

# Why Children Need To Dance!

There has been no proper physical education curriculum at either primary or pre-school levels in Ireland's history. T.V., video games, computers, motor transport and a lack of regular exercise have all contributed to the sedentary lifestyle many Irish children are leading today.

Irish Health Authorities are now armed with research showing that physical inactivity increases the risk of everything from heart disease to cancer. The Irish Heart Foundation amongst others recognises that prevention of heart disease must start with habits established in childhood. Did you know also that our bone health is determined between age 8 and 9. **According to recent research, the increase in ill health, obesity, and heart disease factors, presenting in our children has more to do with inactivity than bad food choices.**

Dance is a great form of exercise and regular dance classes build self-esteem, heighten awareness, relieve stress and decreases illness for children.

"Children really enjoy movement to music, singing and the drama elements we provide in classes" says Sheila Garvey, Director of The Academy of Performing Arts.

'Both heart attacks and stroke are caused by disease of the body's blood vessels, and that starts in childhood'.

(Dr. Vincent Meagher, Consultant Cardiologist at Tallaght Hospital)

In 2006, the National Association for Sport and Physical Education in Washington D.C. released the first ever physical activity guidelines for infants and toddlers. According to this "Toddlers should accumulate at least 30 minutes daily of structured physical activity, and pre-schoolers at least 60 minutes. During the pre-school years children should be encouraged to practice movement skills in a variety of settings. Instruction and positive reinforcement is critical during this time in order to ensure that children develop most of these skills before entering school. For toddlers, basic movement skills such as running, jumping, throwing and kicking do not just appear because a child grows older, but emerge from an interaction between hereditary potential and movement experience."

**The Academy of Performing Arts provides structured dance classes with lots of movement in a fun environment! Call us now for details on classes in your area. Tel: 046 94 36324.**