



Tri-Community Dance Club (TCDC)

Rising Stars Youth Dance Assistant

Program Handbook

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(Adapted using material from Academy of Performing Arts)

Email: tricomunitydanceclub@gmail.com

Website: www.tri-communitydanceclub.com

Tri-Community Dance Club
Rising Stars
Youth Dance Assistant Program

TCDC Mission:

Sharing the spirit, values and practices of dance through education, presentation and creation in our communities for everyone's benefit.

TCDC Vision:

Dance is a vibrant and integral aspect of the social and cultural fabric of our communities with high quality educational, performance, and creative opportunities available for all. TCDC works with communities as a hub for dance across Northern Saskatchewan and is a force for enriching the health and well-being of residents, building community, and advancing Truth and Reconciliation.

TCDC Values:

Equity: *opportunities are for everyone.*

Access: *no barriers to our programs and services.*

Participation: *being involved in whatever way you choose.*

Respect: *everyone's perspectives and experiences are valued.*

Imagination: *its spirit underpins all our work.*

Passion: *it inspires our commitment.*

Sustainable: *here for the long term.*

Collaboration: *to work willingly with everyone who shares our values and goals.*

TCDC Code of Ethics and Beliefs:

TCDC is a community of dancers, staff, and parents who hold our relationships with one another, all art forms (dance, theater, visual arts, music, etc.), and the values of the work we do in high regard. It is an honour to participate in our community for the performing arts. These ethical standards are here to guide our work, and relationships, and are what we agree to demonstrate in our work with TCDC.

Integrity: *To be a person who leads by example and honors commitments, to be a trustworthy person other people can rely and depend upon. Any conflicts of interest or concerns shall be disclosed to the board of directors.*

Leadership: *To be a person who represents high levels of personal integrity, leadership, and responsibility for oneself and others. A person who has the courage and willingness to face issues and concerns with maturity and dignity.*

Responsibility: *To respect and adhere to the policies and procedures of the rental space, or the organizers of any conference, workshop, or competition. We ensure that the spaces in which we teach and dance are cared for and maintained, we help one another, and ensure garbage, recycling, and lost and found items are placed within the appropriate places.*

Professionalism: *To uphold our professional values and standards of conduct both in the community, on social media, within relationships, and in dance classes. Working relationships with colleagues in all areas of the field are based on mutual respect, fairness and open communication. Any conflict or disagreements shall be dealt with respectfully, judiciously and democratically. I will deal directly with the individual with whom I have a disagreement, and to not discuss the issue with other board members or parents. Any serious issues will be documented I will seek support from the board chair.*

Inclusivity: *Dance is for EVERY body. To ensure that the dance class environment is welcoming of all children and families regardless of their socioeconomic status, gender, race, ethnicity, age, body shape, and culture. Every child is entitled to the best dance education and shall be embraced by the group. There is ZERO tolerance for bullying of any kind, whether it be in person, on social media, or texting.*

**These ethical standards have been adapted from The Dance Project (September 2022).*

Dance Genres:

Ballet – *A graceful form of dance done to classical music. Ballet also includes character and free movement. Ballet training improves posture, flexibility and strength aiding all other dance forms. The TCDC follows the Royal Academy of Dance.*

Jazz – *An energetic form of dance which includes jumps, turns, and kicks to fast paced music. Jazz improves coordination, flexibility and it's fun! It's an excellent form of exercise. TCDC follows the Canadian Dance Teachers Association syllabus.*

Tap – *A rhythm-based form of dance where the dancer also is a musician! Students wear hard soled shoes with metal taps attached to the ball and the heel to make rhythm patterns on the*

floor. Tap can be an excellent form of exercise. TCDC follows the Canadian Dance Teachers Association syllabus.

Modern/Contemporary – *Modern dancing is characterized by its versatility and covers a range of techniques and styles. This free-flowing style pushes movement to the boundaries while incorporating the whole body. This style is danced in bare feet.*

Hip Hop – *Dance to your favorite hip hop music in an upbeat and high energy class. This popular style of dance can be found on TV commercials, music videos and movies. TCDC focuses on the Street Jazz style where students learn isolations, rhythms, poppin' and lockin' and much more.*

Breakdance – *originally called b-boying or b-girling, an athletic style of street dance originating from the African American community in the U.S. Breaking encourages developing a sense of self, expression, creativity, and offers individual and team options. Breaking involves diverse variations mainly consisting of five kinds of movements: top rock, foot work, power moves, freezes, and get down.*

Acro - *A combination of dance and gymnastics. Learn how to properly execute acrobatic tricks and develop dance skills in this fun class. Acro improves strength, agility, flexibility and physical control.*

Youth Dance Assistant Program

Role Description

TCDC's Youth Dance Assistant Program is an in- studio training program that gives students the opportunity to learn the skills and techniques necessary to be successful dance instructors and leaders. TCDC will choose Youth Assistants based on the following qualifications:

- Attendance (own dance classes and assistant classes regularly, and on time).
- Attitude/Maturity.
- Displays a natural love and passion for dance.
- Displays a desire to learn and grow as a dance instructor.

