for cell phone calls, texting, or filming inside the studio.

We're all working together to model great behavior for our dancers. Let's make the studio a place where everyone feels safe, celebrated, and empowered to grow.

The highest educational standards are expected from all The Dance Connection faculty members. They are lifelong learners who continue to educate themselves through certification programs, teacher-training schools, conferences, and other learning opportunities.

## **Attendance**

Consistent attendance is one of the best ways to help your dancer feel confident and successful in class. Every lesson builds upon the last, and missing even one can impact your dancer's progress and confidence—especially as we begin recital choreography between December and April.

We know life happens, and sometimes an absence is unavoidable. If your child is sick, out of town, or has another obligation, just let us know by email. Three or more unexcused absences (especially in the spring) may result in a dancer being moved to a different class or choreography adjustment.

## **Tardiness**

Warming up is a vital part of dance training. It helps prevent injury and sets the tone for class. If your dancer arrives more than 10 minutes late, they may be asked to sit and observe the remainder of class to stay safe and avoid disrupting others.

## **Illness**

To keep our studio safe and healthy, please keep your child home if they are experiencing any of the following:

- Fever
- Vomiting or diarrhea
- Persistent cough or sore throat
- Green or yellow nasal discharge
- Pink eye or other contagious conditions

If your dancer becomes ill during class, you will be contacted to pick them up. Please wait until your child has been symptom-free for 24 hours before returning to class.

## **Makeup Classes**

We offer makeup options whenever possible! If your dancer misses class due to illness, family travel, or a school conflict, email Maddie to find out what classes may be available to attend within two weeks of the missed session. Makeup opportunities depend on class sizes and whether the class is working on recital material.

Please note: There are no tuition credits or refunds for missed classes.

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## **Medical Information**

Your child's safety is important to us. If your dancer has a medical condition (such as asthma, diabetes, allergies, or learning differences), please inform Maddie and your child's instructor at registration and keep us updated throughout the year.

If your dancer uses an inhaler or requires medication during class time, arrangements must be made with the studio. All health information is kept confidential and shared only with relevant staff to ensure appropriate care and support.

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## DRESS CODE REQUIREMENTS

We believe that what dancers wear can directly impact how they feel and focus. Our dress code promotes a sense of unity and helps instructors clearly see alignment and technique to ensure safety and improvement.

- Students should bring dancewear and shoes in a labeled dance bag.
- Dancewear should be clean and in good condition.
- No watches, jewelry, or large accessories in class.
- Dance shoes should never be worn outside.
- Hair should always be pulled securely away from the face; a bun is preferred for ballet and pointe.
- Deodorant is expected for dancers age 10 and older.
- All Hair should be pulled back away from the face. Please refrain from using large clips or bows.

If a student is not dressed according to the dress code, they will receive one warning. If the issue happens again, they may be asked to sit out of class. Proper attire supports classroom discipline, confidence, and safety.

### Class Dress Guidelines

Class	Girls	Boys
Pre-Dance	Leotard, Form-fitting athletic wear  Bare feet only	Sweatpants/shorts, t-shirt  Bare feet only
Tumbling	Leotard, Form-fitting/flexible clothing  Bare feet only	Form-fitting/flexible clothing, t-shirt  Bare feet only
Ballet	Leotard and tights (skirts encouraged)  Pink ballet shoes  Hair in bun	White t-shirt, Black Pants  Black ballet shoes
Jazz	Form-fitting dancewear (no “gym” clothes), Pants  Tan split-sole jazz boots	Sweatpants, t-shirt  Black split-sole jazz boots
Tap	Form-fitting dancewear  TK–5th: Tan slip-on tap shoes	Sweatpants/shorts, t-shirt  Black leather oxford taps

	6th–12th: Black oxford taps	
Modern & Lyrical	Form-fitting dancewear, Pants Barefoot, Foot Undeez, Lyrical Half Sole	Sweatpants, t-shirt Barefoot, Foot Undeez, Half Sole
Hip Hop	Sweatpants, t-shirt White dance tennis shoes	Sweatpants, t-shirt White dance tennis shoes

### **Dance Footwear Orders**

For your convenience, dance footwear will be available for purchase during our open house. If you miss the initial order window, you're welcome to come into the office for a fitting—shoe orders are placed monthly during the season. All required footwear should be purchased (or at least ordered) by the end of the first month of classes.

### **Lost and Found**

Label everything! Dance shoes, jackets, water bottles—all of it. Lost items will be held in our Lost & Found bin. We do our best to return labeled items, but we can't guarantee recovery of unlabeled belongings.

### **REGISTRATION & FEES**

Online registration for fall classes opens June 1st.

A \$35 annual registration fee per student covers administrative costs such as insurance, handbooks, scheduling, and more. This fee is non-refundable.

All families are required to enroll in Direct Payment (EFT). The registration fee will be automatically withdrawn on the Monday following registration. Monthly tuition will be withdrawn on the 10th of each month starting in September.

