

This glossary includes vocabulary from the “Words to Know” sections throughout the Guide, along with other terminology that will be helpful as your daughter begins pointe and advances in her ballet training. (For terminology relating to parts of the pointe shoe, please see the diagram on page 9.)

Achilles tendon The largest tendon in the body, running from the heel bone into the calf.

arch The curve of the sole of the foot.

barre Handrail for balance during ballet exercises; to be held lightly, not gripped or leaned on.

breaking in Softening and molding pointe shoes to the feet.

bunion Deformity and inflammation of the big toe joint, often very painful. Proper pointe fitting and training help dancers avoid or delay bunion development.

core strength Muscular strength throughout the torso, including the abdomen, back and pelvis.

demi-pointe/half-pointe Standing and dancing on the balls of the feet.

instep The curve of the top of the foot.

knuckling Crumpling at the toe joints and sinking into the toe box.

metatarsal area The metatarsals are five long bones connecting the heel and toes. “Metatarsal area” refers to the joints between the metatarsals and the toes, where the toes bend at the ball of the foot.

on flat Standing and dancing with the entire sole of the foot or shoe on the floor.

on pointe Standing and dancing on the tips of the toes; also called en pointe (“ahn pwent”).

plié Bending the knees with correct ballet posture.

pulling up Coordinated usage of muscles throughout the body to elevate, not sink, for proper technical development and reducing strain on the muscles and joints of the back, legs and feet.

pre-pointe Special exercises and guidance that target the technique and strength needed for pointe work; may be offered within ballet class or as a separate class, using ballet slippers or demi-pointe shoes.

proprioception Awareness of the body in space.

relevé Rising from flat to demi-pointe or pointe.

rolling to pointe/rolling through Passing through demi-pointe on the way from flat to pointe.

sickling (over-supination) Slanting or twisting of the foot so that it rolls toward the little toes. On flat, the big toe might be raised. On pointe or demi-pointe, the dancer seems to fall outward off the toes.

springing to pointe Rising to pointe with minimal roll-through, almost as if jumping onto the toes.

winging (over-pronation) Slanting or twisting of the foot so that it rolls toward the big toe. On flat, the foot rolls over the big toe. On pointe or demi-pointe, the dancer seems to fall inward off the toes.