

modern

Encourage self-expression and creativity with this free-flowing dance form.



An introduction to modern dance

Modern dance is a relaxed, free style of dance – very different from ballet. Instead of following set steps and moves, modern dancers make up their own steps, using their moods and emotions as inspiration.

Suitable for: Girls and boys of all ages.

Equipment: None – a leotard, tracksuit or any comfortable clothing is suitable. Dancers usually have bare feet.

Music: Any sort of music which encourages children to express emotions and ideas – jazz, disco, rhythm and blues, classical or pop. You don't always need music but it may help to choose something that suits the style of dance.

Space: Children will need room to move their bodies freely – both on the floor and in the air.

Safety: Make sure the room is clear of objects with sharp edges or things children can trip over. If the children are dancing barefoot, or in tights or socks, make sure the floor isn't too slippery. A little warm up is also important, before any stretches begin, to avoid the risk of pulling a muscle or feeling sore afterwards. Try a few jumps and shakes of the body, tensing and releasing muscles, in time to the music.

modern dancing suggestions

With modern dance the focus is on self-expression, rather than set movements.

To get children started, suggest they think about emotions such as sadness, happiness, anger or excitement. Ask them to move in the way that these emotions 'feel'. Using stiff, floaty, energetic movements or stillness and so on. You can use music to help with the enjoyment.

Then ask them to choose an emotion of their own that they would like to express, and make up a routine around this. Children can do this at home and practice on their own, then perform in front of the rest of the group. They might also like to paint a picture or write some words to accompany the routine. And make their own costume and scenery.

Movements from any of the other dance forms can be incorporated – such as ballet and ballroom. The main thing is for children to use their imaginations and learn to feel confident in expressing their emotions through movement.