Tuition is a flat monthly rate that does not change based on the number of class weeks (whether 3, 4, or 5). Spirit Lake students receive 36 total lessons, with tuition divided into 9 monthly payments from September through May. Spacing Day, Dress Rehearsal, and Recital are all counted as lessons.

There are no deductions for missed classes. Tuition is non-refundable once it is pulled on the 10th. Students that are enrolled after the 10th will pay a prorated tuition fee on the date of enrollment.

Miscellaneous purchases like shoes or dancewear will be charged separately. You will receive an email receipt and a pull date within one week of your order.

A \$25 service charge will be applied for any rejected payment, such as returned checks, or similar.

Checks may be made out to: **The Dance Connection**

Payments can be mailed to:

**The Dance Connection**

614 Lake St

Spirit Lake, IA 51360

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## CLASS OFFERINGS

Listed below are the various levels and their corresponding price schedules and styles to choose from. All prices include tax. **All students that take more than one class will be eligible for the current discount rate:**

**Class 1: No Discount**  
**Class 2: 10% Discount**  
**Class 3: 20% Discount**  
**Class 4: 30% Discount**  
**Class 5: 40% Discount**  
**Class 6: 50% Discount**

This discount is applied so that the lowest discount is put towards the lowest tuition fee (which means you will receive the greatest discount per class!)

### SPIRIT LAKE CLASSES/RATES

#### LEVEL 1: Preschool (3-5 years)

Class	Monthly Total
“Pre-Class” (45 minutes): combo of dance, tumbling, and creative movement	<b>\$49</b>

#### LEVEL 2: TK-2<sup>nd</sup> Grade

Class	Discount	Your Savings	Monthly Total
“Combo Class” (75 minutes): ballet, tap, jazz	No Discount	<b>\$0</b>	<b>\$67</b>
“Tumbling” (60 minutes)	No Discount	<b>\$0</b>	<b>\$57</b>
“Hip Hop” (30 minutes)	No Discount	<b>\$0</b>	<b>\$44</b>
“Hip Hop” & “Tumbling”	10% off 2nd Class	<b>\$5.70</b>	<b>\$95.30</b>
“Combo Class” & “Tumbling”	10% off 2nd Class	<b>\$6.70</b>	<b>\$117.30</b>
“Combo Class” & “Hip Hop”	10% off 2nd Class	<b>\$6.70</b>	<b>\$104.30</b>
“Combo Class” & “Tumbling” & “Hip Hop”	10% off 2nd Class, 20% off 3rd Class	<b>\$19.10</b>	<b>\$148.90</b>

**LEVEL 3: 3<sup>RD</sup>-12th Grade****Base Rate of \$57/class**

Choose from: Ballet (60 minutes), Tap/Jazz (60 minutes), Tumbling (60 Minutes), Hip Hop (30 minutes), Modern (6<sup>th</sup> grade and older; 45 minutes), Pre-Pointe/Pointe (10 years and older; 30 minutes)\* MUST be registered for ballet

# of Classes	Discount	Your Savings	Monthly Total
1 Class	No Discount	\$0	\$57.00
2 Classes	10% off 2nd Class	\$5.70	\$108.30
3 Classes	10% off 2nd Class, 20% off 3rd Class	\$17.10	\$153.90
4 Classes	10% off 2nd Class, 20% off 3rd Class 30% off 4th Class	\$34.20	\$193.80
5 Classes	10% off 2nd Class, 20% off 3rd Class 30% off 4th Class, 40% off 5th Class	\$57	\$228
6 Classes	10% off 2nd Class, 20% off 3rd Class 30% off 4th Class, 40% off 5th Class, 50% off 6th Class	\$85.50	\$256.50
Hip Hop Only	No Discount	\$0	\$44

**LEVEL 4: 8<sup>th</sup>-12th Grade****Base Rate of \$67/class**

\*\*MUST be enrolled in Ballet to register for this level

Choose from: Ballet (75 minutes), Tap/Jazz (75 minutes), Hip Hop (30 minutes), Modern (60 minutes), Lyrical (60 minutes), Pointe (30 minutes)

# of Classes	Discount	Your Savings	Monthly Total
1 Class	No Discount	\$0	\$67.00
2 Classes	10% off 2nd Class	\$6.70	\$127.30
3 Classes	10% off 2nd Class, 20% off 3rd Class	\$20.10	\$180.90
4 Classes	10% off 2nd Class, 20% off 3rd Class 30% off 4th Class	\$40.20	\$227.80
5 Classes	10% off 2nd Class, 20% off 3rd Class 30% off 4th Class, 40% off 5th Class	\$67	\$268
6 Classes	10% off 2nd Class, 20% off 3rd Class 30% off 4th Class, 40% off 5th Class, 50% off 6th Class	\$100.50	\$301.50
Hip Hop Only	No Discount	\$0	\$44

## **DISCIPLINE POLICY**

In order to maintain a happy, healthy, and professional environment, we work to help students understand the importance of respect—for their teachers, peers, and the studio space. We foster cooperation, accountability, and kindness through clear expectations and consistency.

