

STOP EVERYTHING!!!! Grab a highlighter, or a more accessible item like a broken yellow crayon. This letter is your personal show assistant. Unfortunately, it reads a bit more like an appliance handbook than a novel, but the following will provide you with a lot of sanity in the short weeks until the show. The Best way to keep happy and calm on show day is to read the following letter, mark important dates and times on your calendar, PLAN AHEAD and FOLLOW these directions. With everyone's tension on high, it is imperative that these rules are followed. I read recently that directing a show is like putting on a wedding with 100 brides.....and their moms :) Multiply that by two and you get an idea of what we have to deal with. While I am usually accessible at the studio, at the show my undivided attention is needed on stage, and last-minute surprises (missing costume parts, needed safety pins etc....) need to be handled without my direction. To help you out I have included my top-secret recital tips. These are tried and true not only from my years of experience as a dancer, but also as a director and a mom. So, read, ask questions (before rehearsal day) and follow the leader.

**Picture Day** One is one of the biggest days of our year is Picture Day... We hold no classes this day (check the online calendar for date) and turn our dance studio into a portrait studio. My willing assistant and I are also stationed at the desk. This is your chance to get tickets (after you pay your patron fee), ask questions, turn in all of those program ads, and pay the piper. Our photographer, Kandace is as calm as can be while turning your children into picture perfect ballerinas and hip-hop divas. I can't tell you what a beautiful job she does. No portrait package orders are placed on picture day. The following week, Kandace will be at the studio with portrait sheets available for purchase. Additional orders can be placed then as well! Don't miss out on these special memories! We have one of the nicest recital programs by far. It is a very important tradition for me to carry on. Please ask to see an old copy if you are not familiar with our format. For an insertion fee of \$23 (payable to Fairgrieve) your child can have their photo in our program. It is such a nice surprise for them to see their shining face among the other dancers in the studio, as well as a beautiful remembrance for family and friends. Advertisements from businesses and well wishes may be included as well for \$20.00. Spaces are 2"x 2". Families wishing to purchase space for both an ad and a photo may do so at a rate of \$38.00. All ads must be turned in on picture day. NO EXCEPTIONS!

**Patron Fee** We don't charge per ticket for admittance to our recital. Each family is charged a patron fee of \$85. The patron fee is used to cover the rental, staging, and expenses of our show. After the fee and any outstanding balances are satisfied you are welcome to as many tickets as needed. Admission to our show is by invitation only. Seating is general admission and tickets are available on picture day.

**Show Video**.... A reminder that NO videos or flash photos can be taken during the show!!!! Each year a few rouge videographers sneak in their equipment. I've even seen an iPad or two, or five:) Be advised that patrons will be asked to put cameras away. Our show is Professionally Videotaped, and your family will be provided with steaming access to all of the performances, so sit back and enjoy! The cameras are not only a huge distraction to our performers but impair their safety. Cell video and online posting of dances to social media is also prohibited. Thanks for your co-operation! Taping of the rehearsal is permitted.

Here they are! The answers to all of your rehearsal and show day questions! Please make sure you have the proper tights and shoe color. We will have order forms for tights available soon. No jewelry. No underwear—it always peeks out from under the costumes. Nude Leos are a great option for under costumes. Check the online calendar for show and rehearsal dates as well as times. Cast lists are posted at the studio on picture day and the following week for proofing. The show takes place in just a few weeks so your attendance in class is very important. As always, admission to our show is by invitation only. Tickets will be available on picture day and may be picked up as soon as your patron fee and other outstanding balances have been satisfied. Please double check the parent portal before submitting your final payment. Outstanding balances **MUST** be paid by May 10th as it is much too confusing to try to collect money at the show. Please make sure you have the right color tights, and shoes for the class numbers. **TIGHTS:** PINK for ballet, pre-school, intro (Q: “Miss Jenny, my costume is yellow, why pink tights?” A: It is very rare for a ballerina to wear white or sheer tights. Pink often looks nude on the stage, and with the pink shoes provides the illusion of a longer leg). **SHEER TO WAIST SUN-TAN** for tap and jazz All ballet need PINK shoes-leather or canvas with bows tucked in. Younger tap classes need **BLACK** tap shoes with **ELASTIC** or buckles in them not bows. Preschool classes will receive decorative bows to tie or pin to the elastic. Sr. class will wear black tap oxfords. Jazz classes will wear black jazz ox-fords not hip-hop shoes. Hip-hop classes wear black hip-hop sneakers. Jr. and Sr. Classes check with your instructor for requirements.

