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## Questions Parents Should Ask to Understand an Organization's Commitment to Child Safety

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At **DA:NCE Awareness**, our focus has always been on protecting children in dance. Certainly, these questions are appropriate for parents and concerned adults to ask anytime they consider the placement of a child into a dance program. But they are also universal and are appropriate to ask anytime a child joins any type of organization or program. We've compiled the core questions here and included a link to the original article should you want to dive into this information in more detail.

Dr. Benjamin Saunders, professor emeritus of the National Crime Victims Research and Treatment Center at the Medical University of South Carolina developed eight questions parents can ask that will help them understand an organization's commitment to youth safety. The questions target red flags, particularly for sexual abuse, and should illuminate any major deficiencies in an organization's policies and enforcement. We recommend that you use these 8 points before you enroll your child in any kind of dance environment.

1

### ***Does the organization have a youth-protection policy?***

A robust youth-protection policy should cover verbal, emotional, physical and sexual abuse. Organizations should also conduct a self-analysis, assessing their positions for those that are high risk and moderating their policies accordingly.

2

### ***Does the organization conduct thorough background checks on employees and volunteers?***

Organizations should conduct background checks on staff and volunteers according to the level of risk posed by the position.

3

### ***Does the organization require employees to complete a written application form acknowledging their duty to follow all youth-protection policies, procedures and guidelines?***

This accountability measure protects both children and the organization.



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***Does the organization provide training in youth protection for staff, volunteers and, if appropriate, participating families?***

Parents should be able to review the training and may also ask whether ongoing training is required.

5

***Does the organization restrict personal contact between children and staff or volunteers outside the activities of the organization?***

Robust youth-protection policies should address personal contact between children and staff or volunteers that occurs outside the activities of the organization.

6

***Does the organization maintain a “two-deep” policy?***

A “two-deep” policy requires that no single child can be alone with a single adult. The policy is intended to reduce the opportunities for an offender to isolate and develop a special relationship with a child.

7

***Does the organization have a clear procedure in place for managing reports and complaints?***

Parents should assess whether an organization has thought about how to handle complaints and is willing to bring in the authorities if necessary.

8

***Has the organization ever received a complaint?***

It is not necessarily a red flag for organizations to disclose having received a complaint. Of interest is how the organization responded to that complaint.



**Take the next step to protect your children from hypersexualized dance. [www.danceawareness.com](http://www.danceawareness.com)**