



Sweet Beats Music Class

Parent & Care-Giver Guide

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Rowlett Parks & Recreation Programs

Philosophy

These guidelines are designed to give parents and caregivers the information they need to get the most out of their music classes. The goal is to enable all children in the First Steps in Music classes to reach their musical potential through involvement in informal music-and-movement activities.

These activities come from the rich body of traditional children's folk songs and rhymes, with the intent of preserving and passing on this important cultural heritage to today's children.

Each class is designed to appear playful while providing a carefully planned curriculum that includes child-appropriate activities and a balanced diet of music-and-movement experiences. Children are not taught "formally" about the specifics of music; instead, they "informally" experience music through a series of integrated activities.

Many researchers agree that beginning music education at a young age is important, and Dr. John Feierabend created First Steps in Music to encourage musical growth for the very young. The curriculum contains two volumes: *First Steps in Music for Infants and Toddlers* and *First Steps in Music for Preschool and Beyond*. By participating in these authentic musical activities, children develop a rich vocabulary of "tune-ful, beat-ful, and art-ful" experiences that lay the groundwork for a lifetime of musical enjoyment.

Parent participation is a key ingredient to the success of the First Steps in Music program. Parents are given the tools they need to repeat the quality musical experiences at home. Repetition is important in the development of musical skills.

Basics

Class Schedules and Cost:

All classes will be offered as long as there is sufficient enrollment. There will be no more than 10 children registered in any class. Classes will be held each Saturday morning from June 11 - July 16, for a total of 6 classes.

Infants and Toddlers: 30-minute classes for 6 weeks..... \$120

Nursery and Preschoolers: 40-minute classes for 6 weeks.....\$132

If the teacher must cancel a class, parents will be notified.

If a parent and child must miss a class, there are not any make-up classes available. Parents do not need to inform the teacher of an impending absence.

If a parent wishes to photograph or record their own child, they may do so. We ask that parents respect the privacy of other families and only take images of their own child, unless permission has been given otherwise.

Siblings:

If a parent has two or more children under the age of five, it is recommended that each child is registered for the appropriate class. However, babies under age 1 may attend any of the other classes with a registered sibling. It is highly recommended that there be one parent or caregiver per child, for the benefit of one-on-one interaction and bonding.

Expectations for Teacher, Parents and Children

1. The teacher is responsible for leading the class in music making activities and guiding student learning.
2. The child is responsible for observing, participating, or a combination of both, depending on personality and comfort level.
3. The parent is responsible for participating in the class activities, focusing on his/her own child during class, and dealing with any discipline problems that should arise in a timely manner.
4. The parent is responsible for learning the activities and repeating them at home during receptive moments.
5. It is perfectly fine for a child to wander during class activities. If, however, the child's behavior becomes distracting to other children, it is the parents' responsibility to correct the behavior. If this cannot be done, then the parent should remove the child from the room until s/he has regained composure. It usually takes about 4 weeks for a young child to learn the routine. "Repetition is the mother of all learning." ~Dr. John Feierabend

Please and Thank You:

1. Please avoid holding conversations with other adults during class activities.
2. Please take your child out of the class and into the hallway if they are having a difficult time settling. We welcome all children, but when they are upset and

crying or noisy and distracting, it affects everyone in class.

3. Please come back for more musical fun when your child is calm.
4. Please restrain your child from hitting or throwing instruments. Safety in class is a priority.
5. Please keep personal items (teddy bears, blankies) out of the area of activity.
6. Thank you for keeping food and drinks out of the room.
7. Thank you for not bringing unregistered siblings to class.
8. Thank you for practicing these fun musical activities at home with your child.

Class Structure and Curriculum Components

Infant (0-12 Months)

Classes begin with 10 minutes of free play for parent and child. An assortment of musical instruments and sound-making toys are made available in some cases. In some classes, trampoline and a rocking horse are available for a child to jump on or ride while a parent speaks a rhyme or sings a song to the child's beat. Free play concludes with the group singing a favorite song, followed by group activities for infants, which include:

Bounces- Parents bounce baby to the beat of a song or rhyme.

