

ARTS and ENRICHMENT

Enriching families through dance at Kids Co-Motion

In today's society, where everything is based on competition, winning, getting the best grades and getting into the best schools, we forget one important thing — to enjoy the moment. With all the wonderful things we pass along to our children, this is often excluded.

How often do we provide an opportunity to explore things for themselves without all the outside pressures creeping in? The arts are a wonderful outlet where kids can be true to themselves. Whether through art projects, dancing or singing, at the end of the day, art is all about authentic self-expression in that moment.

Dance is an art form that sparks the whole being. The use of one's body to express oneself offers endless possibilities. Studies show that many positive connections between learning, the arts and the development of the brain abound. When one is dancing the enjoyment is instantaneous. Many things are occurring in the language and spatial awareness centers of the brain. Dancing is a wonderful way to exercise and stimulate the body and mind, while developing important social, imitative and cognitive skills. Young children learn everything from and through their families. Cultivating and sharing the ability to embrace music with their moving body is a priceless gift. The freedom to explore music through movement helps integrate music into a young person's life, a gift that lasts a lifetime.

The objective of Kids Co-Motion, a children's creative movement program founded



Kids Co-Motion is a children's creative movement program.

in 1993 by Rebecca Kelly, co-director/choreographer in New York City, is to enrich the lives of families through dance and music.

"We hear countless stories from parents how their child has been dancing and singing songs from class at home or in the car or on the sidewalk or when they visit the grandparents and proudly show what they know," said Michelle Wurf, who runs the programs in the Westchester locations and preschools.

Children learn best in an atmosphere of enthusiasm, optimism and forbearance, and where limits are clearly defined. Children should be inspired and guided to acquire dance movement and music experiences with plenty of opportunity for modeling behavior.

Kids Co-Motion is all about enjoying basic dance expression together, because that sends a most important endorsement about creativity, about movement, about

being active. The goal is to make dance a healthy part of family life. The experience of learning through participating in dance adapts itself to children's play to further language and vocabulary development, augment social skills and introduce mathematical concepts while exploring the body in motion. Dance, music and song are among the primal expressions to communicate sadness and joy, anger and energy, victory and wonder, courtship and friendship, defiance and praise.

Kids Co-Motion classes provides children with important tools they need to learn while still allowing them plenty of room for self-expression. In the adult/child classes for kids 12-40 months, everyone dances so children can learn through example.

In the after-school classes for older students, the program promotes confidence, self-awareness, self-discipline, careful listening skills and growing movement vocabulary. KCM is non-recital-based, so the primary focus is on developing skills and the act of dancing itself. Creative Movement classes are offered for ages 3-5. A more formal introduction to Modern Dance is offered for 6-8-year-olds; 9-11-year-olds and a new teen class for 12-14-year-olds.

Excerpts, Rebecca Kelly, choreographer and artistic director of Rebecca Kelly Ballet author of "Dancing with Delight", and co-founder with Craig Brashear of Kids Co-Motion, a creative movement program offered in studios and pre-schools in Manhattan, Brooklyn and Westchester.