

GROSS MOTOR SKILL MILESTONES IN DANCE

It is important that all dance educators—especially teachers of preschool-aged students—understand what constitutes a safe and constructive class for the students placed in their care based on age and physical development. This requires a basic understanding of anatomy and physiology, plus a robust knowledge of the physical requirements of the dance technique they are teaching.

Child development is both individualized and specific. There are a great deal of physical skills children can master at different ages. Within those age ranges, every child will progress at his or her own pace—each must walk before they can run!

Here is an overview of common gross motor skill milestones in dance:

Ages 3-4

At this age range, students can generally transition to different positions, perform bilateral movements (both arms, both legs), walk on tiptoes, and jump with two feet.

Ages 4-5

At this age range, students can generally balance on one foot for a few seconds, kick one leg at a time, hop on one foot, and perform simple arm movements (both or one at a time).

Ages 5-6

At this age range, students can generally walk backward, skip, sustain balances on one foot (less than 10 seconds), and jump forward multiple times in a row.

Ages 6-9

At this age range, students can generally perform oppositional use of their arms and legs (e.g. chassé), and maintain balance when jumping and running.

Ages 9-12

By the pre-teen years, children's gross motor skills are generally completely developed, although the growth spurts of this age often cause temporary clumsiness! The emphasis shifts from what children can do to their self-awareness of how and what they do. At this age range, students have increased body awareness and self-perception, and an increased awareness of their physical skills and how they appear to others.

Source:
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