Wiggles- Parents wiggle baby's fingers or toes to the beat of a song or rhyme.

Tickles- Parents tickle baby at the end of a song or rhyme.

Tapping/Clapping- Parents tap on baby's hands or feet to the beat of a song or rhyme.

Simple Songs- Parents and teachers sing songs with a limited tonal range for baby. (These are the first songs baby will be able to sing independently as that skill develops.)

Beat Motions with Recordings- Parents tap baby, bounce baby, walk or dance with baby to recorded music.

Lullabies- Teacher sings a lullaby as parents rock their babies.

NOTE: Parents learn all songs and rhymes for repetition at home.

Toddler (13-24 Months)

Classes begin with 10 minutes of free play for parent and child. An assortment of musical instruments and

sound-making toys are made available in the classroom. In some classes, trampoline and rocking horse are available for a child to jump on or ride while a parent speaks a rhyme or sings a song to the child's beat. Free play concludes with the group singing a favorite song, followed by group activities for toddlers, which include:

Bounces- Parents bounce toddler to the beat of a song or rhyme.

Wiggles- Parents wiggle toddler's fingers or toes to the beat of a song or rhyme.

Tickles- Parents tickle toddler at the end of a song or rhyme.

Tapping/Clapping- Parents tap on toddler's hands to the beat of a song or rhyme. (Toddlers may also tap on parent's hands or clap his or her own hands to the beat of a song or rhyme.)

Simple Circles- Parents and toddlers walk around in a circle to a song. Circles can sometimes have motions accompanying the song or can end in a fun way (like with a fall to the ground or with toddlers being picked up in the air by parents).

Simple Songs- Parents and teachers sing songs with a limited tonal range for baby. (These are the first

songs toddler will be able to sing independently as that skill develops.)

Beat Motions with Recordings- Parents and toddlers tap, walk, or move otherwise to the beat of recorded music. Props add expressiveness or excitement.

Lullabies- the teacher sings a lullaby as parents rock their toddlers and the toddlers rock provided stuffed animals.

NOTE: Parents learn all songs and rhymes for repetition at home.

Nursery (25-36 Months) and Preschool (3-5 years old)

Classes begin with 10 minutes of free play for parent and child (15 minutes for Preschool). An assortment of musical instruments and sound-making toys are made available in the classroom. In some cases, a trampoline and rocking horse are available for a child to jump on or ride while a parent speaks a rhyme or sings a song to the child's beat. Free play concludes with the group singing a favorite song, followed by group activities, which include:

Pitch Exploration- The teacher models vocal sounds, which parents and children imitate to warm up singing voices.

Echo and Call-and-Response Songs- The teacher sings part of a song and the parents and children echo a phrase or sing a response, sometimes taking turns.

Movement Exploration- The teacher leads parents and children in exploratory movement with and without recorded music.

Finger Plays- The teacher leads parents and children in songs that have motions for fingers and hands.

Action Songs- The teacher leads parents and children in songs that have motions for the whole body.

Simple Circles- The teacher leads parents and children in songs that have games or dances in circles.

Beat Motions (child initiated)- Each child performs a beat on an instrument or hi/her body as the teacher sings a song or speaks a rhyme to the child's beat.

Beat Motions (Teacher initiated)- The teacher leads the parents and children in performing a beat on their bodies or instruments to a song or rhyme.

Beat Motions with Recordings- Parents and children walk, tap, or move otherwise to the beat of recorded music.

Simple Songs- The teacher models songs with a limited tonal range, which the children learn to sing independently.

Arioso- The teacher, parents and children spontaneously make up original songs.

Songtales- The teacher sings a story song for the class.

NOTE: Parents learn all songs and rhymes for repetition at home.

