

## HELPFUL GUIDELINES AND INFORMATION

1. Please be ready to enter the classroom **5 minutes prior** to the scheduled class time to allow for great TRANSITION time for this age group. The shoe room/gathering area will be open at least 10-15 minutes prior to every class. **Please allow time for toileting, removal of coats, shoes, etc.** so that we are able to begin each class promptly at its scheduled time. It can actually become comical if one child needs to leave the room; before you know it the entire class has to go! We'll open classroom door @3 minutes before class to greet children and parents upon arrival. I will provide something to explore – instruments, books or other manipulatives - for a few minutes of special Gathering Time. This time is invaluable in helping your child feel comfortable and settled before class begins..
2. The greeting song allows us to acknowledge each child's presence in class, and children come to expect it as a part of our opening ritual. Missing this song can be unsettling to children, yours and others.
3. The preschool child is learning to be self-sufficient in a group setting of peers, while also needing the affirmation and emotional security provided by you, the parent. Children at this age are at various stages of comfort when separating from parents or caregivers; some children may need their adults with them a bit longer than others as class begins, and maybe they may even need you to STAY WITH THEM for the whole class. This is perfectly fine! I want to honor each child's needs and help them to build rapport and trust in their ongoing emotional journey. You and I as partners can work together to develop the best plan for your child where separation anxiety is a concern.

In order to be available for your child should he/she need a reassuring glance or hug during the first 30 minutes of class time, we recommend that adults remain right outside the door in the hall. This is particularly important at the start of the semester, when the children are just learning what to expect from our weekly class routines. Note: Children who adjusted to the separation by the end of last semester, may need to repeat the adjustment process again this semester. That's ok and very normal!

4. The last fifteen minutes of class, appropriately named Family Sharing Time, provides a wonderful opportunity for joyful musical interaction between you and your child. Sharing Time is a time of transition from the one-on-one teacher/child time to the larger group setting; we can have fun, share a bit of our learning and activities with you, and joyfully build a larger community of music lovers! Remember, however, that your child has been attentive for a long 20-30 minutes before you rejoin the class; it may be hard to refocus once grownups are called in. Some may need just to snuggle for awhile (become Lap Potatoes). **Remember to enjoy your I LOVE YOU RITUAL that you have created with your child and FOLLOW YOUR CHILD'S LEAD.** We have found that it helps if you discuss this special time with your child in advance – how excited you will be to join him in the classroom – how you can't wait to see what he's done, etc., and if you have concerns, *please* feel free to discuss your child's needs/responses with me.
5. **I am eager to address any and all of your early childhood developmental questions and/or concerns, or classroom questions.** Therefore, if time does not allow us to chat after class (between classes), please let me know and I will call you at a time convenient for you, or we can arrange a time to meet. I want to always be there for you and your family!
6. **We like to know in advance if you will be absent.** We are building a community here, and the children will acknowledge and sing to their friends when one is "absent." Please call me at [redacted] when you become aware that you will need to miss class due to vacation, schedule conflict or illness. Otherwise I will be calling to check on you!
7. **Make-ups:** Each lesson intentionally incorporates a great deal of repetition (this strengthens neural connections in the brain), so it is unlikely your child will "miss anything new" by a rare absence as we always repeat an activity at least once in a following week. Taking your child to a different class with new children and a different teacher, however, could very likely be unsettling to him/her (and the class) and is therefore not recommended. Please call and speak with me at **347-8178** to discuss any make-up class desires.
8. **Please leave all personal items and toys in Fellowship Hall** so your child's eyes and hands will be free for exploration of classroom manipulatives/instruments/etc, and the classroom free from distraction
9. No food or juice in class, please. This seems to start a "want one" epidemic!
10. Wear loose and comfortable clothing as we sit on the floor and move up and down a lot!
11. **Singing**, a critical component of *Imagine That!*, supports this basic and beautiful form of human expression. The three, four, and five- year-olds ability to be expressive in language extends to exploration of his/her many voices, singing songs in a limited range, and emerging pitch accuracy. The curriculum is presented specifically and systematically to further encourage the development of your child's singing voice. The benefits of singing, however, extend beyond the ability to match pitches. Singing helps with memory and recall, with physical development, creativity and socialization. Your child is provided many examples of quality singing through class-time together and in listening repeatedly to the home CD.

