



## **LYNN ACADEMY of IRISH DANCING**

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Stamford, CT • New Rochelle & Tarrytown, NY • Audubon, NJ • Egg Harbor, NJ

### **2007 - 2008 Student/Parent Handbook Supplement for Preliminary/Championship Levels**

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2007 - 2008 Year



**Dear LYNN Academy Preliminary & Champion Dancers & Parents:**

Welcome to the big leagues of Irish dancing! Preliminary and Championship levels are the 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> (final) levels in Irish dancing. The two levels are the most difficult in Irish dancing. Remember, all the dancers from various schools who make it to these levels are good!!!! If your dancer would like to pursue his or her dancing career at these levels, the dancer, and his or her parent(s) have to make a serious commitment as outlined in this handbook. We at the LYNN Academy have a lot of expectations for these level dancers and do not mind what outside activities your dancer is involved in as long as the dancer attends all or up to 95% of our classes, practices *everyday* at home or at the studio, and attends the required Feisianna. If your dancer is involved in extracurricular activities, please do not discuss this with a LYNN Academy instructor, since at this level, we are only interested in ensuring that your dancer is the best Irish dancer that he or she can be. When it comes to these high levels, it is imperative that parents do NOT interrupt class time unless it is an extreme emergency, and please be patient if class runs a little long. The dancers are learning hard moves and it is difficult to stop class right when a difficult move is being taught.

Our Preliminary and Championship dancers are representing LYNN Academy at regional, national and international levels and the dancers and parents must uphold the highest standards of etiquette while competing. In addition, when a dancer and parent decides on this commitment, the parent(s) must emotionally support their dancer in a positive way and be the best cheerleaders we can for our dancer, especially at competitions. The LYNN Academy instructors enjoy teaching Irish dancing to any dancer at any level, so if after reading this handbook, the commitment is too large, your dancer is more than welcome to still take lessons, but just realize that those who make this commitment will most likely surpass your dancer at a much faster rate. After you have finished enjoying this handbook, please sign the enclosed form. Upon signature, you will be given a key to the studio for your dancer to practice at anytime. We look forward to many very successful years together and helping your dancer(s) achieve his or her goals and dreams!

Sincerely:

*Maureen*

Maureen J. Collins, TCRG (lead instructor - NJ, CT)  
Mary Lynn Collins (lead instructor - NY)  
Dr. Mary Lynn Collins (overall director)  
Monica Kaul (CT instructor)

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## What is Preliminary & Championship Level?

Preliminary Championships is the 5<sup>th</sup> level and Championships is the 6<sup>th</sup> and final level in Irish dancing. The big change from Prizewinner level to Preliminary to Championship is the following:

Differences	Prizewinner	Preliminary Championship	Championship
# of Dances Performed	4 (2 hard shoe, 2 soft shoe)	2 (one hard shoe, one soft shoe)	2 (one set piece, one soft shoe)*sometimes there are 3 levels
# of Chances for Winning	4	1	1
# of First Place Winners	Up to the Judge	ONLY 1	ONLY 1
# of Stages Dancer Performs on	Up to 4	1	1
Rules for Movement	1 <sup>st</sup> in each dance before movement to Prelim or teacher's discretion	(2) First Places to move up to Championships (sounds easy, but is very difficult)	None – dancer looks to win nationally and internationally
# of Competitors on Stage	Up to 15-20 dancers lined up	Groups of 2 or 3 utilizing whole stage at the same time	Groups of 2 or 3 utilizing whole stage at the same time for soft shoe, Solo for set piece
# of Judges	1	3 (judges scores combined for two rounds)	3 (judges scores combined for two or three rounds)
Average number of months in level	18 months	24 months	Indefinitely
# of Feises Required	4	2 a MONTH minimum of 20	2 a MONTH – minimum of 20
# of Steps	2	3	3
# of Placements	1 <sup>st</sup> , 2 <sup>nd</sup> , 3 <sup>rd</sup> , possibly 4 <sup>th</sup> &/or 5 <sup>th</sup>	50% of competition receives a place – i.e.: 50 competitors, 25 placements	50% of competition receives a place – i.e.: 50 competitors, 25 placements
Type of Costume Worn	Class Costume/ Teacher Approved Simple Solo Costume	Up To Date Teacher Approved Used Solo Costume	Dancer has earned the opportunity to design own costume by Siopa Rince only with instructor's help
Eligible Competitions (please see eligibility requirements)	Oireachtas (1 <sup>st</sup> in hard shoe dance, 1 <sup>st</sup> in soft shoe dance by September 30th)	Oireachtas, North American Championships	Oireachtas, North American Championships, All Scotlands, European Championships, All Irelands, Great Britains, World Championships

