

# Teacher-Parent Relationship

Following are guidelines for how parents can contribute to a Teacher-Parent Partnership that benefits youth dancers.

**Recognize the Teacher's Commitment:** Your child's teacher has made a commitment that involves many hours of preparation beyond the time spent at practices. Often this involves time that is volunteered outside of class hours. Respect their commitment and imagine yourself in their place before approaching them to discuss any issues you may perceive.

**Make Early, Positive Contact with the Teacher:** As soon as you know who will teach your child, contact those teachers to introduce yourself and offer assistance (which may include encouraging your dancer to practice at home, and encouraging a positive attitude in class). Establishing a positive relationship with the coaches will help you proactively shape a positive experience for your child and will lay the foundation for respectful, productive conversations with the teachers should a conflict arise later.

**Fill the Teacher's Emotional Tank:** Too often, teachers hear only from parents who have complaints. Fling the teachers' emotional tanks with specific, truthful praise positively reinforces them to continue doing the things you see and benefiting the youth dancer.

**Don't Put the Dancer in the Middle:** You wouldn't complain to your children about how poorly their math teacher explains fraction. Don't share your disapproval of a teacher with your child. Doing so may force the child to take sides, and not necessarily your side. If your child has an issue with the teacher and can maturely articulate it, encourage your child to approach the teacher and at the very least learn some life lessons in self-advocacy with an authority figure. Otherwise, if you disapprove of how the coach handles a situation seek a private meeting to discuss further.

**Let Teachers Teach:** It can confuse dancers to hear someone other than the teacher offering instructions or interrupting class. Also, your instructions may counter the teacher's strategy or choreography or vision for the dance, undermining the dancer's performance.

**Fill Your Child's Emotional Tank:** Competitive dance can be very stressful to a young dancer. The last thing they need is your critiquing their performance, on top of what the dance teacher may deliver and what they already are telling themselves. Let your dancer know you love and support them regardless of their performance.

**Contribute to a Positive Environment:** Fill all the dancers' Emotional Tanks when you see them doing something well. Honor the team by becoming a mentor for positivity and providing a supportive environment.