



Developmental Music Programs for Early-Aged Children And The Adults Who Love Them!

HOW TO ENSURE YOUR CHILD GETS THE MOST FROM

Romper Rhythms & Fun

When a young child engages in structured play, his/her opportunity for learning and development is great. In order to maximize this opportunity, it is important that you, the parent/caregiver, play an active role in the program. The following tips are based on the research done by the Center for Music and the Young Child in Princeton, New Jersey:

1. **Create a sense of anticipation.** Prior to class say excitedly to your child, “We’re going to music class today.” As you enter the classroom, say, “Here we are at music class. Let’s go find a seat.” When your child eagerly anticipates class, he/she will be more likely to enter a focused state of learning at the very onset of the session.
2. **Participate in class.** Children under the age of 5 love nothing more than to imitate the adults they love. Therefore, the most important thing you can do is participate in every aspect of class. Sing the songs (even if you don’t know all the words, sing la, la, la) and engage in all of the movement activities. This is especially helpful at those times when your child loses focus. By calling attention to yourself and all the fun you’re having, your child will quickly re-enter a state of learning. Likewise, if you seem self-conscious about singing and moving, your child most definitely will too.
3. **Set limits.** Allow your child to have freedom of movement, but within set boundaries. Any time your child wants to explore within the realms of the circle, allow him/her to do so. Your child will usually come back to you when he/she sees you participating in the activity. If you see that your child is embarking outside of appropriate boundaries, however, like “borrowing” another child’s instrument or running to other areas of the classroom, go to your child and guide him/her back into the activity by saying, “We’re at music class, so let’s go back to our seat and sing some more.”
4. **Be Consistent.** Your child will reap the most developmental benefits if music and movement become a part of his/her weekly schedule. Most early-aged children do not remain in a prolonged state of learning at their first, or even second music class (Actually, this is true for all types of structured play programs). It is therefore important that you set aside the time each week to take your child to class. When your child expects to go to class, it gives him/her a sense of control over their environment. This is vital to your child’s ability to grow beyond the initial feeling of over stimulation that sometimes comes with the

first class and reach a point where he/she is able to maintain a prolonged state of learning throughout his/her future classes. Keep in mind that if you break the regular schedule for more than a week or two, he/she will have to get acclimated all over again. Of course, you know when your child is having an “off” day either due to illness, teething, or something else, and on these days it is better to skip class.

5. **Keep it fun!** Above all, remember that in order for any structured play program to be beneficial, it must be enjoyable. If your child doesn't seem to enjoy class after his/her third or fourth consecutive try, it is best for you to reevaluate whether it is an appropriate addition to his/her schedule. Talk to the instructor about your observations. It may be better to wait a month or two and then resume class, or it may just be that you should choose a class that meets at a different time of day.