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## **Solo Costume Searching**

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All dancers in Preliminary Championships and Championships are required to dance in an Irish dancing costume. Although dancers can wear their class costumes, 99.9% of the dancers do not. This is so the judge will not know which school the dancer is from and will judge the competition fairly. When looking for an Irish dancing solo costume, please keep the following in mind:

1. The costume should fit your dancer perfectly – a huge turn off for a judge is when a dancer is in a dress that is too large or too small
2. If you like a costume, but the length or waist are more than 2 inches off, do not purchase the costume. Costumes never look the same after they have been taken up or in too much.
3. The color should compliment the dancer's features.
4. Remember, a dress that looks gaudy or too sparkly up close will probably look gorgeous on stage. We are dressing our dancers for large competitions on large stages (such as the Oireachtas & North American Championships)
5. Your dancer wants to be noticed first when on stage with the other (2) dancers (before they begin to dance), the dress plays an important role in this. Don't let all that practices get lost in a dress that is not at the same talent level as your dancer.
6. If a dress is at a really low price, it is probably an old design or the fabric is cheap. Just beware before purchasing.
7. When buying a used costume, always ask the following questions
  - a. How old is the dress
  - b. How many previous owners
  - c. Who designed the costume (will help with quality factor)
  - d. Is the dress returnable if it does not fit
  - e. Can you please send me a picture of it with the dancer in it
  - f. Does it come with the matching crown
  - g. Is your price firm
8. When negotiating used costumes, always blame the teachers at LYNN Academy if you ever want to ask a question that is uncomfortable (i.e.: Can I return this dress, the instructor has to approve the dress on my daughter and I am afraid to purchase it without my teacher seeing it on her)
- 9. Always consult and get approval from an instructor before purchasing a dress**
10. A dress that your dancer loves, might not be what suits her features or is in line with her talent

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### **KEEPING YOUR WIG ON**

1. Wash hair the night before. This prevents fly away hairs in front. natural hair oils work great to help hair stay in place, even when using other products such as shine enhancers, gel, spray, etc...
2. Comb and part hair to the side. use front of ears for guideline for your side part. Start at the top and part down to front of right ear, then the same for left side, pulling the small section from each side forward.
3. Pull small sections of hair from top on each side of part into ponytail, one on each side. use bands that won't slide.
4. Part down the back of head to divide remaining hair. pull hair from top ponytail down into each section making another ponytail on each side. Bands should be at the bottom base of the head.
5. Braid any remaining hair and band at ends.
6. Bring each ponytail/ braid up toward the top of head, cross them over, behind front part of where side bangs will be. use several bobbypins to secure ponytails across top of head, following along front part for bangs, this will support front of wig - comb in top of wig will slide under pins.
7. Using hair product such as shine drops, shine spray or hair adhesive, apply small amounts to front sections to smooth into desired position on right side. Pull front hair-piece down behind ear and apply bobbypins as needed to secure hair around to back ponytail. follow with left side. Apply spray or hair adhesive to smooth out loose pieces of hair.
8. Put head-piece on, using the part in front of head as a guideline to rest headpiece or crown. Apply several pins to bottom of headpiece, going from base of one lower ponytail to the other. the comb in back of wig will use the lower ponytails and pins as anchor.
9. Starting in the back of head, push comb from wig firmly into ponytail anchors and pins at the base of the neck and going under strap for headpiece, making sure entire comb is secure.
10. Tip head back slightly and directly behind headpiece, push comb from top of wig into front section of ponytails and pins, pulling wig tightly. If you are concerned about any movement put a few extra pins on side of headpiece.
11. As far as stage makeup is concerned, please feel free to visit Sephora ( [www.sephora.com](http://www.sephora.com) ) with your crown and wig to get the desired product needed for a stunning look.

