



OUR TIME HELPFUL GUIDE

1. In the *Our Time* class, music, movement and literacy come together to help you and your child build a relationship that will positively affect your child's development. The teacher's role is to lead you through and teach you activities that are developmentally appropriate for your child, and easily transferable to your HOME. You will get information and techniques to support your child's total growth & learning both in class and at home.
2. 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. We'll open classroom door @3 minutes before class to greet children and parents upon arrival. We 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.
3. 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. Please talk with your little one **PRIOR to class to choose their SPECIAL HELLO movement** for the day. Knowing his/her movement ahead of class will allow your child to feel more comfortable sharing their movement with the class when their turn comes. We want to invite your children to speak in front of the class, but it is not a requirement as that would be PERFORMANCE, and we try to avoid performance moments
4. **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!
5. Wear loose and comfortable clothing as we sit on the floor and move up and down a lot. We recommend removing and leaving shoes in the shoe room. Many sensory nerve endings are present in the feet and our movement activities can most fully be experienced barefoot (stocking feet are acceptable as well, but as the experts say – **"Barefoot is Best"**).
6. In the *Our Time* classroom, the most effective way to encourage your child's participation is to **fully engage in each activity "yourself" with JOYFUL EXUBERANCE!** You do not need to "know how" to sing to have a successful *Our Time* 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.
7. **Please leave all personal items, water, coffee, toys, etc. in Fellowship Hall (or purses in library)** so your child's eyes and hands will be free for exploration of classroom manipulatives/instruments/etc. (Please make me aware of "security blanket" needs)
8. **We like to know in advance if you will be absent.** As "Community Building" is one of our goals in Kindermusik, we want to always recognize "our friends who are absent from class." Please call me at _____ 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!
9. **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 _____ to discuss any make-up class desires.
10. Please make listening and responding a priority behavior to model for your child in class. **Please resist adult conversation.** During "Listening Activities" your child may get excited and want to respond to what he/she is hearing on the CD. **We love that, but just keep your listening index finger to your lips, smile and "nod yes" that you understand.** 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.
11. Your child will show you their favorite way to learn: VISUALLY (watch), AUDITORIALLY (listen), KINESTHEICALLY (move & touch). Please respect your child's participation choice. A child who learns visually may choose to watch (even watch from a corner), later showing you the activity at home. A kinesthetic learner may want to move constantly during class, giving focused attention to a song or story later at home. Be observant of where your child is in the development process and you will be able to support and build on it. Enjoy your child's choice first before offering a change in style of participation. Remember – it's a PROCESS! All experts agree that **PERFORMANCE EXPECTATION AT THIS AGE IS INAPPROPRIATE!**

12. Transitioning is something your child will gain skill at in the Our Time curriculum. If your child is reluctant to transition (Ex. Put the instrument away) then sing to him and gently encourage the transition. Sing “bye-bye ____ (object name)”, and let him/her know that we will play with them again. Typically, the child will release if you count to “3” together and sing “bye-bye ____ (object name).” If your little one needs more time to transition, just wait for an opportunity to whisk the object away so your child can remain HAPPY. Typically within a few activities the child will relinquish. **With practice transitioning in class each week, your child will learn to joyfully transition, not to worry!**

13. To maintain a positive learning environment in our classroom we ask that you intervene if your child is engaged in unsafe behavior. We have two guiding principles: **1) Safety and 2) Respect for people and property**. Running (except in group), throwing instruments, hitting or pushing other children are some of the behaviors that we avoid in the Kindermusik classroom to keep all SAFE. The risk of falling, running into people, knocking down other children or breaking instruments is great. We work to disinfect instruments after each class, but please discourage mouthing instruments due to the risk of passing germs. NOTE: Intervening on the above issues CAN set off a temper tantrum with loud crying or screaming. These emotional outbursts are understandable and even expected. Achieving emotional stability is a process. We encourage you to remain calm, remove your child lovingly from the room and return when settled (“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 stability from experiencing YOUR COMPOSURE. Early childhood experts agree that giving your child **2 viable/productive choices is the best route to change an undesired behavior (e.g. When child running: Would you prefer to sit in Miss Betsy’s lap or mommy’s? Which would you choose?)**

14. Kindermusik provides **HIGH QUALITY HOME MATERIALS** for your use at home, and even 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 fun activities related to your unit, and also the entire online Kindermusik library that you can download using credits. Use the 2 CD’s for casual listening and also to prompt interaction. Extend activities with suggestions from the Home Activity Book. We’ll help you each week with knowing which related activities to choose. Make music with the *Our Time* Home Instrument. Extend Music and Movement Story time with the *Our Time* storybooks. Your materials are not needed for class and may remain at home. 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 own *Kindermusik* CD copy; perhaps purchase their own CD player for special music listening. Remember also to simply apply the *Our Time* methods to any activity that is relevant to your child’s experience. And most importantly - have fun!

15. *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 newly formed NEURAL CONNECTIONS in the brain, wraps it in a material called Myelin, and retained learning/intelligence is gained. The Family Activity book suggests activities each week to extend our classroom experiences and to further your understanding of your child’s developmental process at this special age. *Observe* your child’s imaginative, musical play, as play is a child’s “work”, and a vital tool for learning.

