

Now for the Fun Part! Choosing your Dance Studio

With a clear understanding of your family's needs in a dance studio, you're in an excellent position to compare your choices. Use the 'philosophy' you came up with in the previous exercise and the process below to discover the best studio for your family.

The DECIDE Process for Finding the Best Dance School:

1. **Define your 'perfect' studio** – You've done this already (yay)! Keep the 1-2 sentence philosophy you came up with in the first worksheet near to you through this exercise. Your goal is to determine the studio in your area that comes *closest* to that philosophy.
2. **Establish which are the best candidates in your area** – Using DanceClassDirectory.com or a search engine, search by location and list below the dance studios within a range you are willing to drive. Consider that carpooling with other dance parents may be a possibility. Also consider that your child, as they grow, may end up taking two or more classes per week.

List each studio's name and website address:

3. **Contemplate the advantages and disadvantages of each** – Using the expanded listings on DanceClassDirectory.com or the studios' own websites, take notes on the criteria that are important to you.

You'll get the general feel of each dance studio from their website, but also take a look through their webpages to consider the following:

- whether each studio is recreational, competitive, or pre-professional,
- types of classes offered,
- facility pros & cons,
- faculty experience,
- class size, and
- other factors that came to light when you defined your 'perfect' studio

Also factor in testimonials, both those on the websites and what you may have heard from friends, schoolmates, and neighbors.

Your Notes: _____

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4. **Identify the best option after considering the advantages and disadvantages** – You'll likely be able to narrow it down quickly to two or three top choices. Do so if possible. Then come up with a couple of questions about classes or prices, and call each studio to get the answers. This allows you not only to get more specifics about the studios, but also to experience their customer service firsthand.

Finalist #1 _____

Finalist #2 _____

Finalist #3 _____

Question #1 _____

Question #2 _____

Taking into account all you've thought about and learned (plus your gut feelings), decide which studio has come out on top.

5. **Determine whether it's truly the right studio for you by comparing it to the definition of your perfect studio** – Studios often state their mission statements or philosophies right on their website. Comparing theirs to yours is an easy way to get a sense of whether you're a good fit.

The Winner! _____

6. **Enroll in dance classes** – You've made your choice, and now it's time to enroll. Many dance studios have a 'first class free' offer. You may have noticed printable coupons on the studio websites when you compared your top choices. If not, it's certainly worth inquiring about when you contact the dance studio.

Congratulations! You've made a thoughtful and well-informed decision to find your best dance studio. Best wishes to you and the dancers in your family.