## **LYNN Academy Preliminary, Championship, & Feis Requirements**

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### **Preliminary Championship Level Requirements:**

- 2 classes a week
- 1 LYNN Academy summer camp
- 2 Feises a month (Oireachtas, Nationals count as Feises)
- Home/Studio practice everyday

### **Championship Level & World, Nationals, International Competition Requirements:**

- 3 classes a week
- 2 LYNN Academy summer camp
- 2 Feises a month (Oireachtas, Nationals, Scotlands, GBs, Irelands, Worlds count as Feises)
- Home/Studio practice everyday

### **Feis Requirements:**

- Watch one Championship competition at each Feis
- Bring one item into class that the dancer learned from each Feis
- Put Preliminary & Championships comments into a word table or excel template to track
- Work on each comment until the dancer no longer sees that comment
- Bring Notebook
- Arrive 1 hour prior to competition to stretch and perform exercises to reduce the risk of injury
- Have parent tape record (not video) the dancer performing his or set piece on stage – this way the dancer can hear if they went off timing
- Watch fellow LYNN dancers and cheer them on!
- Start to relax and perform on stage – at these levels it's not about just dancing on stage, but performing
- Meet new dancers and enjoy your time at the Feis

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**2007 – 2008 LYNN ACADEMY**  
**DANCER ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS FOR IRISH DANCING COMPETITIONS**

These requirements are guidelines intended to be in the best interest of the dancer to ensure confidence and success and most importantly, prevent injury!

- A. OIREACHTAS SOLO CHAMPIONSHIP COMPETITIONS [www.idtana.net](http://www.idtana.net)  
(Regional Qualification for the World Championships)
- a. Held in November
  - b. 2 classes (3 classes for Championship Level)
  - c. 95% attendance (Exclusions include: sickness w/doctor's note, religious obligation, mandatory school function with calendar and/or note from teacher)
  - d. Home or Studio Practice
  - e. One Full Week July Summer Camp must be attended
  - f. 6 – 8 Feises must be entered and danced before Oireachtas (September – November)
  - g. Teacher approved costume
- B. ALL SCOTLANDS <http://www.irish-dancer.co.uk/>
- a. Held in Mid October near Glasgow, Scotland
  - b. Must be in Championship Level
  - c. 3 regularly scheduled classes for Championship Level
  - d. 95% attendance (Exclusions include: sickness w/doctor's note, religious obligation, mandatory educational school function with calendar and/or note from teacher)
  - e. Home or Studio Practice
  - f. Average grade of 50% or greater from local feisanna must be maintained after dancer's first time attending All Scotlands
  - g. Two Full Week Summer Camps must be attended
  - h. 6 – 8 Feises must be entered and danced before competition (August – November)
  - i. Teacher approved champion level costume
- C. GREAT BRITAINS <http://www.id-rc.com/>
- a. Held in late October, early November near London England
  - b. Must be in Championship Level
  - c. 3 regularly scheduled classes for Championship Level
  - d. 95% attendance (Exclusions include: sickness w/doctor's note, religious obligation, mandatory educational school function with calendar and/or note from teacher)
  - e. Home or Studio Practice
  - f. Average grade of 50% or greater from local feisanna must be maintained
  - g. Two Full Week Summer Camps must be attended
  - h. 6 – 8 Feises must be entered and danced before competition (August– November)
  - i. Teacher approved champion level costume
- D. ALL IRELAND CHAMPIONSHIPS [www.clrg.ie](http://www.clrg.ie)
- a. Held in February
  - b. Must be Championship Level
  - c. 3 regularly scheduled classes for Championship Level
  - d. 95% Attendance (Exclusions include: sickness w/doctor's note, religious obligation, mandatory educational school function with calendar and/or note from teacher)
  - e. Home or Studio Practice
  - f. Average grade of 50% or greater from local feisanna must be maintained
  - g. Two Full Week Summer Camps must be attended
  - h. 5 – 8 Feises must be entered and danced before All Irelands (November - February)
  - i. Teacher approved champion level costume
- E. WORLD CHAMPIONSHIPS (“Irish Dancing Olympics”) [www.clrg.ie](http://www.clrg.ie)

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- a. Held over Easter
  - b. Must have qualified at the Oireachtas and/or Nationals
  - c. 3 regularly scheduled classes for Championship Level
  - d. 95% Attendance (Exclusions include: sickness w/doctor's note, religious obligation, mandatory educational school function with calendar and/or note from teacher)
  - e. Home or Studio Practice
  - f. Average grade of 50% or greater from local feisanna must be maintained
  - g. Two Summer Camps must be attended
  - h. 8 – 10 Feises must be entered and danced before Worlds (November – March/April)
  - i. Teacher approved champion level costume
- F. NORTH AMERICAN CHAMPIONSHIPS [www.idtana.net](http://www.idtana.net)
- a. Held over the Fourth of July
  - b. Must have recalled at the Oireachtas and placed within 25% of competition OR is Championship level status (have won 2 firsts in Preliminary) by May 1st
  - c. **3 regularly scheduled classes must be taken**
  - d. 95% attendance (Exclusions include: sickness w/doctor's note, religious obligation, mandatory educational school function with calendar and/or note from teacher)
  - e. Home or Studio Practice
  - f. 12 Feises must be entered and danced in before Nationals (January - July)
  - g. One Full Week Summer Camp must be attended
  - h. Teacher approved champion level costume

