

# THE MANY BENEFITS OF DANCE



## INTELLECTUAL AND ACADEMIC BENEFITS

1. Young children will create movement spontaneously when presented with movement ideas or problems that can be solved with a movement response. Movement provides the cognitive loop between the idea, problem, or intent and the outcome or solution. This teaches an infant, child and, ultimately, adult to function in and understand the world. The relationship of movement to intellectual development and education is an embryonic field of study that has only recently begun to be explored. (Source: NDEO [National Dance Education Organization])
2. Children-at-risk (those with lower socioeconomic statuses, less family stability, etc.) benefit from arts-rich experiences in that they earn higher grades, are more likely to graduate from high school and further their education, and become engaged learners and citizens. The arts make education more equitable for all, regardless of external circumstances. (Source: James Catterall, National Endowment for the Arts)
3. Eighth graders who had high levels of arts engagement from kindergarten through elementary school showed higher test scores in science and writing than did students who had lower levels of arts engagement over the same period. (Source: James Catterall, National Endowment for the Arts)
4. Students who had arts-rich experiences in high school were more likely than students without those experiences to complete a calculus course. Also, students who took arts courses in high school achieved a slightly higher grade-point average (GPA) in math than did other students. (Source: James Catterall, National Endowment for the Arts)
5. In two separate databases, students who had arts-rich experiences in high school showed higher overall GPAs than did students who lacked those experiences. High school students who earned few or no arts credits were five times more likely not to have graduated than students who earned many arts credits (Source: James Catterall, National Endowment for the Arts)
6. Both 8th-grade and high school students who had high levels of arts engagement were more likely to aspire to college than were students with less arts engagement. (Source: James Catterall, National Endowment for the Arts)
7. Arts-engaged high school students enrolled in competitive colleges—and in four-year colleges in general—at higher rates than did low arts-engaged students. (Source: James Catterall, National Endowment for the Arts)
8. Students who had intensive arts experiences in high school were three times more likely than students who lacked those experiences to earn a bachelor's degree. They also were more likely to earn "mostly A's" in college. (Source: James Catterall, National Endowment for the Arts)
9. Lastly, the study notes that students from arts-rich backgrounds were also more civically engaged than those with low-arts backgrounds. (Source: James Catterall, National Endowment for the Arts)

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## SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL

1. Dance lessons can encourage children to foster a more positive attitude and explore their own self-expression. This can be particularly beneficial for children who are physically or mentally impaired or those who are attempting to deal with significant emotional problems. (Source: EduDance)
2. Dance lessons can help children improve their social and communication skills, learn how to work as part of a team, develop a greater sense of trust and cooperation and make new friends. If your child is shy, enrolling her in dance can encourage her to reach out to other children her age and help to reduce her anxiety about new people or places. Dance can also help to alleviate fears related to performing in front of an audience. (Source: FamilyTalk Magazine)
3. Dance promotes psychological health and maturity. Children enjoy the opportunity to express their emotions and become aware of themselves and others through creative movement. A pre-school child enters a dance class or classroom with a history of emotional experiences. Movement within a class offers a structured outlet for physical release while gaining awareness and appreciation of oneself and others. (Source: NDEO)

### Dance promotes psychological health and maturity.

4. Dance fosters social encounter, interaction, and cooperation. Children learn to communicate ideas to others through the real and immediate mode of body movement. Children quickly learn to work within a group dynamic. As the ongoing and sometimes challenging process of cooperation evolves, children learn to understand themselves in relation to others. (Source: NDEO)
5. Dance yields small but consistent effects for improvement of well-being, mood, affect and body image. The authors of a meta-analysis of 23 studies on the effectiveness of dance movement therapy concluded that dancing should be encouraged as part of treatment for people with depression and anxiety.
6. Results suggest that Dance/Movement Therapy and dance are effective for increasing quality of life and decreasing clinical symptoms such as depression and anxiety. Positive effects were also found on the increase of subjective well-being, positive mood, affect, and body image. (Source: The Arts in Psychotherapy)

1. Regular dance practice can increase your child's



## PHYSICAL

flexibility, range of motion, physical strength and stamina. The repetitive movements involved in dance can improve muscle tone, correct poor posture, increase balance and coordination and improve overall cardiovascular health. Dancing is an aerobic form of exercise. For children who are overweight, it can potentially help them to lose weight and improve their eating habits. (Source: Pro Dance Center)

2. Dance involves a greater range of motion, coordination, strength and endurance than most other physical activities. This is accomplished through movement patterns that teach coordination and kinesthetic memory. Dancing utilizes the entire body and is an excellent form of exercise for total body fitness. Young children are naturally active, but dance offers an avenue to expand movement possibilities and skills. (Source: NDEO)

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