

What to Expect at Musikgarten

Part 1: The role of the caregiver

- **Engage with your child.** You are here to practice active music-making with your child so that the fun and learning will continue at home. My role as teacher is merely to model activities while guiding our group so that you can focus on your little one and enjoy your time together.
- **Don't expect too much too fast.** Your child sees me only once a week, and this is not enough time to establish a strong feeling of trust right away, but it will come over time. Your toddler knows and trusts you. . . so it is very important that you participate in all the activities—*especially when your child doesn't*. Your participation shows that what we are doing is safe, important, and fun.
- **Sing and dance, both in class and at home.** Together we can surround our children with live voices, which is so important for musical development. No worries if you think you sing off-key; studies have shown that this will not impair your child's ability to match pitch. Your child loves the sound of your voice and thinks you are a rock star. In fact, your voice is your child's *favorite sound* in the world. Let your inner critic go and have fun. Dance like nobody's watching!
- **Do not force your child to participate.** Opting out of an activity is a perfectly acceptable and common response at this age. Toddlers learn a great deal through observation. Practice saying, "Thank you for listening!" or "Thank you for watching!"
- **Offer choices within appropriate limits.** Toddler won't be fully able to copy all actions. Avoid unnecessary power struggles by allowing your child to *participate as he or she is able and comfortable*. Most activities can be performed EITHER sitting on your lap OR on the floor. Toddlers may want the comfort of being held at circle time OR they may want to walk around the circle. Sticks can be tapped on the floor OR together, etc.
- **Don't Talk – Just Do It.** We often make the mistake of trying to get the children to do something by verbally coaxing them. This very rarely works in a group situation and the talking just adds to the noise level in the room! Instead, *simply model the desired behavior for your child*. He or she will not want to miss out on the fun for long.
- **Do, however, intervene when necessary.** Please do not allow your child to misuse the instruments or do something that is dangerous to him or herself or other children.
- **Please step into the hallway if your child creates a disruptive disturbance.** This teaches sensitivity and respect for the others in the group. And if it is obvious that your child is "done" for the day before class is over, that's okay. Sometimes less is more. We all have limits!