**ONLY TCRGS (TEACHERS) CAN SUBMIT  
ENTRIES FOR THE ABOVE COMPETITIONS**

## **Studio Items Needed For Preliminary & Championship Level Classes**

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- SHORTS, BUT PREFERABLY SKORTS OR SHORT FLOWING SKIRTS, FITTED TEE SHIRTS OR TANKS NOT SHOWING THE BELLY BUTTONS
- **WHITE POODLE SOCKS ONLY – PULLED UP LIKE IN COMPETITION**
- PRACTICE PAIR OF HARD SHOES, PRACTICE PAIR OF SOFT SHOES - *Ensure that a good pair of hard shoes and soft shoes are broken in and left aside for competitions – dancers do NOT want to be breaking in hard shoes a week before a major competition*
- TOWEL – YOU WILL GET SWEATY
- TAPE RECORDER FOR PERSONAL TAPING OF HARD SHOE DANCES IN CLASS
- BRING SET PIECE MUSIC TO EVERY CLASS
- NOTEBOOK
- COMPLETED HOME PRACTICE SHEETS
- DANCE SNEAKERS
- GATORADE, POWERAID, VITAMIN WATER ONLY – NO FOOD
- HAIR IS OFF FACE AND BACK
- GO TO THE BATHROOM **BEFORE** CLASS
- **BE ON TIME TO CLASS – IF THE DOOR IS CLOSED OR THE BLINDS ARE DOWN, DO NOT ENTER CLASS – WE WILL GIVE YOU A 5-10 MINUTE GRACE PERIOD, AFTER THAT NO ONE IS TO ENTER CLASS**
- AS SOON AS YOU ARRIVE START STRETCHING AND WARM UP – DO NOT SIT IN THE LOUNGE AND GOSSIP
- MONDAYS/TUESDAYS PLEASE HAVE HARD SHOES ON & READY FOR CLASS
- WEDNESDAYS/THURSDAYS HAVE SOFT SHOES ON & READY FOR CLASS
- **DO NOT WEAR PANTS OR JEANS IN CLASS – IT WILL CAUSE INJURY. IF YOU DO NOT HAVE SHORTS OR SKIRT YOU WILL BE EXEMPT FROM DANCING IN CLASS**
- NO GUM CHEWING AND NO EATING DURING ONE HOUR CLASSES
- RESPECT ALL FELLOW DANCERS
- TREAT OTHERS AS YOU WOULD LIKE TO BE TREATED
- THERE ARE NO "I CAN'TS" ALLOWED IN CLASS – ONLY "I WILL TRY'S"
- THROW AWAY ALL TRASH AT THE STUDIO
- LEAVE THE STUDIO BATHROOMS CLEAN
- DON'T FORGET TO BRING HOME YOUR SHOES
- STAY INSIDE UNTIL A PARENT COMES TO COLLECT YOU
- SAVE ALL NON-DANCING RELATED QUESTIONS, STORIES, ETC. UNTIL THE END OF CLASS
- APPRECIATE AND RESPECT YOUR PARENTS!
- PRACTICE MAKES PERFECT
- HAVE FUN

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## HOME PRACTICE ITEMS & HOME PRACTICE SCHEDULE

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### Items needed for home practice:

1. Full-length mirror
2. Area large enough to dance - kitchen, garage, basement
3. CD player/tape player
4. LYNN Academy CD
5. Notebook
6. Blank tape for hard shoe practice
7. Wood, tile, vinyl floor for hard shoe
8. Irish Dancing Shoes - please practice with shoes on
9. Water

## PRACTICE SCHEDULE

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### LYNN Academy of Irish Dance Weekly Practice Schedule

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Week Ending \_\_\_\_\_

Irish Dances	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
Soft Shoe Exercises (48 bars each)							
Hard Shoe Exercises (40 bars each)							
Reel							
Slip Jig							
Treble Jig							
Hornpipe							
Traditional Set							
Contemporary Set							
Tape Record of Hard Shoe Dances							
Video-Tape of dancing							
Total # of Minutes Practiced							

\*Remember it's not about running through your steps, but taking them apart and dancing them as exercises to perfect them!

