



Midlands Youth (MY) Dance Good Practice Guide

U.Dance events are performed or accessed by audiences of children, young people and members of the general public. This broad audience should always be considered.

Recommendations

The following points are recommendations for creating a well-considered piece of youth dance performance work. We encourage youth dance leaders to support young people to reach their potential and stay safe while presenting work to the public. We encourage all youth dance leaders to read these recommendations carefully and consider them at regular points during your creation process.

Music, Sound and Accompaniments

Consider the dynamics and pace of music/sound, think about how this influences the movement. Consider transitions between different sections of music/sound, don't chop pieces of music together with harsh edits but ensure music is fluid and well edited. Consider if a piece of music/sound has associations with TV programmes, adverts, popular culture etc, think about what messages that conveys to an audience.

Groups should not assume they can use any piece of music for free – the rights must be secured, and the rules vary depending on if your piece will be performed live or streamed online. U.Dance partners are unable to pay to secure rights to any music accompaniment to pieces, and will not be able to stream the piece online if the rights are not secured.

[See One Dance UK's Digital Music Licensing Best Practice Guide here.](#)

Costumes

Choose costumes that are suitable for the age of the young people and that can be worn when performing to family audiences. Consider why you are costuming female- and male-presenting and non-binary young people differently in relation to your choreographic idea; think about gender equality. Rehearse in costume prior to any performances or filming. Check that the costumes are safe for performance and are not a distraction for the performer or audience. Consider how the costumes connect to the overall performance work.

Movement Content

Ensure movements are suitable for the age and ability of the dancers and can be performed safely, don't feel the need to use unnecessary tricks. Consider how male- and female- presenting and non-binary young people are being presented in performance work and how they can be profiled fairly and equally. Don't feel under pressure to use a theme, (it is not essential), but do give thought and development to the intention of the choreography. Is your dance inspired by a specific style, genre, idea a piece of music, artwork or professional choreography?

Choreography

A number of examples of best youth dance practice involve the young people as choreographers and creative collaborators. Try to empower young people to contribute to the making process, use choreographic tools, games and creative tasks to create content. Where possible, watch professional choreography (live or recorded) to inspire work, however any work that directly copies or plagiarises previously created work will not be eligible. Consider getting an outside eye to watch rehearsals to provide feedback. Rework the choreography as necessary as the work progresses.

Staging

Think about how the dancers appear 'on stage' or 'on screen', be inclusive and demonstrate the skills of the whole group. Think about how the dancers exit and enter the stage. Consider how the group are spaced, the use of solo, duet, small group or ensemble material and how this relates to the visual design of the choreography.

When creating youth dance work:

- **Do not** use music with explicit language, swearing or language that could cause offence.
- **Do not** use music that contains 'bleeping' over swear words, themes which refer to violence, sexual references or that are misogynistic, derogatory or demeaning to others.
- **Do not** use costumes that are revealing or that sexualise young people.
- **Do not** use photographic or video projection that includes images that are not suitable for/ or that could cause offence to family audiences.
- **Do not** use flashing images or strobing for extended periods of time.
- **Do not** use movements that sexualise young people.
- **Do not** profile gender differently, unless relevant to a storyline or meaning.
- **Do not** plagiarise/directly copy professional choreography from live or film/video content.
- Youth dance work should be original.

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