

[Date]

Dear Parents and Guardians,

Welcome to the IMPs (Intensive Music Program) at the Hopkinsville Family YMCA! We are so happy that you have chosen us. It is our hope that this is a wonderful and enriching experience for both you and your child.

If you haven't turned in your Intake Form yet, please be sure to do that on the first class meeting. It's important for me to know a bit about your child so that I can begin to develop a program that meets his or her needs. Again, please be assured that this information is kept strictly confidential.

IMPs is designed to accommodate children at any functioning level. Every child can have a successful music experience, no matter what the disability. However, because of the therapeutic nature of the group, I am not able to accommodate siblings in the room. (There is child care available at the Y, and I encourage you to check with YMCA staff if you have questions about this).

I would like to take a moment and tell you about my work experience. I hold a degree in Music Education from the University of Massachusetts, and a Music Therapy degree from Anna Maria College in Paxton, MA. Currently I am pursuing advanced certification in Neurologic Music Therapy from Colorado State University. I am a Board-Certified Music Therapist, and have been since 1998. I completed 1040 hours of post-graduate internship at the Community Music Center of Boston. In my internship I worked with severely/profoundly disabled children and children on the Autism Spectrum at the Music Center, and also in schools and other day programs. I also had the opportunity to work with adolescents and adults with developmental disabilities, mental illnesses, and dementia.

After completing my clinical internship, I went into private practice in Central Massachusetts, and worked in a variety of settings with severely and profoundly disabled children from 0-22 until I moved here in 2007. Currently I am employed full-time at Western State Hospital as a music therapist, and I am working to develop a private practice in the Western KY/Clarksville-Ft. Campbell areas.

I'd like to tell you a little bit about the way I work with groups of children with special needs. Although IMPs is recreational, it is also music therapy, however informally it is presented. I know how difficult it is to wait for responses, and to not step in and do things for your child, or to provide maximal assistance. It's what a parent does, after all! :)

I would encourage you to allow your child to do as much for him or herself as possible, and to allow the music itself to be the prompt. It's okay to wait! And when hand over hand assistance is needed, or when extra verbal prompts are in order, we'll work together to decide how much assistance is necessary, and when to prompt. The phrase "hurry up and wait" never takes on more meaning than in music therapy groups with children--and that's no problem at all.

I try to keep extra chatting to a minimum during the music. Music therapy can be chaotic, and for our children with sensory processing trouble, extra auditory stimuli can be counterproductive. Keeping the sound level down will help ensure a positive experience.

The most important thing I can say to you is this; in the event that your child becomes upset, please do not feel like you must leave the group. New experiences are BIG experiences for young children, but in my experience, they almost always adjust and are able to do well in group. Sometimes something as simple as moving back from the group is enough to help them regain control. To look at it another way, these moments are wonderful opportunities to work on social, emotional, and behavioral skills. So please don't feel uncomfortable or embarrassed! These issues are planned for and expected. Crying or other behavioral outbursts are NOT a reflection on you. It is simply part and parcel of what you deal with every single day, and that is what this group is all about--giving the children the opportunity to develop more skills to take with them OUTSIDE the music therapy group. Remember too, that this kind of work builds power over time. Small gains (and many times BIG ones!!) will be made as the weeks go by. Above all, it is my hope that this is just a fun, rewarding and affirming experience for both you and your child.

I would ask that if you are not able to be at a scheduled class that you call me (839-7210) before the class, if at all possible. I would like you to know that if you have questions or concerns about the class that I am always open to talking with you. Please feel free to call me (leave a message if I'm unavailable), or e-mail me at marybethbrand@rocketmail.com.

Thank you for choosing to join us! I look forward to meeting all of you. Again, if there is any question I can answer, please call. If you have questions about registration, child care, or any other YMCA-related question, please call Kristen Stewart at the YMCA.

Sincerely,

Marybeth Brand, MT-BC
Music Therapist, Board Certified
Certified Orff-Schulwerk Instructor, Levels I and II
Certified HealthRhythms Facilitator

IMPs (Intensive Music Program) at Hopkinsville Family YMCA

Intake Form

Child's Name: _____ DOB: _____

Parent(s) Name(s) _____

Address: _____

Phone # _____ E-mail: _____

Child's Diagnosis: _____

Medications (this is asked only in case of side effects that might change a child's behavior or tolerance to sound or the length of the class):

Is your child ambulatory? Yes No

Does your child need special seating or positioning? Yes No If yes, please describe:

Does your child use any Assistive or Augmentative Communication Devices? Yes No If yes, please describe:

Please use this space to tell me anything that you feel is important for me to know about your child. I want to take this time to state again that this information will be kept completely confidential. I only use this information as a starting point to create activities that will benefit your child, and no one else has access to this form.

Please return this form to the Hopkinsville Family YMCA, ATTN Marybeth Brand, MT-BC ,

7805 Eagle Way, Hopkinsville, KY 42240