**Rehearsal** will be LONG but efficient! In perspective, a sports invitational or tournament is probably longer. It is a practice, not a show. The point of a rehearsal is to set lights and staging. If it is run quickly, something is wrong. It is not a time to re-teach dances, but it is a time to adjust to a stage with different sounds, lights and dimensions than we have been working with all year and to program our lighting. Once our rehearsal time has been set, I ask that you **DO NOT ARRIVE** unreasonably **EARLY**. The time that our stage crew and I use before you arrive is **VERY** valuable. We need to set lights, test sound, and dress the stage. Students need to be in full makeup, hair done, costumes on, and seated quietly in the auditorium at the start of rehearsal. From here, I will make several important announcements and reinforce the procedures addressed here. As to hair and make-up, older students are well aware of their hair requirements. If you need help, ask before show day. It is really quite easy if you know a few tricks! Also, please be prepared, bring your own hair nets, hair pins, bobby pins, hair spray, hair gel, make up, safety pins.... I cannot stress this enough. We have several people willing to help, but please remember they are preparing their own children as well and do not have extra supplies. Pre-school and kindergarten students may wear their hair as they see fit. **ALL** ballet classes grade 1 and up must be in a bun unless directed otherwise. If your student’s hair is too short, don’t panic! We’ll see what can be done. At dress rehearsal you may leave when your numbers are done. To keep the show running smoothly we ask that you bring your pre-school, kindergarten and elementary aged children to the hall by the stage 4 numbers before their dance, leave them with our staff, return to your seat, and return to pick them up immediately after their number. We **WILL NOT** hold any number for a missing dancer. We ask that you refrain from “hollering” to our dancers while they are performing. Energetic applause (lots of it) works much better. Every-one is excited and talkative, but we cannot have noise or running. Save all of the energy for the stage. At the show, all of the same rules apply. All older dancers must be lined up in the hall four dances before their number. As we have done in the past, **ON SHOW DAY**, all pre-school and elementary age dancers will need to be seated with a guardian in the upper tier of the auditorium. No dancers

will be permitted on the main auditorium floor. **THIS WILL ALLOW OUR AUDIENCE TO ENJOY THE SHOW WITHOUT DISRUPTION!** It is very important that we leave the school cleaner than we found it. We have use of the auditorium as well as rooms for dressing. School is still in session, so they need to be **CLEAN!** This means **ABSOLUTELY NO** food or drink in any of these rooms. Schools are very strict about this and many schools will not rent out for dance recitals for this reason. Also, please take **ALL** costume parts, shoes, hangers, etc.... home with you. It is a very unpleasant surprise to find something missing on show day.

