



The Brock Dance Research Lab

# EXPERIENCES OF YOUTH DANCERS AND THEIR FAMILIES

Presented by: Dr. Dawn Zinga,  
Natalie Tacuri, and Victoria Dewar

# EXPLORING THE LIVED EXPERIENCES OF YOUNG COMPETITIVE DANCERS



## Where and When?

- 12 dance competitions
- Beginning of 2019 through summer of 2019



## How?

- Series of surveys that could be completed over the weekend of a competition

# EXPLORING THE LIVED EXPERIENCES OF YOUNG COMPETITIVE DANCERS



## Who?

- 464 dancers
- 682 parents and grandparents
- 112 different studios



## Age?

- Dancers: 8 – 18 years old
- Parents: 23 – 65 years old
- Grandparents: 65 – 75 years old

# DANCER EXPERIENCES

Hours of dance per week

**30 minutes to 35 hours**

Performances on stage

**1 performance to 100+ performances**





# WHY DO DANCERS CHOOSE TO DANCE?

Dance makes  
me happy

I like the  
challenge

Dance is fun

Dance is  
stimulating

Dance is  
interesting

I like to perform

# FROM THE DANCERS' PERSPECTIVE: WHAT IS IMPORTANT AND WHO IS IT IMPORTANT TO?

	I think that it is very important (to the dancer)	I think it is very important to my dance teacher	I think it is very important to my mom	I think it is very important to my dad
That I win at competition	22%	24%	6%	8%
That I perform well at competition	67%	56%	26%	12%
That I improve from competition	73%	65%	26%	20%
That I perform well at recital	51%	49%	22%	14%
That I practice my dance routines	56%	79%	32%	11%





# THE STUDIO ENVIRONMENT



**97%**

enjoy working  
with their  
teammates

**68%**

felt their teachers  
provide them  
with choices and  
options

**81%**

felt understood  
by their dance  
teachers

**85%**

felt their dance  
teachers convey  
confidence in their  
ability to do well

**61%**

felt their dance  
teachers try to  
understand how they  
see things before  
suggesting a new way

**76%**

felt that their  
dance teachers  
encourage them to  
ask questions

**56%**

felt their dance  
teachers listen to  
how they would like  
to do things

# THE COMPETITION EXPERIENCE

77%

of dancers said their score is important to them



92%

of dancers said the judges' comments are important to them

## COSTUMES

Most dancers like the way their bodies looked in their costumes

Most dancers thought their dance costumes were just right for their body



# PARENTS' EXPERIENCES IN DANCE

**61%**

nervous or totally nervous when their child performs on stage

**99%**

enjoy or totally enjoy watching their child dance

**15%**

upset or totally upset if their child made a mistake during a dance

**52%**

upset or totally upset if their child could not dance anymore

**89%**

enjoy or totally enjoy recitals

**9%**

upset or totally upset if another dancer made a mistake during one of their child's dances

**87%**

enjoy or totally enjoy competition

# CHOOSING A STUDIO

93% of parents said they were happy with their current studio

Quality Teachers

Supportive  
Team Members

Well Organized  
Studio

Good  
Communication

Attitudes toward  
Competition

Low Drama

Space for  
Practicing



# CHANGES

Receive clearer, more consistent communication from studio owners

"Better office organization"

"More time for warmup"

"Working on choreography earlier in the season"

"More space for large group practices"

"More encouragement for teamwork and conflict management"



"The full commitment that is made to fostering a love of dance and an attitude where all dancers push themselves to achieve their very best."

"How everyone cares about each other. **It is like a second family!**"

"The way the kids build each other up. They are always cheering for each other."

"We love our teachers and studio director. They are fabulous, age appropriate and encourage our kids to be the best they can be."

## VALUE



**THE FINAL REPORT FOR THIS STUDY CAN BE  
ACCESSED AT**

[https://brocku.ca/dphwb/wp-  
content/uploads/sites/60/Dance-Research-Final-  
Report.pdf](https://brocku.ca/dphwb/wp-content/uploads/sites/60/Dance-Research-Final-Report.pdf)

