

## **Boys and Ballet**

Caring parents strive to encourage and respect their children's individuality. Some children have very strong feelings about the activities they want to participate in. From an early age, boys are taught that dancing is for girls, or that boys don't dance. Male dancers are sometimes viewed as unusual, making it difficult for parents of boys to encourage participation in dance.

Parents must remember that dancing is a physically beneficial activity for both boys and girls. Dancing helps build strength, muscle tone, balance, and coordination. Some boys decide early on that they would rather take dance lessons in a studio than play sports on a field. The following tips may help your son deal with frustrations he may feel as a male dancer.

- **Encourage his motivations to dance.**

Your son may be truly talented as a dancer. Encourage him to try several styles of dance to find out what he really loves.

- **Give your son male role models.**

Take him to see professional male dancers on stage or rent movies with men in dancing roles. Show him that men really do dance, and they dance well.

- **Compare dance to other sports.**

Remind your son that dancing is a physical sport that requires lots of strength.

- **Let him choose to stop dancing.**

If your son suddenly begins to struggle with peer pressure, allow him the freedom to try something else. If he truly wants to be a dancer, he will find his way back as he matures.