



# Tutus & Tap Shoes

June 20, 2008

Whether they're in tutus, or tap shoes these little dancers are showing their stuff. Parents TV correspondent Anne Ebeling is on the scene at **apple seeds**.



Anna Kaiser teaches ballet and basic tap to little ones 18 months to 5 years old as part of a program called Creation Station.

"They learn different dances," Kaiser says. "Some of the classes, the 2/3s classes incorporate both ballet and tap. So it's a half hour section of ballet and then a 15 minute section of tap. We not only incorporate the ballet movement and the ballet vocabulary, they're able to recite, I would say, 10 different positions by the end of class. But they are also able to move freely and just really enjoy dancing and being creative in the space. So it doesn't just have to do with learning ballet at a young age, but also just exploring movement."



Krista Rowe says dance class is a great way to get you and your little on out of the house.

"I'm a stay at home mom for the most part with her," Rowe says. "And so I think all of these classes for women like me are a way for them to socialize, to get out and for them to play really. And, it's also a great way for stay at home moms to meet other people and you know to avoid going absolutely crazy at home."



And Krista loves seeing her daughter Leia get moving

"It's a great exercise in learning to listen," she says. "And even the things that if she won't participate in class, I find when we get home she'll do the moves, she'll do her plies and passes and perform for her father."



Mom Mariella Shirak says her daughter Arianna brings the lessons she learns in dance class home as well.

"She has a little tutu at home and she's always asking for the tutu when the music's on," Shirak says. "She's like, 'tutu, tutu,' and so she'll put on the tutu and she'll dance around."

Which shows that Arianna is actually absorbing what she does in dance class.

"What I loved about it was they actually have to listen and pay attention and at first I was hesitant, I was, 'oh, I don't know is she really going to pay attention.' And by the end she got more accustomed to it. She was actually listening. And she'll do it at home too. Some of the stuff. So she'll do some of the positions. Really more she is paying attention."



Creation Station classes take place several times per week here at apple seeds, a place for children to learn and play in New York City.

"apple seeds is an all in one play space for families with children 0 to 5. We have a bunch of businesses under one roof," says Schlanger.

Co-Funders Allison Schlanger and Alison Qualter Berna made ballet a priority when choosing the classes apple seeds would offer.

"The reason why we took ballet," says Qualter Berna, "in large part people do it as a memory of their own childhood taking ballet. But there really is no more beautiful thing, more fun thing, more sort of hilarious thing than to see little children coming in their tutus and their tiaras."

The dress-up factor at this age for young girls and young boys is tremendous. And so when you can actually have a class that allows them to do that, and actually encourages them to do that, it's a joy for you as a parent, but it's so much fun for the child."

But your child doesn't have to have a tutu to get started in dance classes. All they need is a pair of tap shoes or ballet slippers and of course, the desire to dance.

"The leotard is more not necessary, but ballet shoes actually help to keep the traction," says Shirak. "Cause when we actually didn't have them she'd kind of slipped. When she was just on socks. So the ballet shoes are definitely helpful."

When choosing a dance class for your child, Anna says to look for something fun and exciting.



"Definitely something that's still fun for the child so that they enjoy doing it and it's not too serious in terms of just learning technique and positions," says Kaiser. "That they really just enjoy moving because that's what's going to keep them dancing throughout their life. And as they get older, look for a place that has a diverse dance background. So not only ballet, but tap or jazz or swing dancing or you know different things to keep them excited. Versatile."

Because while it might not look like much now, your little one could more than just getting a tutu from taking dance class.



"It's being comfortable and confident with yourself," says Kaiser. "And some people and some kids will take that on and go further with it and become dancers because they really love it. And some will just use that confidence to be a capable person in the world in many different aspects."