

EASTCOUNTY

PERFORMING ARTS CENTER

BALLET GUIDE

2025- 2026 Season

Welcome To Ballet!

At East County Performing Arts Center our Ballet program is the largest and most comprehensive in the area. We offer 8 levels of Ballet for various ages within each level where dancers will be able to experience both contemporary and classical styles.

PERFORMANCE OPPORTUNITIES

The Ballet Company of East County (BCEC)

The Ballet Company of East County, our esteemed resident company, offers dancers unparalleled opportunities to shine in professional-caliber productions. Audition for two spectacular performances, each fostering artistic growth, storytelling, and technical mastery.

- **The Nutcracker (December):** A cherished ECPAC tradition for over 20 years, this iconic ballet captivates audiences with its magical storytelling and timeless choreography. Dancers age 6 and up in all levels may audition, with rehearsals held outside of regular class time to prepare for this grand holiday production. Participation offers a transformative experience, immersing dancers in a professional performance setting.
- **Alice in Wonderland (Spring):** Our exciting new production brings a whimsical, contemporary flair to the stage. Dancers in all levels 1-6 are assigned class roles, seamlessly integrated into regular class time, ensuring accessibility for all. Dancers in Level 3 and above may audition for featured roles, which require additional rehearsals outside of class. This vibrant production inspires creativity and showcases dancers' versatility as storytellers.

BALLET PROGRAM STRUCTURE AND EXPECTATIONS

Building Ballet Classes are our introductory levels of Ballet. Because we offer multiple age groups, beginning dancers can feel comfortable while learning their basics

Graded Levels of Ballet (Levels 1-6)

Ballet classes emphasize structure, discipline, and technical development—core

traditions essential for mastering this challenging art form. Classes are demanding yet deeply rewarding for students of all ages as they progress.

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Graded Levels of Ballet (Levels 1-6) Cont'd

- **Ballet Levels 1-2:** Dancers advance their vocabulary and solidify basics, building technique, strength, and flexibility. Taking multiple classes per week accelerates progress, though one class is sufficient.
- **Level 3:** The start of our pre-professional program. While not mandatory, two classes per week are highly recommended for advancement.
- **Level 4-6:** For dancers committed to personal growth and interested in pursuing dance beyond high school. Two classes per week are required.

Ballet Evaluations

Dancers in Ballet Level 1 and above receive individual written evaluations in November and May, assessing their progress in ballet. These evaluations help parents, students, and teachers collaborate to enhance technical skills.

Ballet Level Advancement

Advancement decisions are made collectively by the ballet team. Mid-year advancements are rare due to the progressive curriculum. To be considered for advancement, dancers must:

- Maintain consistent attendance.
- Demonstrate technical progression aligned with their level's curriculum.
- Show focus and discipline to meet the next level's expectations.

Repeating a level is common and beneficial, allowing dancers to strengthen foundational skills. Not advancing does not indicate a lack of progress.

Ballet Vocabulary Testing

The Ballet Vocabulary Test, administered in class, requires students to identify demonstrated steps from a list of terms. Mastery of ballet's universal terminology is vital for communication and advancement.

- **When:** Test #1 in November, Test #2 in May.
- **Passing:** Dancers must score 70% or higher. A second attempt is offered if needed. Passing is not required for level advancement but contributes to overall

evaluation.

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Dress Code:

A strict dress code ensures a professional and focused learning environment, reflecting ballet's tradition of discipline and uniformity. Dancers must adhere to the following:

- **Hair:** Secured in a clean ballet bun (no loose scrunchies or hair ties to hold hair in messy bun). Short hair must be pinned away from the face.
- **Leotard Color by Level:**
 - Black: Building Ballet
 - Green: Ballet 1
 - Purple: Ballet 2
 - Red: Ballet 3
 - Blue: Ballet 4
 - Black: Ballet 5 and above
- **Tights:** Pink ballet tights.
- **Shoes:** Ballet shoes in good condition (no holes in toes).
- **Skirt (Optional):** Must be shorter than knee-length.
- **Warm-Ups:** Tight-fitting ballet warm-ups allowed in cold months (no sweatshirts, sweatpants, or baggy clothing).

Class Expectations:

Ballet's tradition of structure and discipline extends to the classroom:

- Arrive 5–10 minutes early (unless coming from another class) to prepare. • Enter with shoes on, ready to start.
- Limit bathroom breaks; use the restroom before class.
- No cell phones, food, or drinks (except water, kept away from the dance area). • Report absences to the ECPAC office, not instructors.

Pointe Shoes:

Pointe training is a prestigious milestone in ballet, reserved for dancers who demonstrate exceptional strength, technique, and dedication. The Ballet Director will invite eligible dancers to begin pointe work, based on a thorough evaluation of readiness. Enrollment in Ballet Level 4 is a prerequisite but does not guarantee pointe training. Both new and existing pointe dancers must meet strict standards to continue, and irregular attendance will result in discontinuation of pointe training.

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To be allowed to train en pointe (new and existing pointe dancers) a dancer must meet the following guidelines:

- Enrollment in Ballet Level 4.
- Minimum age of 12 during the class year.
- Two weekly ballet technique classes plus one weekly pointe class. • Consistent weekly attendance in all required classes (inconsistent attendance will disqualify dancers from continuing pointe training).
- Properly fitted pointe shoes in good condition.
- Commitment to pointe training, including assigned strength exercises and safe practice (e.g., avoiding pointe work outside the classroom).