

Music Together at Music Center of the Northwest Guidelines and Best Practices

You've made the first steps to instilling you little one with a lifelong love of music. These guidelines will help make each class the best possible.

Class Attendance - Regular attendance gets the most out of class. Of course, we all have other obligations but making the class a priority will make a huge difference in what you and your little one receive from the class.

Timeliness - Arrive on time as a courtesy to yourself and others. The "Hello Song" is designed to welcome each family into a wonderful music making experience. If this song is missed, the class can seem disjointed to your little one. If you must miss the "Hello Song," sing it to your little one before coming into class!

Makeup policy - Missed class must be rescheduled and advanced make ups can happen by contacting the teacher. All make up classes must be confirmed by your teacher.

Sickness - If you or your little one is suffering from any of the following: fever, runny nose, virus, serious cough, please stay home and attend one of our extensive makeup options on a day when you feel much better!

Running - For safety, use "dancing feet" in class. Wandering and exploring are expected and welcome.

Food - Snacks are a distraction in class and lead to other students wanting them. Nursing and bottle feeding are expected and completely okay.

Toys - Please do not bring toys into the Music Together Room. These are extremely tempting to other students and could result in a few meltdowns!

Listen to CD - Frequently and all the way through. Don't skip tonal patterns or rhythm patterns, they are the shorten versions of the pieces they follow and allow for small connections to be made. Think learning words before learning complete sentences.

Use the Songbook - Even if you are unable to read music, you will find the songbook extremely beneficial. This resource helps solidify that "reading" music is similar to reading other books at home. Try singing with the book before bedtime as a nighttime ritual.

Music Continuum - Music making doesn't stop at the end of the "Goodbye Song." Music is everywhere and can be made anywhere. Sing about the stoplight on the way home, about your friends at a playdate, when you are eating dinner. Dance and find new ways to make music. Bring your ideas to class to share!

Participation in Class - You are the most important role model for your child! Even if you feel like you “can’t carry a tune in a bucket,” you are always encouraged to sing in class.

Music Together® is a program which aims to build a musical relationship between caregiver and child. To this end, we request that the caregiver(s) participate fully in the activities and keep in-depth chatting to a minimum. Please maintain focus and avoid talking between class activities. This is a time to listen for musical responses from your child. Talking will only distract your child from the musical experience we are so carefully creating.

A positive joyful attitude is far more important than formal music training. Dispositions, or attitudes, can only be learned from parents or significant caregivers. Attitudes are important because they motivate children to learn. When caregivers genuinely enjoy an activity, the children, who want to be like adults, will too.

Be enthusiastic, but do not force your child to play or sing if he doesn’t want to at that moment. Remember, a child who observes is participating mentally, and he/she will probably sing many of the songs during the ride home from music class!

Please resist the urge to constantly give your child verbal instruction. Children have the amazing ability to teach themselves through play and even the most well-meaning adult can disrupt that process by giving too much direction. Allow your child to experience the class in his or her own way, whether by constant movement, sitting and staring, tasting instruments rather than playing them, etc. We know from working with hundreds of children over the years that each child is busy processing the musical information, even if that’s not apparent during class activities. Trust this process, relax and let your child be, and you will begin to see new musical behaviors emerging as the session progresses.

Maintain a nonjudgmental positive attitude toward your child as well as others in the class. Each child will react differently, so avoid comparing your child with others.

Most of all, have fun with your child!