

Ballet Class Divisions

Welcome Dance Parents! To better serve you and your child, you may notice a significant change in ballet levels this 2024/25 dance season. SOFA is growing, and these changes are meant to meet both studio growth and recognize the unique needs of multiple age groups!

The divisions and descriptions below are meant as a guide and to help parents better understand their child's dance class level. As with most things, exceptions may arise. Your child's teacher will help determine your child's best class placement.

PLEASE NOTE!

BEGINNING IN FALL 2024- ALL STUDENT BALLET SHOES *MUST* BE LEATHER FULL-SOLE SHOES. NO CANVAS BALLET SHOES OR SPLIT-SOLE SHOES. THIS IS TO SAFEGUARD THE NECESSARY AND IMPORTANT DEVELOPMENT AND STRENGTH OF THE ARCH IN YOUR CHILD'S FOOT. STUDENTS WHO PRESENTLY WEAR CANVAS OR SPLIT SOLES MAY CONTINUE TO DO SO UNTIL IT IS NECESSARY TO PURCHASE NEW SHOES.

Early Years Division

The early years division of classical ballet considers early childhood movement and cognitive development. Ballet training at this age is more about the *process* than the *finished* product; therefore, many of the ballet 'steps' your child learns are rooted in movements found naturally in child's play, such as skipping, hopping, and jumping. As each child progresses and coordination matures, a hop becomes a temps levē, a jump demands stretched feet, and the humble skip one day becomes a grande jetē, or *big jump!*

Early 1 - (Ages 4-5) 40-minute class

Early 2 - (Ages 6-7) 45-minute class

Early 3 - (Ages 7+) 45-minute class

Pre-Foundation - (Ages 8+) 60-minute class

Foundation Division

Minimum age 8

Most school-age children are better able to concentrate for longer periods, and with improved concentration skills often comes improved listening, coordination, and overall ability to continue developing a strong foundational classical ballet technique, building upon the knowledge and skills learned during the early ballet years.

Foundation 1 - 60-minute class

Foundation 2 - 60-minute class

Foundation 3 – 60-minute class

Foundation 4 – 60-minute class

Pre-Student – 90-minute class

Student Division

(Minimum age 12/13. For pointe, children must take a minimum of two ballet classes per week)

Depending on your child's ability and desires, the student division may include the beginning of pointe work. *This is not compulsory.* Children unable, or do not wish to transition to pointe work may still participate in more advanced ballet classes.

Student 1 – 90-minute class

Pre-Pointe (Demi-pointe) - 40-minute class

Student 2 – 90-minute class

Beginner Pointe – 45-minute class

Student 3 – 90-minute class

Intermediate Pointe – 50-minute class

Pre-College Division

(Minimum age 16. For pointe work, students must take a minimum of two classes per week)

Older high school students often have different dance goals than younger teens. Having continued to dance beyond all temptations to engage in other activities, an emerging adult in this age group may consider continuing to dance at college or as an avocation alongside their chosen primary career. Others may enjoy ballet as an outlet while still wishing to advance their technique and artistry through advanced training.

Pre-College 1

Pre-Advanced Pointe

Pre-College 2

Advanced Pointe

Promotion of Child to Next Class

At the end of each school calendar year, children are assessed by their dance teacher on their suitability for promotion to a higher level commencing the following school year. NOT ALL children will be promoted. It is not unusual for children to remain at a particular level for two, even three years, depending upon your child's goals, and level of commitment applied to their dance training. Some children prefer to remain within the lower levels, particularly those who do not wish to attain the levels where pointe shoes become part of their training.

Children new to dance or joining from another studio will be placed in a class closest to their appropriate level and/or age.

Promotion is based on the following criteria:

- 1: The child attends class regularly
- 2: The child possesses the technical facility to work safely at a higher level
- 3: The child has expressed the desire to work at a higher level
- 4: The child has demonstrated the appropriate technical competence for their level.