

TEACHING ASSISTANT PROGRAM

Assisting a Dancearts teacher with younger classes or classes with large enrollments is a wonderful way to learn about teaching dance and improving your own technique. The extent of your responsibilities will depend on your age and your skill level.

If you are chosen to be an assistant, realize we are placing our trust in you and your ability to be professional enough to handle the job. You and the teacher must work together as a team, but always remember that you are their assistant and they are the lead teacher. You must follow the teacher's leadership and guidance of both you as an assistant and their teaching to the dancers.

DEMONSTRATING

Become acquainted with the classwork and the combos/dances the class is learning. Memorize it as soon as possible. You will need to get a feel for how your teacher relates to the class and how they guide them through the technique/combos/dances.

You need to be ready to demonstrate any of the class work as needed. The teacher will present the activity/step/exercise/combo, then let you know whether they want you to demonstrate it in front of the class, or help individual students that are struggling. Things will vary weekly, so you must learn quickly and be ready to take direction well. At times you will face the class, which means you must mirror them and begin on the opposite foot. Other times you may be facing the mirror and doing the steps with them.

GIVING INDIVIDUAL HELP

If you see a student having trouble with a step and you are free to do so, give them help quietly, gently, and with a friendly and positive attitude. Always offer praise for them trying!

You can help the class as needed in lining up, forming circles, and being ready to begin class. At times the teacher may want you to take one or two students aside for special help with a skill. Avoid criticizing a student if they are unable to do a certain skill/step. You can say something like, "You are doing a great job! Can I help you with it a bit?" Always begin with a positive.

HELPING TO MANAGE THE CLASS

Learn the students' names as soon as possible. The teacher might give you instructions on helping dancers find the correct place to dance or if certain dancers need to dance apart from each other.

Dancers of all ages and ability levels have personality and behavioral differences. The teacher may want you to help guide their behavior to help the dancer learn what is appropriate behavior for dance class.

CARE OF THE DANCERS

As an assistant, you now share some of the responsibility for keeping students safe from injury and for encouraging a positive, friendly environment in class. Be positive in helping dancers follow safety rules. Encourage them to be kind and respectful to the teachers and to each other. Be aware of any behavior that might lead to injury or to damaging the studio space.

MUSIC AND PROPS

At times the teacher may want you to run the music. Learn how to work the sound equipment and how to locate the music playlist used in class.

When you arrive, ask the teacher if you need to help get any music or props ready for class. During class help to make sure any props are handed out, used correctly, and put away with minimal disruption.

YOUR BEHAVIOR

Come dressed as if you were the teacher—wear form-fitting clothing relating to the style in which you are assisting. You are a role model and the students will look up to you. As an assistant, students will copy how you dress, how you dance and how you treat others. Be supportive of the teacher and show respect for her/him and the studio. Never say anything negative about the teacher or the studio, and never correct the teacher openly in front of the students.

If you speak to parents, always be positive, encouraging, and supportive of your teacher, the students and the studio. If you are unable to answer a parent's question, let the parent know you will check with the teacher when she/he is available.

IN CONCLUSION

Being an assistant teacher is an important job requiring more maturity and dependability than just being a student. Take your job seriously. Attendance is a priority because the teacher is relying on you. If you need to be absent, please contact the teacher or Hallie asap.

**WE HOPE YOU ENJOY WORKING WITH YOUR TEACHER
AND STUDENTS, ALL WHILE WATCHING THEM GROW
AND HELPING SPREAD YOUR LOVE OF DANCE!**