Recommended Practice Minutes A Day For Winning Results!					
Beginner	15	minutes	Prizewinner	60	minutes
Advanced Beg	30	minutes	Preliminary	90	minutes
Novice	45	minutes	Championship	120	minutes

\*Please return completed form to an instructor at the beginning of every week\*

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## **STUDIO PRACTICING & PRIVATE LESSONS**

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### **Studio Rules:**

All Preliminary & Championship dancers will be given a key upon return of the attached form. Please do not abuse this privilege; dancers who have a key should remember to lock the studio upon exiting the studio.

- Please ensure that all bottles and trash is picked up each time you utilize the studio – leave it the way you found it
- A parent or guardian must be at the studio while practicing
- If you would like to turn on the **AC or Heat, a \$25 per hour fee will be incurred**
- If there is any damage to the studio whatsoever and a dancer does not claim fault, a fee will be spread over all those with a key and your account will be charged accordingly.
- Studio Practice can be done with other dancers upon the dancer's request. Parents, please do not get offended if your dancer does not get asked to practice with another dancer – it is the dancer's rights to ask whomever he or she wishes to practice with at the studio. ***Please do NOT get the teacher or Business Manager involved if your dancer was not invited to a practice – it is not our issue!***
- Please do not leave chairs in the dance studio area – chairs are to remain in the lounge
- So please do not abuse your privileges, or they will be taken away

### **Private Lesson Rules:**

- Signups for Private Lessons will be done at each dance studio
- Please sign the dancer's name(s).
- If you sign up, you must pay or give the time slot to another dancer.
- Cash payment is due BEFORE Private lesson takes place (\$35 half hour; \$65 hour)
- If you do not attend the private lesson, but sign up, you WILL be billed.
- It would be appreciated if sign ups could be made in numerical ordered time slots.
- *Dancers must be in good financial standing with LYNN Academy and LYNN Academy PTA in order to be eligible for a private lesson.*
- Private lessons are limited to two dancers.

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## **Tuition Policy**

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Tuition is Due on the Following Dates:

1. **Registration in September** – Session I
2. **December 1<sup>st</sup>** – Session II
3. **March 1<sup>st</sup>** - Session III

The Sessions are divided up as follows:

1. Session I – September, October, November, December
2. Session II – January, February, March
3. Session III – April, May June

### **Tuition Rules Are As Follows:**

1. Dancers will not be allowed to enter the dance-room until he or she is in good financial standing. The dancer will be asked to sit in the lounge if he or she is not in good financial standing.
2. No dancer is allowed to perform in a parade, show, or Feis if he or she is not in good financial standing with the dancing school.
3. No dancer is allowed a private lesson if he or she is not in good financial standing.
4. If a dancer is taking 2 or more classes a week plus a drill class, the ceili class is free of charge.
5. Payment plan options are only available for families with two or more children
6. If you would like a payment plan option, a credit card must be kept on file. If you miss a deadline for payment, your credit card will be charged accordingly & with a 2% credit card fee attached.
7. No cash discounts for payment plan accounts (NJ location only).
8. If you have been delinquent in the past on your account, you will be asked for a credit card to be kept on file for future payments,
9. No pro-rations or refunds for returning students under ANY circumstances
10. If your dancer is injured, he or she can still watch the class and learn a great deal (Maureen injured her foot right before the Nationals, attended class anyway and still won the Nationals). No refunds for injury or absences.
11. Only new beginner students in their first session **ONLY** will be refunded their tuition pro-rationally, but **ONLY** if a teacher is notified via e-mail **within the first 4 weeks** of when the beginner dancer started.
12. If you are paying in cash, please ensure that you always receive a receipt.
13. \$20 per month late fee incurred one week after tuition deadline for delinquent accounts.
14. \$20 bounced check fee. After the third bounced check, only cash will be accepted from account.
15. Tuition policy and fees are firm. ***Tuition is non-negotiable.***
16. Kindly do not discuss your financial situation with any of the instructors of the LYNN Academy, please refer to our Business Manager.
17. Any family that raises \$10,000 or more for our non-profit (LYNN Feis PTO) organization in corporate sponsors a year will be given free lessons for a year (up to a \$2,000 value). ***Maureen raised \$30,000 for the National Irish dancing organization in two months!!***

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## **ATTENDANCE POLICY**

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### **Class Policy:**

\*LYNN Academy students must have a 75% attendance rate per session to participate in LYNN Academy events such as performances and parades.

