



ARTS + MORE

# FORWARD MOTION FRAMEWORK:

Five Skills Students Build Through Dance Integration

**Forward Motion Framework: Five Skills Students Build Through Dance Integration** shows how meaningful movement strengthens learning while building essential life skills. Each section offers practical strategies, reflection prompts, and classroom-ready activities that help students develop self-regulation, creative problem-solving, emotional literacy, collaboration, and spatial awareness. Designed for educators and teaching artists, this guide supports real-world instruction with clear, actionable steps you can use right away. Ready to get started? Let's move forward together and support student growth through the power of dance.

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Thank you for honoring our work and for helping extend its impact in thoughtful, ethical ways.

# DEFINE YOUR GOALS

A parent shared this with me recently:

"My child is doing great in school, but the moment something goes wrong, he completely falls apart."

I hear this often. And it points to a deeper question many families and educators are carrying right now:

Will our children be ready for life's challenges?

Not just tests or grades—but uncertainty. Change. Disappointment. The moments that don't come with instructions.

In arts-integrated classrooms, we see this play out every day.

A dance doesn't go as planned. A drawing doesn't match the vision. A group drama scene falls apart. These are small moments, but they mirror real life. And they become powerful teaching opportunities.

So many students are capable, motivated, and bright; yet unravel when plans change, or they hear "no." What's missing isn't intelligence.

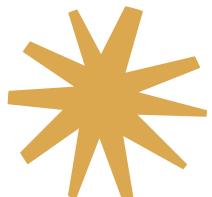
It's guided practice. It's rehearsal.

Arts integration creates space for children to rehearse life skills in meaningful ways. Through movement, visual art, storytelling, and music, students learn to pause, reflect, problem-solve, and try again. They experience setbacks safely. They adapt. They rebuild.

That's exactly what Arts Integration supports.

Through **Moving Forward**, children rehearse:

- ✓ Emotional intelligence – naming and managing big feelings
- ✓ Growth mindset – learning from mistakes
- ✓ Resilience – bouncing back after disappointment
- ✓ Adaptability – adjusting when things change
- ✓ Confidence – trusting themselves through challenge



These aren't abstract concepts. They come alive through creative, hands-on experiences that connect learning to real moments—at home, in classrooms, and during transitions.

At Arts+More, we believe the arts give children a rehearsal space for life. Preparing kids isn't about pushing harder. It's about giving them inner tools they can carry forward—no matter what comes next.

# FIVE CORE SKILLS



Here are five core skills students develop through Arts Integration using dance:

## **1. Self-Regulation**

Students learn to manage their energy, focus their attention, and respond to cues. Movement requires awareness of timing, space, and impulse control—skills that transfer directly to classroom learning.

## **2. Creative Problem-Solving**

Dance invites students to explore multiple solutions. How do you show “change” with your body? How do you represent a math pattern through movement? This builds flexible thinking and innovation.

## **3. Emotional Expression & Literacy**

Movement gives students a safe way to identify and communicate feelings. They learn to recognize emotions in themselves and others, strengthening empathy and emotional intelligence.

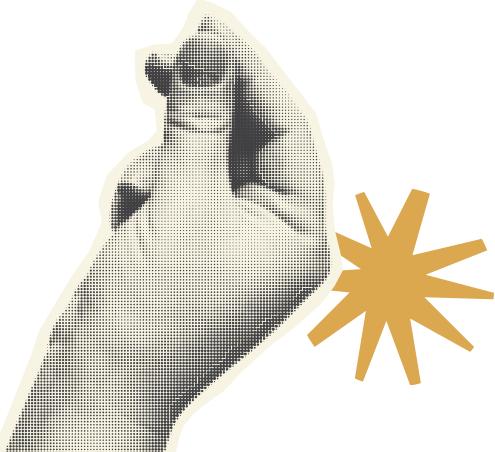
## **4. Collaboration & Communication**

Partner and group choreography develop listening skills, shared decision-making, and respect for different ideas. Students practice giving and receiving feedback in real time.

## **5. Spatial Awareness & Kinesthetic Learning**

Dance strengthens understanding of space, sequencing, and relationships; supporting concepts in math, science, and literacy while engaging learners who thrive through movement.

Together, these skills support academic growth while building resilience, confidence, and adaptability—the same life skills students will rely on far beyond the classroom.



# REFLECT & GROW



The best way to measure skills from arts integration is a mix of observation, reflection, and structured assessment—focusing on growth rather than just “correct” outcomes.

Here's a practical approach for a classroom:

- 1. Rubrics:** Create simple, skill-based rubrics for each target area—self-regulation, collaboration, creative problem-solving, emotional literacy, and spatial awareness. Include observable behaviors, like staying on task, contributing ideas in a group, experimenting with movement, or expressing emotions through gestures.
- 2. Reflection and Journals:** Ask students to reflect on their experiences after activities. Questions like “What part was challenging?” or “How did you adjust when something didn’t go as planned?” provide insight into emotional intelligence, adaptability, and growth mindset.
- 3. Peer and Self-Assessment:** Encourage students to give feedback to themselves and peers through a **SPARK SESSION**. They can identify strengths, note improvements, or set goals for the next activity. This promotes metacognition and reinforces collaboration skills.
- 4. Performance Tasks:** Use short, structured movement tasks tied to academic concepts. Observe how students solve problems, follow sequences, or respond to changes. For example, can they adjust a dance pattern to match a math or science concept?
- 5. Anecdotal Notes:** Teachers and teaching artists can track behaviors during activities, noting moments of persistence, innovation, or social-emotional growth. Over time, patterns emerge showing skill development.

Combining these approaches gives a holistic picture of both individual and group growth, while keeping assessment flexible, authentic, and supportive of learning through dance.

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GROWTH BEGINS WHEN  
YOUR STUDENTS  
START REFLECTING.

# OBSERVATION

## Moving Forward: Five Skills Classroom Rubric

| Skill   | Emerging (1)   | Developing (2)  | Proficient (3)  | Exemplary (4)  |
|---|--|---|---|--|
| <b>Self-Regulation</b>                              | Struggles to focus or follow directions; easily frustrated | Can stay on task with reminders; sometimes adjusts behavior       | Usually maintains focus and adjusts behavior independently                | Consistently focused and adapts behavior in challenging situations without support             |
| <b>Creative Problem-Solving</b>                     | Relies on one approach; avoids experimenting               | Tries new ideas with guidance; occasionally solves problems       | Generates multiple solutions independently; explores different approaches | Innovates and adapts solutions confidently; takes risks to improve outcomes                    |
| <b>Emotional Literacy</b>                           | Has difficulty expressing or identifying feelings          | Sometimes identifies feelings and responds appropriately          | Usually recognizes emotions and expresses them clearly                    | Consistently demonstrates awareness of self and others' emotions and responds thoughtfully     |
| <b>Collaboration</b>                                | Rarely participates or works with others respectfully      | Participates with support; sometimes listens to peers             | Works cooperatively; contributes ideas and respects others                | Actively supports team, encourages peers, and demonstrates strong leadership in group tasks    |
| <b>Spatial Awareness &amp; Kinesthetic Learning</b> | Struggles to move safely or follow movement patterns       | Follows patterns with some guidance; occasionally misjudges space | Moves confidently, aware of self and others; sequences are accurate       | Demonstrates advanced control, fluidity, and precision; adapts movement to new contexts easily |



# BUILD LASTING HABITS

"I will take a few minutes each class to observe and note how students are using self-regulation, problem-solving, emotional awareness, collaboration, and spatial skills, so I can track growth and adjust activities to support their learning."



**Habit:**

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**Habit:**

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**Habit:**

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