



This dancer is pulled up and balancing on the center of the platform, with all the signs of proper posture for pointe work. A vertical line can be drawn from her head to her toes.

What is the best age to go on pointe?

There is no single correct age to start dancing **on pointe**. You have seen how your child's physical growth follows its own unique pattern. Pointe readiness is also very individual, and it is determined by both physical development and technical growth. Age 11 or 12 is often recommended as a *minimum*, and dancers with several years of serious, regular training tend to be ready by age 12. Nonetheless, there is no age-based universal rule. It is much better to wait than to start without adequate readiness, and each child should be evaluated individually.

What are the signs of pointe readiness?

Before beginning pointe:

- Dancer has had several years of serious ballet training, preferably including targeted **pre-pointe** instruction.
- She has adequate **core**, leg and foot strength to **pull up** consistently on **demi-pointe**.
- She has adequate development of the bone structure to minimize potential for damage to the feet.

As a pointe beginner:

- Her back and knees are straight when she stands on pointe
- Her abdominal muscles are pulled in, without straining, and her shoulders are relaxed.
- Holding the **barre**, she is able to balance on the center of the **platform**, without falling backward or rolling forward.

What should we discuss with the teacher?

Your daughter's teacher has probably spoken with you about pointe readiness; if not, this is an important discussion to initiate. Before your child begins, you should be confident that she is ready and receiving appropriate instruction, which should include pre-pointe training and guidance and a careful progression through the first pointe year. If possible, observe a beginners' pointe class. At professional schools, pointe beginners typically spend only a short portion of the ballet class on pointe, focused on learning how to use the shoes and building strength and flexibility, rather than attempting steps and combinations on pointe.