

# DANCE KIX

Never miss the chance to dance!



## *The Shy Child!*

### Help Your Shy Child Shine!

When a shy child comes into the studio the physical signs are easy to spot - a lowered chin to chest, semi-closed eyes, thumbs and or fingers in mouth, and often darting behind Mum or Dad, clinging to their legs trying to hide. They retreat into a protective shell that can be hard to prise open. Sometimes, it's easy to see in their eyes how desperately they want to join in, but are paralysed on the spot. Whilst at other times the fear is so big that tears are flowing and separation from Mum or Dad is not an option.

Shyness is a personality trait and perhaps could be better labelled as reserved or introverted rather than shy! Regardless of personality, we know as parents that developing confidence in our kids is really important as they grow and move through life's obstacles. We are constantly looking for ways to better equip them with the right tools so they can tackle situations with courage and assurance.

Some kids show signs of shyness from day dot, but what about the bubbly two-year-old who smiles and waves at every stranger, but who at age three turns into a clam? Personality reversal? Before age two, many children are spontaneous. They act before they think, especially in social relations. Between two and four years of age, children go through a second phase of emotional maturity allowing their brains to become more aware of their surroundings and of their social encounters. This is where your bubbly toddler who smiles and waves at everyone begins to socially retreat and becomes guarded in new situations. Rest assured that this is a normal stage of development.

Some of the nicest people I've ever known are shy or reserved. They tend to be attentive listeners, deep-thinkers and cautious. They are slow to warm up to strangers and take time to build trust in new relationships. Often this trust needs to be built upon over several encounters across time. They are cautious when choosing friendships but once they make a friend, it's a friendship for life.

So what can you do to support your reserved child as they step outside their comfort zone?

#### **Hug Your Little Blossom**

First, recognise that you are blessed with a sensitive, deeply caring, reserved child who is slow to warm up to strangers and approaches social relationships cautiously - which is not a bad thing! The world will be a more gentle place because of him or her.

# DANCE KIX

Never miss the chance to dance!

Hug your child and let them know how proud you are of them for trying out a new activity and meeting new people. Reassure them that you love them and will stay around to wait for them to finish their class. A great book to read to your little one before they embark on a new situation is *The Kissing Hand* by Audrey Penn. It is a great shared reading experience that explores the emotions of starting something new with a great tool for mums and dads to use afterwards!

## **The harder you pull, the more a shy child retreats**

As a parent of the shy child, it's easy to look around the room and admire those extroverted, naturally confident little humans and feel frustrated that your child is clinging to you. It's tempting to want to apply pressure for them to join in. However, remember their sensitive personality and respect the emotional turmoil they are feeling. It's better to create a comfortable and supportive environment that lets their social personality develop naturally. This may mean you need to initially stay in the room and join in yourself to show trust within the surroundings. It's important to know that it can take weeks or even months for a shy child to join in. A good teacher will know this and although they will continue to encourage them to join in, often observing from a distance can be a building block of trust for young children. Many children learn by watching, and this is ok!

## **Some handy tips:**

- Tell your child ahead of time what they can expect, we can help you with that!
- Allow your child to see that you are comfortable with their class teacher, let them see by watching you chat, that 'If Mum's ok, I'll be ok'.
- Share a few points of information about your child with your class teacher so they can use the information as a bridge for communication. For example, when introducing your child to their teacher say something like 'This is Kailtin, she loves to dance at home and dressing up as a princess sometimes! Her favourite color is purple and she loves to skip.'
- Be prepared for them to want to watch and observe for the first few classes. Remember our shy children are attentive listeners, deep thinkers and cautious. They need time to observe, reflect and evaluate the whole picture beforehand in order to gain the confidence to participate.

Humans are born to move! Dance classes are a fun way to build on this natural instinctive need. Through a creative and imaginative teaching approach, young children can be encouraged to explore their feelings and step outside their comfort zone. The key is finding the right dance school who can offer these things! Teachers who offer that extra 'magic' and foster a highly supportive and nurturing environment, will not only help your child to build social skills but will show your child that they are special for who they are and love them for it!



**Happy Dancing!**  
**Donna Hann**  
**Creative Director**

## **Would you like more info about Dance Kix?**

**Information about Dance Kix and the programs we offer, can be found at [www.dancekix.com](http://www.dancekix.com) Online registration is available, alternatively you can contact us by email [hello@dancekixstudios.com](mailto:hello@dancekixstudios.com) or by phone 49737805**