



VILLAGE HELPFUL GUIDE

- 1) Kindermusik affirms and accepts children wherever they are developmentally. **Free exploration is expected and encouraged!!** It is essential to the child's learning experience. Walkers walk just to walk; they need to practice this skill and it brings them pleasure. The walker loves to explore the environment and this behavior is completely appropriate. The key to "retained learning" is the "happy" child. If your child is emotionally "happy", then retained learning becomes possible! If we force our "babies or walkers" into an activity the way "EVERYONE else" is doing it, then there is nothing to be gained except an unhappy child. Relax – it's okay to be different in this case!!! Just follow your child ☺
- 2) Each activity in village has features and choices for lap babies, crawlers and walkers, all participating at their individual level. Remember, there are only 2 rules in Kindermusik:
 - 1) **"Follow YOUR child"** (They must be happy or they can't learn) There are probably at least 10 ways to participate in any one activity, and diversity is not only welcome, but encouraged! Please respect your child's participation choice. A child who learns **visually** may choose to Watch (even watch from a corner), later doing it all at home. A **kinesthetic** learner may move constantly and touch everything during class, but able to show you focused attention to a song or story later at home. A wandering child may need to explore the environment before settling down to participate. Be observant of where your child is in the development process and you will be able to support and build on it. Remember – it's a PROCESS! and
 - 2) **"Safety First"**: To maintain a positive learning environment in our classroom we ask that you intervene if your child is engaged in unsafe behavior. Our guiding principle is respect for people and property. Running with an instrument, defiant running, throwing instruments (and this may be an exciting new discovery to play with at home), hitting or pushing other children are some of the behaviors that are not allowable in the Kindermusik classroom. The risk of falling, running into people, knocking down other children or breaking instruments is too great.
- 3) Great NETWORKING RESOURCE! This multi-age setting in *Village* allows parents to exchange ideas and observations with the other parents as the babies develop at different rates and in different ways. Older children are fascinated by the younger ones and enjoy the confidence-building role as the older one – the leader, the "big" brother or sister.
- 4) **What if my child seems to just be walking and totally disengaged – no activity appeals to him or commands his attention?** The walker is benefiting from being in the environment whether he chooses to show us or not at that very moment. Remember that he/she is absorbing everything that is going on through all of his/her senses. Experts have said that "if babies and toddlers are awake, they are learning!" I would encourage you to attempt the activity later at home when the environment is free from the stimulation of other babies and when your child is calm and willing.
- 5) **Intentional Touch**: Baby may fuss a little until they get used to this stimulation, or they may even refuse to participate at first. If you experience this resistance, please don't fight it, instead engage in bouncing or rocking or walking to the activity. Attempting the activity regularly at home during a time the baby is willing to participate will help, and eventually the child will look forward to this special time.
- 6) Each week the lesson will move directly from intentional touch to a form of **exercise**. Imposing some discipline on the random movements which infants-young toddlers produce hastens the learning pace of the babies' abilities to acquire useful information about the dimensions of their bodies and how each part works. Once again, if your child is not in the mood for structured exercise some day in class, just modify the activity until your little one is happy. (i.e. bounce, dance, etc)
- 7) Singing & Chanting are long-term musical goals that begin at birth and develop through careful attention to the quality and nature of the sound placed within the environment. The initial singing experience is really one of rapt listening; though the vocal chords are not yet developed, the ears can already discern one sound from another. We can't emphasize the "USE OF YOUR VOICE" enough, whether talking or singing through every activity except the listening activities.
- 8) Our *Village* activities will encourage the constant repositioning of Baby's body in space so that he can get yet another way to view the world. This "variety of views" allows for development of the eyes, understanding of space and position in space, and accommodation of muscles in the body for movement and balance. Each time your child's position is changed, new neural connections are being formed in the brain. Go for it! Get creative! – just remember to support baby's neck.

9) **What if my child starts crying** and disrupting the class? In some cases your baby may have urgent needs to be met such as nursing, feeding, diaper changing. Perhaps Baby just needs a moment in a quiet corner of the room or outside the classroom with only you present (overstimulation sometimes happens in the first few weeks until baby learns to integrate the new sounds and sights and feel comfortable). Feel free to leave the classroom, just outside the door, and return within a few minutes and see if Baby is more content. There may be a RARE circumstance where it would be better to leave class altogether for that day, sometimes a sign of illness onset. This happens very seldom, but we must keep “the child’s best interest” in mind at all times. If this happens, please do call me with an update later that day as I will be concerned.

10) **The most important thing you can do for your child in class is to be an active, focused and joyfully exuberant participant.** Children “sense” our joy, fear, hesitancy, etc. and respond in turn. You do not need to “know how” to sing to have a successful Village experience. Your child does not judge (or even recognize) your singing ability; he/she is, however, ready and eager to respond to your enthusiastic and joyful vocal and physical interaction with him/her. Your comfort and enthusiasm will transfer to your child.

11) As the community feeling in the classroom will grow throughout the semester, we must be careful about chatting with our neighbor during class. Please make listening and responding a priority behavior to model for your child in class, and **resist adult conversation**. This is the fastest way for your child to learn excellent listening activities and your behavioral modeling demonstrates respect for the other class participants and teacher as well. We do encourage socialization and networking amongst the parents, but from the time we sing “Hello” to singing “Goodbye” the success of your child’s growth and development will be based on focusing our attentions on our children. “Gathering Time” and “Meet & Greet Time” and “After Class” are great occasions for strengthening our social connections.

12) Emotional Stability is one of the wonderful “gifts” of Kindermusik. Emotional outbursts occasionally will occur at “transition” moments in class (i.e. collecting balls or instruments). Outbursts are understandable and even expected. **Achieving emotional stability is a process.** We encourage you to remain calm, remove your child from the room and return when settled (i.e. Say something like, “When you’re ready, we’ll go back in”). When you return, continue to invite your child into the activity and reward with smiles and loving gestures. Extend grace and forgiveness to your child and emotional stability will come. They will learn from you!

13) **Please call me as early as possible before class to let me know that if you will be absent.** My cell number . As “Community Building” is one of our goals in Kindermusik, we want to always recognize “our friends who are absent from class.” The structure of our program would be hindered by an open policy for “make-ups”. 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 to discuss your make-up class desires.

14) *Kindermusik* and all Early Childhood experts agree that **you are your child’s most important teacher**. The incredible combination of child, parent movement 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. The Home Journal provides suggestions for activities each week to extend our classroom experiences. Each journal 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. Even more fun is now available online at <http://play.kindermusik.com> where you will enter the code on your CD. 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. Playing your home CD a *lot* is an additional way to trigger memories for your child of our experiences together. You may burn a copy of the CD for your personal use. In summary, Kindermusik provides high quality materials for your use at home. Use the CD for casual listening and to prompt interaction. Extend activities with suggestions from the Home Journal. Hang the Art Banners where baby can see them (i.e. Mobile-fashion, Wall, etc) These materials are not needed for class and may remain at home. Remember also to simply apply the *Village* methods to any activity that is relevant to your child’s experience. And most importantly –

HAVE FUN WITH YOUR BABY!!



Musical Pathways
Foundation

A good beginning never ends . . .
(608) 576-6688, musicalpathways.net