

What to Look for at Parent Watch Week – Junior 2 and Up

Parent Watch Week is an opportunity for our families to view the progress of their children in their classes. Here are some important things to think about and look for when watching the class:

Standard	Students must achieve the set standard in a class before moving to the next level. Just like swimming lessons, specific skills must be completed and all areas of the syllabus (exercises) must be performed properly in order for students to safely move to the next grade.
Posture & Core Strength	Abdominal muscles must be held securely flat throughout class with a well pulled up spine (no sway back), wide open lines through chest and upper back. The pelvis should be upright and the weight should be over the balls of the feet.
Use of Turnout	By Junior 4 turnout should be well established starting at the hip and thigh and held through the knees, ankles and feet. Loss of turnout happens most frequently when the dancer is standing on one leg and working with the other or in jumping movements (both taking off and landing).
Stretch Though Feet and Legs	By Junior 2 the dancer should accomplish a good stretch of the feet through most of their work. At any time the foot is lifted it should be stretched. In all jumps the feet should stretch the moment they leave the floor.
Flexibility	The dancer should be working to increase flexibility in all classes. Increasing the height of extensions needs diligent work. This applies not only to jazz classes, but to all dance forms.
Placement and Co-ordination of Arms	The carriage and shaping of the arms is an important part of the training and poor placement weakens the posture. Arm placement is also an important aesthetic element in dance.
Memorization, Musicality & Performance	Students should memorize new exercises or choreography as soon as possible. The student also needs to incorporate all musical qualities and rhythms, eye lines, and expressions as they learn new work. This should start even with the barre work or warm up exercises. The use of rhythms and musicality is important in all dance forms.

Some reasons that students are not ready to move to the next level include:

Lack of Focus	Students need to focus in class and learn the work, as well as apply corrections. A positive attitude towards corrections (which are designed to help them) is important.
Poor Attendance	Students who are late or absent miss crucial information and physical development. Attending class is the only way to improve.
Growth, Development, or Illness	Students sometimes experience a quick change in body structure, due to a growth spurt, puberty, or inactivity due to illness or injury. At these times, students can lose strength, flexibility, co-ordination or stamina. Even though this is no fault of the dancer, we must be careful not to push the dancer past their limits to avoid injury and increase success.

We hope that you will enjoy the open house and that this information is helpful to guide your observations. Our teachers will also explain during the classes what is expected at each level. Please do not hesitate to contact our office (780-440-2100, admin@esbdance.com) if you have any questions for your child's teacher.