\*Unless there are extenuating circumstances, students should attend class every week.

\*It is imperative that students attend class regularly as it not only improves his or her dancing ability and teaches responsibility, but it is key when performing in group dances as others are depending on the attendance of dancers in that group.

\*Attendance is taken into consideration when the LYNN Academy instructors place students for the following year

\*If you plan on missing more than one class in a row please contact a LYNN Academy instructor

\*If you miss a class, please get together with another student from your class to learn the steps

\*Students are more than welcome to take additional classes a week , but the student **MUST** attend his or her class **FIRST**. There are absolutely no substitutions.

**\*A FREE PRIVATE LESSON WILL BE GIVEN TO ANY STUDENT WHO HAS PERFECT ATTENDANCE FOR THE ENTIRE YEAR**

### **Workshop Policy:**

\*Monthly workshops will be held at various locations on weekend afternoons. More information will be provided through our monthly newsletters.

**\*IF A STUDENT SIGNS UP FOR A WORKSHOP THE STUDENT WILL BE BILLED EVEN IF THE STUDENT DOES NOT PHYSICALLY ATTEND THE WORKSHOP**

\*At least 15 students must attend the workshop in order for it to be held (unless previous arrangements have been made and agreed upon)

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## **ROLE MODELING BEHAVIOR**

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At the Preliminary & Championship Levels, your dancer is an important role model for future LYNN Academy Irish dancers

### **A GOOD LYNN Academy Role-Model Dancer (& parent) Is Someone Who...**

- Is helpful to teachers and fellow dancers.
- Practices consistently, but does not push their own methods on anyone else.
- Helps and gives advice to other dancers who ask for assistance with steps, etc.
- Places high, and acts graciously.
- Realizes that she/he can't place high all the time.
- Acts graciously when s/he does not place as high as expected or wanted, & saves the upset for private.
- Is well-groomed and modest, whether it be at practice or at the dinner dance
- Is modest in behavior, and does not have a dirty mouth or attitude.
- Does not gossip about anyone.
- Knows a lot about dancers and schools, but does not use it to hurt them.
- Encourages beginner to adult dancers, from other schools as well as their own.
- Will graciously let someone else take the spotlight.
- Is there to congratulate, cheer on and support other dancers.
- Is not jealous of or nasty to other dancers from their school that competes in the same age group.

### **A Good LYNN Academy Role-Model Dancer (& parent) Is NOT Someone Who...**

- Wears a snide face.
- Is rude to adults, teachers, or children.
- Wears their undergarments in public (bloomers would be "under" the dress).
- Gossips (if they gossip with you, they probably gossip about you).
- Tries to beat someone by ruining his or her reputation.
- Treats a dancer cruelly because they want to be better than them.
- Cusses and yells and makes a spectacle.
- Does not acknowledge the talents of any other dancer, whether they be the dancer that beat them, or just a beginner.
- Makes excuses for doing badly.
- Does not practice (then wonders why).
- Does not act responsibly with their peers.
- Has a bad attitude about other schools.
- Brags.
- Throws a fit when they don't win or get their way.
- Makes fun of people.

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## HOW PARENTS CAN HELP

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Parents, you are your dancer's greatest role models in life and your dancer(s) constantly look to you for support. We, at the LYNN Academy recognize that, and like to encourage you to take an active role in your child's dancing career (when they decide that this is something that they really want to pursue). As coaches, we have found the below website extremely helpful as well.



We Found This really Great Excerpt From the Website [www.competitivedge.com](http://www.competitivedge.com) :

### **Making the Best Out of Youth Sports: Dr Alan Goldberg's 13 Steps to Being a Winning Parent**

#### **INTRODUCTION**

If you want your child to come out of his youth sports experience a winner (feeling good about himself and having a healthy attitude towards sports), then he needs your help! You are a vital and important part of the coach-athlete-parent team. If you do your job correctly and play your position well, then your child will learn the sport faster, perform better, really have fun and have his self-esteem enhanced as a result. His sport experience will serve as a positive model for him to follow as he approaches other challenges and obstacles throughout life. If you "drop the ball" or run the wrong way with it, your child will stop learning, experience performance difficulties and blocks, and begin to really hate the sport. And that's the good news! Further, your relationship with him will probably suffer significantly. As a result, he will come out of this experience burdened with feelings of failure, inadequacy and low self-esteem, feelings that will generalize to other areas in his life. Your child and his coach need you on the team. They can't win without you! The following are a list of useful facts, guidelines and strategies for you to use to make you more skilled in the youth sport game. Remember, no wins unless everyone wins. We need you on the team!