**The Big Day!** Students watching the show must be seated in the upper auditorium. When students are in the upper tier, their costumes **MUST** be covered up. **ONCE AGAIN, NO COSTUMES ARE PERMITTED PAST THE DRESSING AREA!** The **BEST** night for school aged students to watch the show is on dress rehearsal. The distractions and excitement are much less intense. Our auditorium holds 600+ people. It might get crowded. Please be understanding. Seating is on a first come first served basis. **THEATER DOORS 30 MINUTES BEFORE SHOWTIME.** Do not try to enter early. Again, we use this time to prepare. The magic of the stage is unveiled when the curtain opens. Up until that time, we are **VERY BUSY.** The curtain is open, stage lights are being changed, and the crew is at work to make the show run smoothly. I know everyone wants the seat of their choice, but do not save seats by holding them with signs or tape. This is a difficult rule for me to enforce, but we will. Please be considerate and oblige. Quite honestly, I usually view shows from the last row and have never regretted it. Surprisingly, I have also never had trouble getting a seat. Just a note, but a **VERY IMPORTANT ONE...**remember, that all of our dancers show a lot of courage up on the stage. They are all wonderful children who love to dance. Please encourage them and congratulate them! The ability to perform in any capacity provides great gifts, and most certainly leaves behind lasting memories. Your children feed off of your emotions of the day. With five children, countless costumes, and show details, I can tell you that being calm, happy, and excited are the way to go!!! Stress causes anxiety, fear and tears. As adults, we need to keep them in check. If your child (or someone else's) forgets an item, falls, or is missing a costume piece, don't fret! In the grand scheme of things, the kids are aiming to do their best, and we as their teachers and fellow classmates couldn't be prouder of them!!! If you have any questions, please ask. Many of them can be answered before the show. If any arise at rehearsal or on show day, please **KINDLY** ask one of the backstage assistants. They are a seasoned group of ladies who have run this for years and are the best in the business:) One being my 80-year-old mom...the queen of dance moms with 41 years of lining up dancers and tucking in ballet bows! My helpers can handle most anything or will check with me.

**Some secret show tips** from my years of running a show with three performing daughters! It is Picture day and things are calm. All of my girl's costumes are hung on hangers with their accessories in an attached baggie. Do I have a mega closet to house their show gear? No! They have a cheap garment rack from Wal-Mart! They have been hanging their costumes for weeks. Each girl also has a baggie with 2 pairs of pink tights and two pairs of tan. They also have a bag of extras that goes show to show with us. All of these tights are packed away and only come out only for shows. Each girl also has a nude leotard...a wonderful thing for girls with fast costume changes. Finally, I don't go to a show or picture day without a trio of garment bags. Each one fully stocked with their tights, and costumes. The only thing the girls share is **THE BOX.** It is invaluable to them. Inside are the absolute **MUSTS!** Hair nets, bobby pins, hair pins, hair gel,

hair spray, body spray, make up, brushes, flip clips, a comb, a sewing kit, duct tape (we have actually used this), Downy wrinkle releaser (who wants to iron a tutu) and safety pins...all brand new and all just for the show! THE BOX is a clear plastic shoe box, also from Wal-Mart, clearly labeled with the girl's names. O.K. grab the dance shoes, and off to picture day we go! The beauty of this system is that when we get home, everything is ready for the show. We unpack nothing! Nothing gets used unless we are on stage, everything is show specific. The contents of THE BOX are cheap to purchase. We have been using them for years! The only extras that we do for rehearsal and show day are to toss in the garment rack and a separate list for each girl of their numbers in order. When we unpack backstage, each costume is hung in order and their list taped to the rack. They are pretty good at using the hair spray, hair nets, and bobby pins, so my girls can look like dancers in just a few minutes. If you need help with hair, ask me prior to the recital at the studio and I can give you a quick lesson. The whole show process is really quite simple, be prepared, start early (not the night before), and don't panic! The most important thing you can do is plan ahead.

A BETTER THAN PERFECT DANCE Or.....Sam's epic falls My junior pointe class had rehearsed really hard all year, tackling some pretty tough choreography! Would they be able to pull off the hard section??? I watched with a smile on my face as they sailed through it like we hoped they would. We were on easy street when, slip...a dancer was on her knees. The dancer was my daughter Sam. Never once in class had the step been an issue. Why was the dance better than perfect???? It was how she got up. She looked right at me in the wings, straight into my eyes, and smiled. She knew it was o.k. She was confident that there would be no yelling, no screaming, and no carrying on when she stepped off stage. And I was more than proud in her for rising after the fall. There are three performances that go through each dancer's mind. The one the practice for, the one they give, and the one they wish they had left on the stage. While I'm sure Sam wishes the grand fall hadn't been left on the stage, the lessons we shared about perspective, confidence, and encouragement were taught by her epic fall, and reinforced by her smile and my "it's OK". Here's hoping for a better than perfect show! We are SO PROUD of you all!!!!