Information about SECE Class

By Lynn McCall

This is a unique program in that our ultimate goal is to capture the child's focus and attention for the full hour. We do this through repetition of curriculum, creating thorough mastery of skills through layering age appropriate tasks, and working in partnership with the parents to create an environment in which optimal learning can take place. The best learning takes place in young children when the room is quiet and calm. Studies have shown that the brain develops at its highest rate during the tender ages of 0-3. This is also the time when the nervous system is organizing itself for all later learning, so we want to partner with parents to create the best learning environment: a triangle which involves parent, teacher, and child in cooperation. Children learn best when able to interact with sensory experiences. We accomplish this through strategies. Here are a few of the strategies. We will go over these many times as the opportunities present themselves.

1. Shoes off. No food, drink, or toys.

2. Trying to keep a calm environment. Learning can only take place in a calm environment. If our child gets loud or begins to fuss, we ask that you take them out of the room briefly, allow them to refresh, and then return quickly. We want the children to identify the classroom with quiet, happy, calm behavior. When you take the child out, we ask that you don't scold, talk too much, or put them down to play. We want them to want to be back in the classroom, so don't make it an appealing thing for them to be out of the room.

3. PLEASE arrive a few minutes early; the beginning part of class is designed to create focus for the children. If you are late or rushed, the child won't have the opportunity to acclimate to the environment and will lose the benefit of the calm start, which many times causes distress for the baby. It will also cause a shift in concentration for the other children who have started the class.
4. **Modeling:** You are the child’s best example of what the behavior in the class should be. Children learn through observation of their parents. If you are having fun, your child will have fun too! Sing, dance; if you don’t know the song, hum along. Leave your dignity at the door. Many times a child will not want to take their turn. If this happens, we will ask mom or dad to take the turn for them. We do not ever want to pressure a child into anything. If they see you doing the activity, they will eventually take the turn on their own. So even if your child is not fully participating, we want you to be. Please do not move your child’s hands for them; you should pat the beat on their body if they are not yet keeping it for themselves. We find that parents who move the child’s hands end up with either a frustrated child or a child who becomes complacent.

5. **No talking to each other in class, but especially try not to talk very much to your own child.** In order to teach focus and concentration, the children and parents must be focused on the teachers.

6. **Play the CD at home so that the child grows affection for the repertoire.** We ask that you don’t buy the children the instruments we use in class. One of our goals is to teach respect for the instruments. If you have the same ones at home, they end up becoming toys. We want them to view these activities as special things they do at music class.

7. **Please keep cameras and phones outside of the classroom.**

8. **Repetition is very important for thorough mastery of skills.** After careful observation and thorough parent journaling at the end of class, together with parents, the teachers will be watching to see when your child is ready for the next age appropriate step.