

# Teaching Young Beginners: Helpful Hints!

## In General

1. Start with a “non-threatening” activity such as a line dance
2. Move to a simple partner mixer
3. Assign a “home position” where they start every class
4. Explain the “NO PAIN” rule. (*Physical & Emotional!!*)
5. Teach that all dances have a name, rhythm and pattern and use that order to teach all dances
6. Boy always starts with LEFT FOOT and girls always start with the RIGHT (*girls are always right!*)
7. When calling, start with “1” (*1-2-ready-go*)
8. Start all new steps with boys and girls separated facing the center
  - a. walk rhythm in place without music
  - b. walk rhythm in place with music
  - c. walk the pattern without rhythm
  - d. walk the pattern with the rhythm, without music
  - e. walk the pattern with rhythm with music
  - f. stand in front of partner, dance w/o touching
  - g. link-up with partner, dance without music
  - h. dance with partner with music
9. Change partners OFTEN – almost every step.



## Dance Position

Gear to age of students – an example of middle school approach might be:

### Linking-up:

1. Start all dances in two-hand position – but don't call it that!
2. Teach that partners must be “linked” up to dance – like a train.
3. The boy is the engine, he moves the train. He signals the link --arms at right angle, waist high, palms facing, fingers folded in.
4. The girls connect (kachung!) palms down, c-shape
5. Practice moving back and forth being linked-up

Regular dance position – when group is ready, try dance position for waltz and foxtrot.

### Landmarks:



- boy's left hand, girls's right: eye level of shortest person (upside-down rainbow)
- boy's right: girls's shoulder blade – not her waist, not her side
- girl's left: below boy's shoulder on “V” muscle (her parking lot)
- girls look over partner's right shoulder (her window)
- feet pointed at partner – not diagonal

Explain and demonstrate tone and equal resistance – no noodle arms!