#### **STEP ONE**

When defined the right way, competition in youth sports is both good and healthy and teaches children a variety of important life skills. The word "compete" comes from the Latin words "com" and "petere" which mean together and seeking respectively. The true definition of competition is a seeking together where your opponent is your partner, not the enemy! The better he performs, the more chance you have of having a peak performance. Sports is about learning to deal with challenges and obstacles. Without a worthy opponent, without any challenges sports is not so much fun. The more the challenge the better the opportunity you have to go beyond your limits. World records are consistently broken and set at the Olympics because the best athletes in the world are "seeking together", challenging each other to enhanced performance. Your child should never be taught to view his opponent as the "bad guy", the enemy or someone to be hated and "destroyed". Do not model this attitude! Instead, talk to/make friends with parents of your child's opponent. Root for great performances, good plays, not just for the winner!

#### **STEP TWO**

##### **ENCOURAGE YOUR CHILD TO COMPETE AGAINST HIMSELF**

The ultimate goal of the sport experience is to challenge oneself and continually improve. Unfortunately, judging improvement by winning and losing is both an unfair and inaccurate measure. Winning in sports is about doing the best you can do, separate from the outcome or the play of your opponent. Children should be encouraged to compete against their own potential (i.e., Peter and Patty Potential). That is, the boys should focus on beating "Peter", competing against themselves, while the girls challenge "Patty". When your child has this focus and plays to better himself instead of beating someone else, he will be more relaxed, have more fun and therefore perform better.

#### **STEP THREE**

**DO NOT DEFINE SUCCESS AND FAILURE IN TERMS OF WINNING AND LOSING** A corollary to TWO, one of the main purposes of the youth sports experience is skill acquisition and mastery. When a child performs to his potential and loses it is criminal to focus on the outcome and become critical. If a child plays his very best and loses, you need to help him feel like a winner! Similarly, when a child or team performs far below their potential but wins, this is not cause to feel like a winner. Help your child make this important separation between success and failure and winning and losing. Remember, if you define success and failure in terms of winning and losing, you're playing a losing game with your child!

#### **STEP FOUR**

##### **BE SUPPORTIVE, DO NOT COACH!**

Your role on the parent-coach-athlete team is as a Support player with a capital S! You need to be your child's best fan.

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unconditionally! Leave the coaching and instruction to the coach. Provide encouragement, support, empathy, transportation, money, help with fund-raisers, etc., but... do not coach! Most parents that get into trouble with their children do so because they forget to remember the important position that they play. Coaching interferes with your role as supporter and fan. The last thing your child needs and wants to hear from you after a disappointing performance or loss is what they did technically or strategically wrong. Keep your role as a parent on the team separate from that as coach, and, if by necessity you actually get stuck in the almost no-win position of having to coach your child, try to maintain this separation of roles (i.e. on the deck, field or court say, "Now I'm talking to you as a coach", at home say, "Now I'm talking to you as a parent"). Don't parent when you coach and don't coach at home when you're supposed to be parenting.

### **STEP FIVE**

#### **HELP MAKE THE SPORT FUN FOR YOUR CHILD**

It's a time proven principle of peak performance that the more fun an athlete is having, the more they will learn and the better they will perform. Fun must be present for peak performance to happen at every level of sports from youth to world class competitor! When a child stops having fun and begins to dread practice or competition, it's time for you as a parent to become concerned! When the sport or game becomes too serious, athletes have a tendency to burn out and become susceptible to repetitive performance problems. An easy rule of thumb: If your child is not enjoying what they are doing, nor loving the heck out of it, investigate! What is going on that's preventing them from having fun? Is it the coaching? The pressure? Is it you?! Keep in mind that being in a highly competitive program does not mean that there is no room for fun. The child that continues to play long after the fun is going will soon become a drop out statistic.

