

BACKGROUNDER



Contact: Mary Bawden
Phone: 909.793.8925
mary@danceawareness.com

Wholesome to Hypersexualized: The Dangerous Trend in Children's Dance

The problem

In children's dance classes around the nation, young children are learning to dance with choreography that hypersexualizes them and their bodies. These children have become covert victims of sexual exploitation in what used to be a safe place – the dance studio. Children's dance is being distorted and the art form of dance is being hijacked.

These studios/teachers often unknowingly model their movement choices on what they see in the media culture. This cultural shift is the difference between healthy, age-appropriate dance versus unhealthy, age-inappropriate dance. Booty pops, lip-licking, finger licking/sucking, breast or groin stroking, obscene gestures, suggestive grinding, and seductive props and looks are becoming more commonplace in children's dance.

The impact

Research shows that most girls – as young as 6-years old – are beginning to think of themselves as sex objects. According to the Report of the APA Task Force on the Sexualization of Girls, the effects of the sexualization of children is widespread:

- Body Dysmorphia
- Eating Disorders
- Poor Academic Performance
- Promiscuity
- Higher Risk of Abusive Relationships
- Unable to Identify Sexual Abuse

Girls' sexual development is being hijacked. The culture invites them to imitate the porn-style dance moves of their favorite stars. Yet, they do not have the emotional sophistication to understand what they are seeing and doing. (Source: Canadian Women's Health Network)

More research and data pertaining to the impact of hypersexualized children's dance is available on www.danceawareness.com.

Share Your DA:NCE Story 2022 Campaign

The goal of the 'Share Your DA:NCE Story' campaign is to collect stories from individuals who had unhealthy dance experiences as children. These stories are important to collect and share because they provide a powerful, real life voice that educates parents, dance instructors, and dance studio owners about the long-term consequences of hypersexualized children's dance. We invite anyone to share their story. More info: www.danceawareness.com/shareyourdancestory/

[shareyourdancestory/](http://www.danceawareness.com/shareyourdancestory/)

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DA:NCE Goals

1. To protect children from hypersexualization in adult costumes, choreography and music, and to protect the art of dance
2. To create free research materials to give adults informed choices about the differences between healthy or harmful dance
3. To engage in respectful conversations about hypersexualization without shaming/demonizing adults or dance studios so that there is a path for reflection and changed perspectives
4. To communicate the hypersexualization of children in dance and its connection to the public health issue of pornography with bipartisan engagement

Free Resources for Parents and Concerned Adults

As awareness grows, dance educators, parents and concerned citizens are speaking out against this cultural shift toward normalizing the hypersexualization of children in dance. Free resources to educate and grow awareness are available at danceawareness.com, including:

- [Video library](#) highlighting the damaging effects of hypersexualized children's dance
- [Educational PowerPoints and in-depth videos](#) for people to use in their outreach efforts
- [Resources for parents](#) to find and select healthy, age-appropriate dance studios
- An [educational and actionable newsletter](#), sent only three times per year, as well as an [engaging eBook](#) that explains the problem and offers solutions

Important Links

- APA Report: www.apa.org/pi/women/programs/girls/report
- Wholesome to Hypersexualized: A Short Story of What Happened to Children's Dance: <https://youtu.be/3eJNhnsDqDc>
- DA:NCE Healthy or Harmful: National Experts Talk About Children's Dance: <https://youtu.be/KUAzIbuXbxE>
- DA:NCE website: www.danceawareness.com

About DA:NCE Founder, Mary Bawden

Dance educator and author Mary Bawden received a BA in modern dance from the University of California Riverside, a MA in worship (emphasis in dance) from Hope International University in Fullerton CA, and a California secondary teaching credential. Mary began choreographing dance within church services in 1994. In 2016, she founded DA:NCE (Dance Awareness: No Child Exploited) in an effort to raise awareness and educate others to take action and stop the hypersexualization of children in dance choreography, costumes, and music.

Interviews

To schedule an interview with Mary Bawden, founder of DA:NCE, email mary@danceawareness.com or call 909-793-8925.