Techniques

The teacher will attempt to include each song or rhyme 4 times in each lesson and in 4 different lessons throughout the 6 weeks. *Research tells us that 4 is the minimal number of repetitions to encourage musical learning.* We all (children and adults) need to hear the song/rhyme this number of times to learn and retain each song/rhyme to the point of independence.

For infants and toddlers:

Have your child face out during **bounces, wiggles and tickles** so they can see other children and the

teacher. At home, have your child face you so s/he may see and hear your expression as you say the rhyme.

During **beat activities** (tapping/clapping), spend a lot of time tapping a beat on your child's body. As your child gets older, be sure to allow your child to tap or clap the beat on his/her own. Do not "assist" your child in beat-keeping activities by holding onto his/her hands and tapping for the child.

When **participating in class**, feel free to join in with the teacher speaking rhymes and singing songs. Please make sure that you are comfortable singing the song before joining in. Allow yourself ample listening time before singing along in class so we all sound like one voice. If we are singing something different, it interferes with the children hearing the correct melody.

When engaging in **musical activities at home**, never hesitate to sing for and with your child. It is important for children to see that parents are comfortable with singing and that it is a normal part of life- not just for kids, but for everyone! Research has shown that children prefer their parent's voice the best.

When **moving to classical music in class**, it is important that you perform the beat motions. You are your child's best model.

For Nursery and Preschool:

The most important rule for teachers to follow at this age level is what we call "Dr. Feierabend's Golden Rule": The teacher should sing for the class and not with the class. If the teacher allows the class to sing along, the teacher will not be able to listen and assess if the students are singing it correctly and the class will not be able to sing the song independently. The teacher will always give the class the opportunity for parents and children to sing together without the teacher's help, and for children to sing without the help of their parents or the teacher. The teacher will make it clear who should be singing and who should be listening.

NOTE: Certain songs (like Songtales) are too difficult for young children to sing independently. They are intended for listening only.

When participating in child-initiated beat activities, it is best not to "assist" your child in keeping the beat. The teacher will give each child the opportunity to keep the beat on his or her own body or on an instrument. The teacher will perform the

song/rhyme to the child's beat. This is the easiest way for a child to have success in keeping a beat.

When keeping a beat to music in class, it is important to model beat motions for your child. If the teacher offers a prop for a beat-keeping activity, do not give your prop to your child because s/he will have a harder time performing beat motions with too many props.

During arioso activities, please understand that the goal is for each child to spontaneously make up simple songs about different things. We are not looking for the child to sing a song s/he already knows. This is a very basic experience with improvisation, so it is important that you avoid "assisting" your child in the creative process. This is often a very difficult concept for young children to grasp. The best way to success is to practice making up songs at home as you go through your day.

Miscellaneous

If you are interested in learning more about First Steps in Music, you can visit the FAME website and become a FAME member. You can also follow Connie Greenwood, of Greenwood Music Services, on Facebook. Most of these guidelines were taken from Connie Greenwood's First Steps in Music

parent handbook. She is the head First Steps in Music teacher at the University of Hartford's Hartt Community Division in West Hartford, CT. She teaches children in several area preschools and daycares through her music business, Greenwood Music Services.

Articles:

The Thirty Year Plan by John M. Feierabend

http://giamusic.com/music_education/feier_infants.cfm

Music and Movement for Infants and Toddlers: Naturally Wonder-full

http://giamusic.com/music_education/feier_infants.cfm

About Jennifer Ross

Jennifer has lived in Rowlett with her husband Matt, and their three boys, for 11 years. She graduated from UNT Denton in 2004 with a degree in music education. She has been teaching elementary music for 17 years and currently teaches early childhood music classes at Trinity Christian Academy in Addison. She has completed her First Steps in Music certification with Dr. Feierabend, and Orff Level 1 training at Trinity University. Jennifer has been teaching early childhood music for the last 6 years. She loves to play the ukulele and enjoys bird-watching. You can reach her through email at jennifersings79@gmail.com or by phone at (512) 876-9426.

A Sweet Beats Facebook group is in the works! More information about how to join coming soon...