



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.

Uninformed dance professionals and parents often unknowingly allow movement choices based 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

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

Curent Initiatives

Healthy DA:NCE Directory: The Healthy DA:NCE Directory is a first-of-its-kind international resource designed to help parents identify dance studios that are committed to age-appropriate, child-centered dance education. Studios listed in the Directory demonstrate a commitment to protecting children from hypersexualization through costumes, choreography, music. Learn more at www.danceawareness.com/find-a-safe-studio.

DA:NCE Trailblazer Award: The DA:NCE Leslie Scott Zanovitch Trailblazer Award honors individuals who have made a meaningful impact in advancing healthy, age-appropriate dance and protecting children within the dance community. Trailblazers are leaders, educators, and advocates who challenge harmful norms, model integrity, and work to ensure dance remains a positive and safe experience for children. Through this award, DA:NCE shines a light on those shaping a **better future for dance**. Learn more at www.danceawareness.com/trailblazer.

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

2026 BACKGROUNDER

DA:NCE Coalition: We are creating a wave of change with our volunteer DA:NCE Coalition. Comprised of dance teachers, dance studio owners, dance artists, arts enthusiasts, and caring adults, this group is for anyone who wants to have a hand in ending the hypersexualization of children in adult costumes, choreography and music. Will you join us? More information at www.danceawareness.com/coalition.

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.

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