



## 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. Most of your children only see me 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! *In fact, most 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 opts out, 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 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 get them back to their parents' laps. 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. I wondered, who was this shy child?!) 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.*

