

Welcome Young Children and Their Families

This article comes from the statewide e-mail discussions. Holly Kastl, a mom who has three young square dancers, shared the following perspective on promoting dancing.

There is a simple way to make sure square dancing doesn't die out: make it fun for the young children and their families.

My children completed mainstream at early ages: Charley (a girl), five; Brogen, seven; and Jacob, eight. They love it! We haven't been able to go to many dances lately, but they are asking to go again. We went to the state convention last June and had a great time! They want to go back to the clubs and dance. If they are welcomed now when they are little and enjoy square dancing, you have them hooked and trained before they are "too cool" to try it later on.

In Minnesota there are MANY homeschoolers who would truly love an opportunity to learn square dancing with their children. Many homeschooling families are available to learn during the day when most callers might not be busy calling a dance. If it is affordable enough, there is a market there!

There are also MANY homeschool co-ops that meet on a regular basis as well as special-interest classes. Once you have a few families dancing together, it makes it more likely that they will show up together as an outing at your clubs on your dance night. The only hard part with children is that starting at 8 PM for them is late, but they can do it; their brains just don't work as well at that time of the night.

Regardless, I love it. I love doing this with my kids! It is so fun to watch them dance and to see them smile! Fun to watch them make it through the tough calls! Fun to watch them want to have some square-dance accessory to wear so they can look the part: the towel, the tie, the badge or the dress!!!

I am so thankful that the Richfield Squares extended their hugs and their extreme patience while my children took their time getting the hang of it. It is a discipline, so it's especially valuable to the children who have a difficult time learning. I have one son that I thought would NEVER EVER make it! He still has trouble focusing when he starts to get tired, but he CAN do it and more importantly, he LOVES IT! That's the best part! It's supposed to be fun!! It's so rewarding to see my child learn something and then put it to use right along with the adults and to watch them have fun while they are moving and thinking and interacting!

Your clubs CAN come to the potential dancers: the young families! Have some patience. Make it fun. Take a longer time to teach the calls, Lower the expectations a little, and you'll have some new members. It's valuable for children to spend time with the older generations and refreshing for the seniors to see some young sparkling eyes and smiles.