Our staff uses constructive discipline methods and redirection techniques to promote class structure. When misbehavior arises, students are calmly reminded of studio expectations and redirected toward more appropriate behavior.

If a child is physically aggressive toward another, we respectfully separate them, talk through what happened, and guide them in resolving the situation together.

If disruptive behavior continues after a reminder, the student may be asked to sit out briefly (3–5 minutes) before rejoining. If a pattern of behavior begins to significantly disrupt the classroom, a parent/guardian may be contacted and asked to pick the student up for the day.

## **TERMINATION OF ENROLLMENT**

In rare cases, it may be necessary to discontinue a student’s enrollment if behavior or circumstances are not conducive to a safe or supportive class environment. This would only be done after open communication and efforts to find a solution.

Grounds for termination may include:

- Repeated disruptive or dangerous behavior by a student or parent
- Harmful or abusive behavior toward others or property
- Inability of our studio to meet the child’s needs despite efforts

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## **ARRIVAL & DEPARTURE**

Students should plan to arrive 10–15 minutes before class begins. Young dancers (under age 10) must be picked up promptly after class. Students ages 10+ must be picked up within 15 minutes of their final class.

Thank you for helping us ensure a safe and timely transition for all students!

## **Parking Lot Safety**

Please drive slowly and stay alert when entering or exiting the studio parking lot. Children of all ages are present, and their safety is our priority. Park only in designated spaces and avoid idling near the front entrance. Siblings must remain supervised at all times and are not permitted to run or play in the parking area.

## **Social Media & Online Conduct**

We love seeing your excitement and support online! However, we ask that all students and families uphold the following standards:

- Do not post choreography in full without studio permission.
- Never share private or negative comments about other students, teachers, or events.
- Refrain from implying you represent The Dance Connection unless given direct permission.

We reserve the right to address any behavior online that goes against our studio's values.

## **General Studio Policies**

- Only water is allowed in the studio—no food, gum, or other drinks.
- Students are expected to be respectful, focused, and kind.
- Children (ages 8 and younger) not in class must be supervised by a parent at all times.

No students may use cell phones or smart watches during class time.

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## **ANNUAL RECITAL**

Our annual recital is a cherished event that gives students a chance to celebrate their growth and share the joy of dance with loved ones. All dancers perform in our spring recital (except first-year pre-pointe students). Participation in the dress rehearsal is required in order to perform.

The recital is a valuable learning opportunity—not just in performance, but in teamwork, confidence, and perseverance. We release a detailed Recital Handbook in February each year with everything you need to know.

## **Recital Structure Update (Starting May 2026)**

Beginning in May 2026, we will transition to separate recitals for Dance and Tumbling. This means:

- Tumbling and Pre-Dance students will perform in a Tumbling-Only Recital, after which the auditorium will be cleared.
- Dance students will perform in a Dance Recital held shortly after.

This adjustment is designed to:

- Shorten the overall length of each performance
- Allow more friends and family to attend the recital they're most interested in
- Create a smoother and more enjoyable experience for dancers and audience alike

Please Note:

- All Tumbling and Pre-Dance students will perform in both Tumbling Recitals, regardless of age.
- Kindergarten–2nd Grade Dance Combo and K–2nd Hip Hop routines will perform in only one of the two Dance Recitals, and those assignments will be announced later in the season.

We are excited for this change and believe it will provide a more comfortable, memorable, and family-friendly recital experience!

### **Costumes**

Costumes are carefully selected to reflect the style and spirit of each class. Each dancer will need one costume per enrolled dance class. Costumes include accessories (such as gloves or hats) but not tights and shoes.

Costume pricing:

- Pre-Dance/Tumbling: \$69
- TK–2nd Grade: \$79
- 3rd–5th Grade: \$89
- 6th–12th Grade: \$99

Costume payment schedule:

- Initial deposit of 50% withdrawn on November 15
- Remaining 50% withdrawn on February 15
- Costume manufacturers do not accept cancellations or refunds; therefore costume payments, including the initial deposit, are non refundable once ordered.
- Costumes will not be ordered for students with unpaid balances.
- Late fees or additional shipping costs may apply to late orders.

### **Tights**

Each dancer will receive the correct tights for their routine. You'll be charged for these automatically on March 15. If you need extras, just let us know by March 1.

### **Recital Media Fee**

A media fee will be automatically withdrawn on April 15th, this fee will be \$35 for an individual or \$45/family. This fee helps cover the cost of professional recital videography and photography, allowing families to enjoy high-quality digital downloads of both. The media fee also includes a complimentary recital t-shirt for every registered student. This fee is required for all families participating in recital and is non-refundable.

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## **Summer Camps & Classes**

Dance doesn't stop when school's out! Each summer we offer camps and classes that let dancers explore new styles, maintain skills, and keep having fun.

Summer registration opens in March/April. Our camps are perfect for ages K–7th grade and often fill quickly. We also offer technique and pointe classes to help older dancers stay strong during the off-season.

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Welcome again, and thank you for being a part of our TDC family. We can't wait to dance with you!