12. Please make listening and responding in class a priority behavior to model for your child. **Please resist adult conversation.** This is the fastest way for your child to learn excellent listening activities and your modeling demonstrates respect for the other class participants and teacher as well.
13. **Emotional & Cognitive Development** – Imagine That? That’s right – this precious timeframe 3 ½ -5 is the perfect time to help your child learn skills that will both help them soar in the social department and allow them to achieve great success in ensemble(group) when they move to the *Young Child* curriculum! Not only will the children learn to become good team members, but will learn empathy, listening skills and cognitive processes thru the *Kindermusik* experience. We provide the environment that has been lost to this new generation. The “pick-up games” (i.e. baseball, soccer, etc.) of the past are almost non-existent as our world has now structured the play of our 4-year-olds (i.e. T-Ball, Soccer). Our children aren’t needing to ask the following questions any longer, and are therefore deprived of the incredible cognitive development that occurs through the process:
- 1) With whom will I play and how do we get in touch with people?
  - 2) Where will we get equipment?
  - 3) Where will we play?
  - 4) What will be the rules of the game? How will the game be played? How will we make a field?
  - 5) Who will take charge and give instructions on how it will all work?
  - 6) When will everyone be free to play? Organizing schedules.
  - 7) What is fair and not fair?
  - 8) What happens when a rule gets broken?

The process of doing his/her own problem solving in PLAY situations provides PRICELESS brain development, cognitively, emotionally and socially. Did you ever argue with a friend as a child while playing a game? Did you maybe feel bad for awhile? You bet we did! The difference was that we were forced to work through those emotions in order to save our friendships and the game. PRICELESS emotional and social development! Your child will be experiencing a process similar to the above example in the *Imagine That* classroom. Don’t be surprised if one day he/she is NOT SO HAPPY about something that happened in class. That is a wonderful opportunity to help your child grow and develop emotionally. Ask them “What happened?”, “Why he/she is sad or mad?”, “Why they don’t want to go back to class?”, “What could he/she do to become happy again?” We, as teachers look forward to these moments with great joy, knowing the solution is both one the child will find with our help (mine and yours) as the “ASKERS OF THE QUESTIONS.” PRICELESS in today’s world, as our society teaches us to “cut relationships because it takes effort” vs. “putting in the effort to continue relationships.”

14. *Kindermusik* and all Early Childhood experts agree that **you are your child’s most important teacher.** The incredible combination of child, parent, imagination and music does not stop in the classroom. It just begins there! **Set aside some special time each week - each day - to spend time in musical exploration with your child.** This repetition or enhancement of classroom activities actually strengthens your child’s new NEURAL CONNECTIONS in the brain, and retained learning/intelligence will be gained. The Family Activity book suggests activities each week to extend our classroom experiences. Each activity page also provides an important Foundations of Learning statement for you, the parent, to further your understanding of your child’s developmental process at this special age. Playing your home CD regularly is an additional way to trigger memories for your child of our experiences together, as well as to encourage the development and use of his/her singing voice (burn a copy to keep in your car). Try giving your child access to their *Kindermusik* CD; perhaps purchase their own CD player for special music listening. *Observe* your child’s imaginative, musical play, as play is a child’s “work”, and a vital tool for learning. *Kindermusik* also provides more fun online at <http://play.kindermusik.com> where you will enter the code on your home activity guide. After entering your code you will have access to all of the music from your CD’s, a long list of add’l fun activities related to your unit, and also the entire online *Kindermusik* library that you can download using credits.



*Your child will grow not only emotionally and musically in this Imagine That class, but his/her cognitive, physical, listening and language skills will begin to SOAR!!! We are preparing your child for great success in not only in Kindergarten and our Young Child curriculum, but in life!*

**Note: One of the greatest surprises of parents who enroll their children in Imagine That through Young Child curriculum is that the fun growth and development PLAY TIME they experienced in Imagine That had such an important role in their child’s success in school.**

*You will see the difference that “honoring” the 3-5 yr olds appropriate methods of learning through play & guided exploration, actually allows for much greater brain development at the preschool level than any highly structured/performance oriented activity ever could. The experts all agree! FUN!!!*

**Musical Pathways Foundation: Betsy Flanagan, Founder/Director**

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