

Ballet Level System

2011-2012

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2011-2012 CAD Ballet Level System

Purpose statement

To ensure appropriate placement in ballet classes based primarily on the dancer's ability as a way to achieve optimum engagement for the dancer, prevent injury, and to provide the greatest opportunity for growth in the art of ballet and dance.

At Carrollton Academy of Dance, appreciation for the art of dance is a top priority. Every student is given the opportunity to study and practice the art of dance in a structured and positive environment, which allows for optimum artistic and personal growth. As a means to supplement this atmosphere of learning, CAD will be implementing a more structured ballet program beginning in the 2011-2012 season. The CAD Ballet Program will contain a series of levels, each of which will have clearly defined expectations of its students. Building upon the ballet technique of each student will drastically improve their understanding of their bodies and of other forms of dance. Their performance levels will increase which will lead to more enjoyment of dance. By implementing this program, we can further the education of our students, both in the art of dance and in the art of life.

Basic outline

The CAD Ballet Program will consist of several levels. The levels will help provide a very structured and defined system for advancement of each dancer. Placement into these levels will be determined by ability (primarily) and by age (secondarily). The levels will be defined as: Beginner, Level I, Level II, Level III, Level IV, and Level V. The option of beginning pointe will be available during Level III. Each level will require at least one year of participation before advancement can occur (Beginner will require a minimum of two years of participation from each dancer). **Note: the ballet level system is not the same as the Company level system. Placement in ballet levels is based on ability, not Company placement. Example: Sally is 11 and in the Junior Company but has only danced for 3 years and has taken ballet for 1 year. Sally will likely be placed in Level I ballet.** If a dancer shows promise and quick advancement, he/she may be promoted one level, but this move will only occur during the first half of the dance year (before Christmas) to avoid jeopardizing recital pieces.

Levels

- **Beginner Ballet**
 - For students with one year or less of ballet/dance training. Generally, this will be for students ages 6 and under*.
 - The goal of this level will be to provide an introduction to the art of ballet through creative outlets (videos, crafts, etc).
 - The steps introduced will include, but are not limited to:
 - *Pliés*
 - Tendu
 - *Dégagé*
 - *Relevé*
 - Concept of jumping (*Sauté*) and turning (*Tournant*)
 - Advancement to Level I will occur after a minimum of two years and only with director approval.
- **Level I**
 - For students with at least 2 years of dance training. Generally, this level will be for students ages 6-9 years old*.
 - The goal of this level will be to build upon the basic technique learned in Beginner level.
 - **Students in this level will be eligible for the following roles in the Nutcracker production:**
 - **Party Children**
 - **Mice**
 - **Gingerbread kids**
 - **Mother Ginger's kids**
 - Advancement to Level II will occur after a minimum of two years and only with director approval.
- **Level II**
 - For students with 3-4 years of dance training. Generally, this level will be for students ages 10-12 years old*.
 - The goal of this level will be continued emphasis on basic technique along with

- the introduction to more advanced steps and combinations.
 - **Students in this level will be eligible for the following roles in the Nutcracker production:**
 - **Party Children**
 - **Reed Pipes**
 - **Toy Soldiers**
 - Advancement to Level III will occur with director approval.
- **Level III**
 - For students with at least 5 years of dance training. Generally, this level will be for students ages 12 to 13 years old*.
 - The goal of this level will be to solidify technique needed for advancement to pointe (should the dancer choose to audition) as students will be eligible to audition for pointe in Level IV. These techniques include, but are not limited to:
 - Ankle strength
 - Calf strength
 - Foot form in *Relevé*
 - Turnout
 - **Students in this level will be eligible for the following roles in the Nutcracker production:**
 - **Peppermints/Candy Canes**
 - **Angels**
 - **Dolls (with approval)**
 - **Clara or Fritz (with approval)**
 - Advancement to Level IV will occur with director approval.
- **Level IV**
 - For students with at least 5 years of dance training. Generally, this level will be for students who are at least 13 years old*.
 - **At this point, students have the option for auditioning for pointe in November**. See Pointe section for more details.**
 - The goal of this level will be to determine who would be appropriate for pointe placement and to introduce more advanced technique.
 - **Students in this level will be eligible for the following roles in the Nutcracker production:**
 - **Corps dances, including Snowflakes, Waltz of the Flowers, Spanish, any solos that are made into corps dances**
 - **Clara or Fritz**
 - **Dolls**
 - Advancement to Level V will occur with director approval.
- **Level V**
 - This level is reserved for our most advanced ballet dancers; those who display comprehensive understanding of ballet technique and a willingness to learn. Generally, this level is for ages 15 and older*.
 - Dancers at this level should expect to dance ballet for a minimum of 3 hours per week (this will include a pointe class, if applicable**).
 - **Dancers in this level are eligible to audition for any solo parts in the Nutcracker Production, which may be choreographed en pointe. These**

parts include Sugar Plum Fairy, Dew Drop Fairy, Chinese Tea, Spanish Chocolate, Arabian Coffee, Dolls in party scene and any additional solo roles that may be added in future years.

- Dancers in this level are eligible to assist in the beginner ballet classes and are eligible for the CAD Apprentice Teacher Program (with director approval).

***Ages listed in level outlines are meant to be guidelines and are not definite. If a dancer outside the stated age range displays readiness to be in a higher level, they can be placed in a higher level. As stated, level placement is based primarily on ability.**

****Students can choose whether they would like to audition for pointe. It is not a requirement for advancement to higher levels.**

Pointe

As previously stated, pointe is an option for dancers beginning Level IV; however, it is not a requirement. Should a dancer choose to not participate in pointe, they can still advance to Level V with their classmates. The decision to begin training for pointe should not be taken lightly. There are increased physical demands for dancing en pointe and only those who can commit fully should audition. Auditions will be held during the month of November and will include a brief dancing audition along with an interview, both of which will be conducted by Miss Heather and Miss Courtney. The decision to allow a dancer to advance en pointe will be made and communicated with the dancer/parents within 24 hours of the audition via email.

Should a dancer not be allowed to advance, they may re-audition the following November. As previously stated, they may advance to Level V with their classmates. **As with ballet and Company placement, pointe placement will not necessarily reflect ballet level placement. If a dancer is not physically strong enough to advance to the next level of pointe training, they will not be permitted to do so. This is to prevent injury.** A rubric will be constructed and will be available for viewing in the office. To ensure that each dancer is physically ready to advance into the next stage of pointe training, there will be **Beginner, Intermediate, and Advanced** placement levels for dancers en pointe.

The formation of this program was done with great thought and care for the advancement and growth of CAD dancers. If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to contact Miss Courtney. As always, comments and questions are welcome.