



# Hudson Education Center for the Arts

## EARLY CHILDHOOD MUSIC PROGRAM

### Program Philosophy:

Music is learned in a similar way to how language is learned. Children need to hear and experiment with large amounts of language and vocabulary before they actually learn to speak, read, and write. Similarly, children need to hear a variety of music and experiment with it before they can sing, move to, and eventually read and create music.

Early childhood classes offered through the Hudson Education Center for the Arts are designed to create a rich, comfortable, and welcoming music environment for the child to interact with and play in. Some children will actively participate, while others will feel more comfortable watching and absorbing the sounds and activities. While classes will vary depending on the age level and musical readiness of the children, all classes will include activities with singing and chanting in a wide variety of tonalities and meters. Many songs performed in class will not have words, because young children tend to focus on the words instead of the musical content. We also create ample opportunity for age-appropriate movement while focusing on guiding children to move in a sustainable, continuous, and relaxed manner that will help them feel and internalize music.

Children will hear a large vocabulary of rhythm and tonal patterns, which they are able to perform in class or at home. There will also be exploration of simple percussion instruments. We do not expect “correct” musical responses from children. Instead, we give children the opportunity to explore music in the same way that they are able to explore language.

### Parents' Role:

Parents should participate in class. Sit with your child in the circle and serve as a good example for your child. If the teacher moves to a song in a certain way, imitate their movement. Parents are encouraged to sing along with songs as they become familiar with them. It is important that parents **do not force their children to participate or do what the teacher does**. Some children will wander around during class, and that is okay! Parents can gently encourage their children to join the group, but please do not force them. This is

all part of creating an exploratory learning environment for the children, and the teacher will not intervene unless a child is harming others or interfering with other students' learning. Please limit talking during class so that children can listen and respond to the teacher's songs and chants.

It is completely okay for children to wander around the classroom at times. Children are still paying attention and hearing the musical sounds if they are not sitting in the circle. However, due to the safety of all children in the class, running is discouraged. If this becomes a concern, we will help parents problem solve solutions. Parents should stay near their children and gently guide them back to the activity. Parents can help their children imitate by imitating teacher's vocalizations, actions, and words during class and at home.

*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.*

Your teacher will share all of the songs that will be used for the semester. These recordings can be played whenever possible (in the car, while your child is playing at home, etc.) At home, play the recordings and engage with your child in the activities from class. This way, children can experience the musical environment created in class in a similar way at home. The more children are exposed to musical play and exploration, the more they will learn! If you are able to sing the songs or chants performed in class, please do so during the week. This helps create the richest musical environment possible for your child at home.

In the event of a class cancellation due to inclement weather, makeup classes will be held the week following the semester.

## **FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS**

*1. Why do you do so many songs and chants without words?*

When songs or chants are presented with text, the children tend to focus on the text rather than musical content. Children need words in order to survive in their environment and get what they want. The rewards for musical production are much less tangible. Therefore, words tend to be more tempting to absorb, especially when children are in the midst of the most critical part of the language-learning process. Because of this, text can inhibit music learning.

*2. The songs and chants that you perform seem so difficult. I have trouble learning them. Aren't they too difficult for a young child?*

The songs that we teach are difficult for adults because they are in unusual tonalities and meters that we don't usually hear. We, as adults, have spent much of our lives listening to major tonality and duple meter. Because of this, we have lots of major/duple baggage that makes it difficult for us to learn songs that are not major or duple. Children, on the other hand, are like learning-sponges and will find the songs and chants in unusual meters and

tonalities as easy as many of the songs and chants in major duple. Learning songs in unusual tonalities and meters will eventually help them understand the more frequently-used tonalities and meters better and with greater depth.

*3. Why don't you use more instruments?*

At this point in a child's music education, extensive use of instruments is not developmentally appropriate. Children have not developed the fine motor coordination to accurately play many instruments. Also, research shows that children respond to parts of music more quickly when they are presented by the human voice. We include some instrumental play to give children the opportunity to explore different timbres, and because it's fun!

*4. I am really worried that my child is not participating in class. What should I do?*

It is 100% okay!!! Children will participate when they are ready. Until then, know that some children learn best from watching and silently absorbing what we do in class. It is completely normal for children to observe rather than participate, and it is not an indicator of a child's interest or musical ability. Children are not assessed based on how they perform for teachers in class. Many students that quietly sit or wander around the room (seemingly not paying attention) end up achieving at very high levels in music! Forcing a child to participate will do more harm than good, because they will grow to resent music rather than enjoying it.

*5. Why don't the children sing with you?*

They are not developmentally ready. Until children are musically ready, they will not be able to coordinate their singing with that of an adult. We sing for the children and then hope that they will experiment with what they hear. As the children mature musically, they will perform with us, but this does not typically happen until about age five.

If you have any other questions, please talk with your teacher. Teachers want to know what would help your child in class, and we love to talk about the reasons for teaching what we teach!. The more communication that there is between parents/caregivers and teachers the better! We look forward to a wonderful semester!

All classes are taught by:  
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