To apply to become a Youth Instructor Assistant, the following requirements must be met. The applicant must:

- Be 11 years of age or older.
- Complete the application form.
- Attend a short orientation and quarterly meetings throughout the dance season.

Selections are made based on application, dance experience, conduct in classes, and availability of classes. Youth dance assistants will be assigned one to three classes for the year. The expectation is that the student is signing up to assist for the full year.

Youth Dance Assistant Duties may include

- Help with attendance
- Walk among the students as your teacher leads the class:
 - Making gentle corrections,
 - Assisting a struggling dancer,
 - Refocusing students who are distracted or not following instructions.
- Lead certain warm-ups or exercises while your teacher:
 - Handles the above tasks,
 - Steps out for a moment,
 - Handles a more severe discipline issue,
 - Observes you in order to give some tips,
- Help children during shoe changes, bathroom or water breaks
- Hand out props or set up items to be used in class
- Keep an eye out for potential hazards like untied shoelaces or poor spacing/awareness while children are dancing
- Be a source of positive and enthusiastic energy in the class
- Keep students on task and focused
- Offer encouragement to dance students during the class
- Help to line up students and to keep them in their line
- Lead or participate in choreography/recital dances
- Answer basic questions that parents may have
- Work seamlessly with your teacher by *anticipating* his/her needs so that together you can provide a fun and supportive learning environment for younger dancers

Tips for how to be a great Youth Dance Assistant

- **Don't wait to be asked** *especially* when you've been assigned small tasks that are done for each lesson. Developing this awareness is important if you want to be a great assistant.
- **Be discreet.** When you see a student that needs your help or correction, address or pull them aside quietly so that you don't distract other class members.

- **Don't be a distraction.** Follow the lead of your teacher. If he/she is trying to get the class to pay attention, that is your job too. Unless you are leading or teaching, you are there to help keep the students' attention on your teacher or on what they are doing (not to pull focus to yourself).
- **Refrain from doing complicated dance moves or practicing steps that the instructor is not teaching.** Children will imitate you as they look up to you. If they see you doing dance moves, they may also attempt them. Please ensure that you are following the instructor's guidance regarding the movement and dance steps so that children are staying within their skills and abilities and maintaining safety.
- **Be mindful of the virtual environment where applicable.** Some of our classes are taught virtually. We need to work hard to ensure we are maintaining class engagement with our lead instructor and we are still following instructions/lesson plans that they prepare. It can be challenging for children to stay focused and listen in a virtual class, so it is important that you support the dancers to follow the instructor as best as you can and you remain focused on the instructor as well.
- **Make corrections with a compliment.** For instance, say something like "Anna, you are pointing your toes nicely, try to keep your knee straight when you tendu. You are being a great listener today!"
- **Offer positive reinforcement** instead of yelling or complaining about bad behavior. Many assistants are helping in classes with young children, an age where having FUN is the biggest priority. Playful approaches are often best.
- **Be prepared and on time.** Being prepared includes having the proper clothes or shoes with you to knowing the exercises or dances that you are supposed to lead.
- **Ask questions, give suggestions, and save the silliness until after class whenever possible.** Your teacher is counting on being able to focus on their class of students without worrying about you (or your behavior) at the same time. You will be the focus when it's your turn in class. Questions for clarification or helping everyone understand instruction are welcome.
- **Show your enthusiasm without being silly.** Use a bright tone of voice (think of making your voice slightly higher) when you talk to the children, use a lot of energy when you demonstrate, and smile a lot. This will show your enthusiasm and still keep the children focused and paying attention. You can have fun as long as you are not distracting the dancers from what they are doing.