### **STEP SIX**

#### **WHOSE GOAL IS IT? FIVE**

leads us to a very important question! Why is your child participating in the sport? Are they doing it because they want to, for them, or because of you. When they have problems in their sport do you talk about them as "our" problems, "our jump isn't high enough", "we're having trouble with our flip turn" , etc. Are they playing because they don't want to disappoint you, because they know how important the sport is to you? Are they playing for rewards and "bonuses" that you give out? Are their goals and aspirations yours or theirs? How invested are you in their success and failure? If they are competing to please you or for your vicarious glory they are in it for the wrong reasons! Further, if they stay involved for you, ultimately everyone will lose. It is quite normal and healthy to want your child to excel and be as successful as possible. But, you cannot make this happen by pressuring them with your expectations or by using guilt or bribery to keep them involved. If they have their own reasons and own goals for participating, they will be far more motivated to excel and therefore far more successful.

### **STEP SEVEN**

#### **YOUR CHILD IS NOT HIS PERFORMANCE-LOVE HIM UNCONDITIONALLY**

Do not equate your child's self-worth and lovability with his performance. The most tragic and damaging mistake I see parents continually make is punishing a child for a bad performance by withdrawing emotionally from him. A child loses a race, strikes out or misses and easy shot on goal and the parent responds with disgust, anger and withdrawal of love and approval. CAUTION: Only use this strategy if you want to damage your child emotionally and ruin your relationship with him. In the 1988 Olympics, when Greg Louganis needed and got a perfect 10 on his last dive to overtake the Chinese diver for the gold medal, his last thought before he went was, "If I don't make it, my mother will still love me".

### **STEP EIGHT**

#### **REMEMBER THE IMPORTANCE OF SELF-ESTEEM IN ALL OF YOUR INTERACTIONS WITH YOUR CHILD-ATHLETE**

Athletes of all ages and levels perform in direct relationship to how they feel about themselves. When your child is in an athletic environment that boosts his self-esteem, he will learn faster, enjoy himself more and perform better under competitive pressure. One thing we all want as children and never stop wanting is to be loved and accepted, and to have our parents feel good about what we do. This is how self-esteem gets established. When your interactions with your child make him feel good about himself, he will, in turn, learn to treat himself this very same way. This does not mean that you have to incongruently compliment your child for a great effort after they have just performed miserably. In this situation being empathic and sensitive to his feelings is what's called for. Self esteem makes the world go round. Make your child feel good about himself and you've given him a gift that lasts a lifetime. Do not interact with your child in a way that assaults his self-esteem by degrading, embarrassing or humiliating him. If you continually put your child down or minimize his accomplishments not only will he learn to do this to himself throughout his life, but he will also repeat your mistake with his children!

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## **Useful Web Sites**

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### **Irish Dancing Shoes:**

[www.rutherfordshoes.com](http://www.rutherfordshoes.com)  
[www.fayshoes.com](http://www.fayshoes.com)  
[www.corrsshoes.com](http://www.corrsshoes.com)

Rutherford Products - Rochester, NY  
Fays - Yonkers, NY  
Corrs Shoes

### **Irish Organizations and Feis Information**

[www.idtana.com](http://www.idtana.com)  
[www.northamericanfeis.org](http://www.northamericanfeis.org)  
[www.petersmithschool.com](http://www.petersmithschool.com)  
[www.backbattertoe.com](http://www.backbattertoe.com)

Irish Dancing Teachers Assoc. of North America  
Listing of Irish dancing feises (comps)  
Peter Smith Feis Information Pages are great!  
Great informational website for dancers

### **Irish Dancing Hair & Wigs**

[www.irishwiglady.com](http://www.irishwiglady.com)

Cindy Coyman's website for wigs

### **Used Irish Dancing Costumes**

[www.mcgahanlees.com](http://www.mcgahanlees.com)  
[www.dance-again.com](http://www.dance-again.com)

McGahan Lees (For Sale) Dress (nicest used costumes around)  
Dance Again used costumes for sale

### **Irish Dancing Designers (New Costumes)**

[www.sioparince.com](http://www.sioparince.com)

Siopa Rince Costumes (high quality & lets you send your own fabric

[www.shamrockstitchery.com](http://www.shamrockstitchery.com)

Class Costumes made here in Long Island - please visit their website when ordering a costume.

### **Music and Videos**

<http://www.celticmusic.com/home.shtml> Celtic music  
<http://www.activevideos.com/irish.htm> Instructional Videos  
<http://www.olivehurley.com> Excellent Instructional Videos  
<http://www.regorecords.com/> Music and videos  
<http://www.dealgan.com/> Pat King's cds and set dance tapes  
<http://www.udance.com/> Mike Shaffer cds and set dance tapes

### **Irish Magazines and Newspapers**

[www.irishdancing.com](http://www.irishdancing.com) Irish Dancing magazine

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