



## Early Childhood Classroom Behavior

The goal of all of the music classes I teach is to engage children in active music-making as a joyful, group experience. Your children see me only once a week, which isn't enough to establish a strong feeling of trust for children so young. It will come over time, but don't expect too much too fast. It is you that they know and trust, so it is very important that you are engaged in all of the activities, even when your child is not! **Most young children tend to fade in and out of activities; very few of them are completely engaged for the entire class.**

Sing and dance with your child. If he or she does not want to participate, just continue with the activity and let me worry about the kids. My general policy is if one child is not engaged in an activity, I usually let him or her go, knowing that the magic of the music will eventually pull him or her back into the moment. If that doesn't do it, often just seeing Mom having fun brings the child back to the circle. If too many children get off track, however, I will switch gears to redirect wanderers.

### **I do ask you take action in the following cases:**

- If your child is doing something that is dangerous to him/herself or someone else.
- If your child is using one of the instruments or props in an inappropriate manner.
- If your child is creating a disturbance such that we cannot continue with class. In this rare case, I ask you to step into the hall until your child calms down, and then rejoin the class. And if it is obvious that your child is "done" for the day before class is over, that's okay.

**Understand that all children learn at different rates and in different ways.** Some children will be quiet in class, simply absorbing all the stimuli. Other children may be very active. They may not even appear to be "learning" . . . but they, too, are absorbing the tones and rhythms as they move about. Some children will do everything perfectly at home, but not in class. (My own son, who never met a stranger, completely shocked me at our first Musikgarten class by suddenly becoming clingy for the first time in his life. *Who was this shy child?!* I wondered.) Let me assure you that the only expectation I have for your child is that he or she is there.

So relax and enjoy the class and the magic of the music. And if your child does one of those things above, don't worry . . . all of our children have done it at one point or another. If they haven't, they probably will in the not-too-distant-future. **It is not a reflection of you or your child; it is simply the action of a young child who is temporarily out of sync with the expectations of the moment.**





## Early Childhood Classroom Behavior

The goal of all of the music classes I teach is to engage children in active music-making as a joyful, group experience. I love working with toddlers, even though we all know that the toddler stage can sometimes be . . . . challenging.

- Your children see me only once a week, which isn't enough to establish a strong feeling of trust in children so young. It will come over time, but don't expect too much too fast.
- Your toddler knows and trusts **you** . . . . so it is very important that you are engaged in all of the activities, even when your child is not! Model the behavior you would like to see—sing, dance, chant, play the instruments. Your participation signals to your child that what we are doing is important and fun.
- A typical class may feature a dozen activities, each lasting 1-3 minutes. Toddlers have short attention spans and are not able to focus much longer than this. If one activity doesn't engage your child, remember that I will be shifting gears momentarily.
- Most toddlers fade in and out of activities; very few of them are completely engaged for the entire class. This is normal!
- Please do not force your child to participate. Opting out of or simply watching an activity is an acceptable response at this age.
- If your child does not want to participate: continue with the activity and let me worry about the kids. My general rule of thumb is that when one or two children are not engaged, I know that the magic of the music will eventually pull them back into the moment. Sometimes just seeing Mom having fun brings the child back to the circle. If too many children get off track, however, I will switch gears to get them back to their parents' laps.
- Instruments are not toys, and young children need to be shown how to handle instruments gently and carefully.
- Toddlers can learn to wait their turn . . . . but it isn't easy. I will come around with instruments/manipulates while they learn to wait. Children need to be sitting down to work with instruments.
- Toddlers will want to experiment with instruments and I do not expect them to copy me perfectly. I am modeling various ways to play the instruments, but I know that

