



*Is Chinese Dance Right For Me Or My Child?*



CAAM  
Chinese Dance  
Theater

800 TRANSFER ROAD  
ST PAUL, MN 55411  
E-MAIL: [admin@caamcdt.org](mailto:admin@caamcdt.org)  
[www.caamcdt.org](http://www.caamcdt.org)

**Welcome!** If you are reading this page, you must have been exposed to the excitements of Chinese Dance at some point. Now you are wondering if Chinese Dance is the right choice for you or your child.

Traditional Chinese Dance is an ancient, beautiful art form. Think of it as ballet, modern dance, rhythmic gymnastics, martial arts, acrobatics, and more all rolled into one! Training is rigorous but rewarding; challenging, but fun; and age-appropriate. Students who master Chinese Dance are elite athletes who often find their training translating to other venues, such as soccer, track, and gymnastics, as well as to other dance forms, such as ballet and dance line. In addition, our students are offered the remarkable opportunity to star and perform in a professional-level production every year at the O'Shaughnessy Auditorium in front of thousands of art patrons. They develop poise and self-confidence at a very early age as a consequence.

Second only to the rewards of learning a demanding art form are the costumes! Parents appreciate CAAM CDT's authentic, age-appropriate costumes, most of which are directly imported from China. The students mostly just love dressing up.



**Still wondering if Chinese Dance is right for you or your child?** Read on to learn a few more fundamentals about Chinese Dance instruction at CAAM CDT!



**Basic Training.** Virtually every dance style has its own set of basic training maneuvers—barre exercises, leaps, and turns for ballet and jazz, for example. Although different from ballet, Chinese Dance also relies on basic training in barre exercises, leaps, and turns. Chinese Dance also incorporates acrobatics, tumbling, bearing, flow, and more. There are more than 56 standard

Chinese Basic Training sets, each mapped to a particular style of Chinese dance and philosophy.

Some dance studios offer intensive Basic Training classes separate from their “dance” class. However, this strategy can backfire if students take the “dance” class but not basic training. At CAAM CDT, every class includes Basic Training. The Basic Training maneuvers are intended not only to warm up dancers’ muscles to avoid injury, but also to prepare dancers for the difficult moves of the specific dance they are learning. Depending on the dancer’s age, the dance being learned, and how far the dancers’ techniques have progressed, Basic Training might be as short as 20 minutes or as long as 2 hours. Basic Training is always geared to be age-appropriate. For example, for our youngest dancers, Basic Training typically lasts for no longer than half of the class period, followed by dance instruction and several minutes of joyful play, such as the “eagle game.”

CHECK OUT THE LINKS BELOW FOR EXAMPLES OF OUR STUDENTS IN BASIC TRAINING.

[HTTPS://YOUTU.BE/9KKF-AMZ2BQ](https://youtu.be/9KKF-AMZ2BQ)

[HTTPS://YOUTU.BE/XPCYGH6ZMXK](https://youtu.be/XPCYGH6ZMXK)

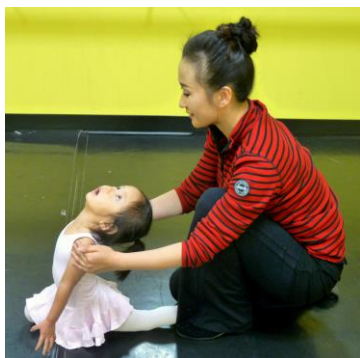


**Within-class breaks.** Although it may seem simple, one of the secrets to CAAM CDT's tight-knit community is the within-class break. Many dance studios offer classes in one-hour blocks or shorter. Students arrive, take the class, and then they leave. There is no time to socialize before, during, or after the class. New

students, especially, may find it hard to make new friends. At CAAM CDT, there is always at least a 10 minute break between Basic Training and dance instruction. This is an ideal, natural time for students to socialize and bond—and bond they do! Our students are kind, friendly, and open.

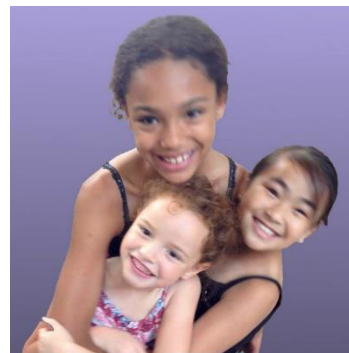
**Prior dance experience.** Prior Chinese Dance experience is not required. Some prior experiences have proven particularly suitable for easing students into Chinese Dance, such as figure skating, ballet, gymnastics and acrobatics. However, students become proficient Chinese Dancers without any of these.

**Age.** Currently our youngest student is 18 months old, and our oldest student is 64 years old! As you can see, the range is wide. For younger children, the ideal starting age is when they can follow instructions from a teacher and pay attention independently. There is no age at which children are “too old” to start. One of our most notable graduates joined CAAM CDT age 25. It was her first dance experience ever; now she dances professionally! If you are uncertain if your child is ready for dance, please email us at [admin@caamcdt.org](mailto:admin@caamcdt.org) to discuss your particular situation.



**Auditions/“Try-outs.”** CAAM CDT does not have “try-outs.” We make every effort to place your child with his or her age peer-group. If your child is new to Chinese Dance, we may recommend private lessons, extra classes, or “homework” (e.g., extra stretches at home) to help him or her catch up.

**Dancing en pointe.** Chinese Dance incorporates incredibly intricate foot movements, but dancing en pointe is not one of them. Students are encouraged to seek an accredited ballet class if they are interested in pursuing this technique.



**Language/Heritage/Gender.** You do not need to speak Chinese or be Chinese to take Chinese Dance. All genders are welcome. All that is required is a willingness to try something new and exciting!

**Costs.** Every student at CAAM CDT receives a tuition subsidy worth approximately \$800-\$1000 per year. Costs to the student average out to approximately \$7-\$9 per hour of instruction, which is highly competitive with costs at other dance studios.

**Scholarships.** Through the generous support of the Stanley and Marvel Chong Memorial Scholarship Fund, CAAM CDT is sometimes able to offer limited, additional financial aid to some students. Calls for applications typically come out in February.

**More Questions?** Please contact us at [admin@caamcdt.org](mailto:admin@caamcdt.org).

**Photo Credits:** Jijun He, Maureen Nelson, Shanda Maddock Wilhelmy, Maren Longbella, CAAM CDT camp counselors