

EARLY CHILDHOOD MUSIC CLASSES

My child is not even a year old! Why should she be in a music class? (And other Frequently Asked Questions)

Why should my young child be enrolled in a music class?

We learn music similar to how we learn language. As children are learning a language, they are first immersed in the speech around them. When they feel comfortable, children begin to babble. This babbling is often interpreted as attempts at language, but this class will view each child's sounds as music and bring them into a musical context. Children only learn to speak, read, and write in a language after immersion and experimentation. Similarly, children first need to be exposed aurally to a wide variety of music and experiment before they learn to sing, move to, and eventually read and write music recognizable to adults.

What does an early childhood music class look like?

Imagine a room with children, parents, teachers, and colorful props that is filled with many types of vocal sounds. We may start by sitting in a circle, but this will soon be interrupted as we begin to move to the music. Early childhood music classes at *Imagine Music and Arts* provide an opportunity for children to be immersed in and to interact with music in a rich music environment. All classes will include singing and chanting in a wide variety of tonalities and meters, along with age-appropriate movement focusing on sustained, continuous, and relaxed motions. Classes will include a variety of tonal and rhythm patterns that will be adjusted based on age level and readiness of the individuals.

Children are not expected to produce "correct" responses during class. **This is not a "sing along" class** (although you are encouraged to sing along!). This class will instead focus on providing an opportunity for your child to develop musical syntax and fluency by exploring a musical environment similar to the language environment they experiment in every day.

What is my role as a parent inside and outside of the classroom?

Parents should sit with your child in the circle and participate in class. **Please do not force your child to participate.** Rather, serve as another musical model for your child by imitating the movements the teacher is doing. Feel free to sing along as the songs become familiar. If your child likes to wander during class, there is no problem with that! You may gently encourage your child to join us, but please do not force them. Unless the child is causing harm to herself or others or interfering with learning, the teacher will not intervene. The children wandering around the room are often paying attention and absorbing way more information than the adults think!

Please do not bring food, drink, or toys to class. This tends to distract the other children. Keep anything of this nature in a bag for use outside of the room before or after class.

What should I do with the recordings the teacher gave me?

The teacher will make a recording of the semester's songs and chants, which can act as an aid as you create a rich musical environment for your child at home. If you feel comfortable, sing the songs and perform the chants for or with your child. Interacting musically with your children will help improve their musical growth.

I am worried that my child is not participating in class. What can I do?

Relax!! Every child learns differently. A child wandering the room who does not seem to be paying attention may go home and perform an entire music class for her stuffed animals. Some children may not feel comfortable giving an individual musical response yet. Your child will participate when she is ready. Forcing her to participate will only harm your child's growth, and she may begin to resent music.

Why don't the children sing the songs with you?

The children are not developmentally ready to coordinate their singing with an adult. As the teacher sings for them, they may experiment by responding vocally or through movement. Children don't usually gain the musical maturity to coordinate their singing with that of an adult until around age five.

Why do you do so many songs and chants without words?

Since language is so prevalent and necessary in our children's worlds, children tend to focus first on the text of a song rather than the musical content. By removing the words, we can help them focus on the musical components of the songs rather than the text.

Some of the songs and chants you perform sound difficult. If I'm having trouble learning them, how is my young child going to learn them?

Some of the songs and chants are in unusual tonalities and meters. Most of our lives as adults, we have heard major tonality and duple meter. Since children have not been exposed to the depth of major, duple songs that adults have, learning songs and chants in unusual tonalities and meters is no more difficult for them. Eventually, learning a variety of tonalities and meters will make the more common ones easier to understand in depth.

Why aren't more instruments used during class?

At this age, children learn music best through the human voice. In addition, they do not possess the fine motor skills required to perform the music they hear in their heads accurately on an instrument. Occasionally we will play some percussion instruments as an opportunity to explore timbre and have some fun!

Please feel free to ask any additional questions!!