- **Be ready for the unexpected and try to handle things maturely when they do.** If you work with very young children, you must be prepared for the occasional “accident”. You can also expect that sometimes children will say some pretty funny or strange things. Sometimes the young children will want to be close to you, you might have to gently ask them to give you personal space because we need our bodies for dance. Again, watch your teacher for how to respond in an appropriate, kind, and respectful manner.
- **Know when to refer a parent to your teacher.** If you are approached by a parent with a question and are not sure how to answer, don’t make it up. If it seems the parent is upset, it is not your job to deal with the problem, let your instructor address this. If you are uncomfortable or unsure with parent questions, please pass it on to the instructor!
- **Give corrections and discipline with confidence.** It can be kind of strange to suddenly be “in charge” when you are normally a dance student yourself. But even though the children in your class probably look up to you, they are not likely to listen to you if you don’t speak clearly and firmly. Sandwiching corrections and being positive may help you to feel like you are not being mean or yelling. Try to avoid making requests in the form of a question (For ex: “Are you ready to put the props away?”). This gives the impression that they have an option to say no. (Instead try “Alright, it’s time to put the props away!” in a way that sounds as if *you* are excited to be moving on to the next activity as well).
- **Communicate clearly with your teacher.** If you have a question, ask at an appropriate time. If you are not sure what is expected of you, don’t be afraid to ask or find out how you can improve.
- **Take care of yourself!** You are probably a busy teen or pre-teen with homework, dance classes, and other activities in which you are involved. If you are well rested, you will be more useful to your teacher and be more energetic in your classes (all of them). If you are missing sleep to fit everything in, maybe you should discuss this with your parents and teacher. Adding an apprenticeship to your activities may not be in your best interest right now. Please make sure to talk with your instructor if there are any concerns or if the assistant position feels too much.

What are some benefits of being a Dance Assistant?

Being a Dance Assistant is an important job! It comes with perks as well! At TCDC, student assistants get paid, via credit to their studio accounts. They gain leadership skills, responsibility, and sometimes the inspiration to become a teacher themselves! This is often the first job many of our students will have, and if there’s one thing we all know to be true, it’s that there’s nothing better than doing a job you love!

Compensation for Youth Dance Assistants

First year assistants are in the learning stages of how the classes are run and are learning what is expected of them. In this apprentice situation the student will only be expected to help with one class per week, and no monetary compensation is given.

Students that have completed one full year of being an assistant and are between the ages of 12 and 14 will be eligible for a discount on their fees. The discount will be 1 free month for each class assisted (up to a maximum of three months for three classes). It is expected that youth dance assistants be at all classes for their assigned session for the full year. Absences should be communicated in advance so that alternate arrangements can be made for that class. Should the hours not be completed during the year, students may be required to repay the discount.

Students that have completed one full year of being an assistant, and are over the age of 15, will be eligible to be paid.

All youth dance assistants are responsible for tracking and submitting their hours on a monthly basis.

Additional Notes

There are a limited number of openings for Youth Dance Assistants each year. There are many variables that go into the placement and scheduling of assistants. We will call you once the schedule is in place, if you have been selected. Thank you for your interest in becoming a TCDC Dance Assistant. Feel free to talk with us if you have any questions. If you are not selected for a Dance Assistant position this season, we encourage you to reapply next year!

Social Media/Confidentiality Agreement

I acknowledge that I have read and agree that the use of Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, Snapchat, TikTok, and any other online social media platforms are common. TCDC trusts that you understand and accept that you are a mentor and leader to your fellow students. Be careful and thoughtful about how you present yourself in online social networks. You may have identified yourself as a TCDC Class Assistant. Please ensure that your profile and related content are consistent with how you wish to present yourself to TCDC's students, their parents, as well as TCDC Members. Class Assistants are not allowed to post inappropriate photos, statuses, and comments that directly and negatively impact the way parents, students, and TCDC members perceive you. If you are unsure if a post is appropriate or not, please ask prior to making it socially accessible. Class Assistants should assume that their posts will be seen and read by fellow students, parents, and TCDC members.

Keep in mind the following when considering whether to share information on any social media platform:

- You do not have permission to reveal any information that compromises TCDC.

- You are not to share personal information about the TCDC members, your students or their families, your fellow Class Assistants, or anything that is owned by and/or confidential to them or TCDC.
- Class Assistants should neither claim nor imply that they are speaking on behalf of TCDC.
- Never post anything that could compromise the self-esteem of your students. If you have a difficult class on a particular day, do not post that information on your Facebook page. It could hurt your students, and that is the opposite of everything that TCDC stands for.
- Refrain from posting items that could reflect negatively on you or TCDC, including comments or other posts about drug or alcohol abuse, profanity, off-color or sexual humor, and other inappropriate conduct.
- Don't use ethnic slurs, personal insults, or obscenities.
- Do not pose or show off any part of your body that you would not want your own parents seeing.
- Respect the law, including those laws governing defamation, discrimination, harassment, and copyright and fair use.
- Class Assistants should never post negative comments about other students, schools or teachers. Also, do not post negative comments about school activities such as competitions, conventions, and performances or about the directors of those events. Make sure that your online activities do not interfere with your Class Assistant responsibilities.

By clicking below you are acknowledging that you have read and understand the above and will hold yourself to these ethics as a TCDC Dance Assistant.