Dance in Early Childhood (2-7 years)
Dance, for the young child should be a joyful experience. Children need to enjoy the process of learning dance. In short, dance classes should be fun. In this way children will develop a love and appreciation for the art.

Dance class should provide a positive environment in which children can learn and grow. It should offer a variety of experiences that promote physical, social, emotional, and cognitive growth in the child. The physical benefits of dance class are widely accepted, but the social, emotional and even academic learning promoted by a good dance program are less popularly understood. A well-balanced dance class addresses the "whole child."

Dance classes for young children should be child-centered. Children develop at individual rates thus abilities and talents in early childhood are extremely varied. Curriculum should provide a sequential program that is appropriate to the age and developmental needs of the child. This will build the child’s self-confidence, an understanding and appreciation for their body, and a love for movement and dance.

While developmental movement skills are important to acquire, dance for the young child should focus on creative movement. Not yet inhibited by socially accepted expectations, their imaginations are at a peak. A variety of sensory experiences to stimulate the imagination are important. Young children possess the imagination of the skilled artist. They learn readily and deeply by applying acquired knowledge to solve problems in new and different ways.

In order to achieve a balance, technique should be intertwined with creativity, respective to the maturity of the child. While it is important that young children be provided with a class structure that will promote learning, it is also important to provide nurturing for the individual development of the child.

Dance for the young child requires an experienced and adept teacher who understands the individual developmental needs of the children and balances this with organized classroom management. Dance for all ages is a joyous learning experience, but formal dance class for children under three years of age is inappropriate. Under this age a different class structure is advised; preferably one with parent or caretaker participation.

Dance in early childhood is important work that provides lifelong value.
UNITY exists to:
Promote cooperation and dialogue among sectors.
Address certification and professional standards.
Promote dialogue with the public.
Speak with one voice on the issues of dance.
Promote research on kinesthetic and cognitive development through dance.
Disseminate information of value to the field.
Improve the lives of dancers and educators through services to the field (health insurance, etc.).
Involve and engage a broad range of dance organizations.
Monitor and address issues of importance to our constituents.

How does UNITY do these things?
Active individual participation on committees, which includes researching topics and taking action.
Partnering with other organizations working in similar areas.
Developing resources to support UNITY's work.
Values - the principles that guide our work
Purposes - the reasons for the formation of UNITY

We Believe and Support These Principles
All sectors are created equal
Access to dance should be available to all
Dance teaches lifelong skills
Best practices and professional responsibility improve our field
Dance educators are valuable professionals
The body-mind connection is honored as an integral component of learning

Learn more: www.unitydance.org

Dance Education in Early Childhood

UNITY Vision
We envision a nation in which dance is a respected and integral part of life for all, and where the dance profession actively and collectively contributes to education and participation in dance.

UNITY is a 501c 3
Not-For-Profit Organization