

Music engages students

• Kindermusik offers South Rome Early Learning Center students a fun and joyful way to learn.

 By Kristina Wilder

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Joyful noise could be heard through the South Rome Early Learning Center hallway at Anna K. Davie as the center's students participated in their weekly Kindermusik class Thursday.

Kindermusik, a class offered by Berry College, teaches children from birth to age 7 about music and music appreciation.

Instructor Wendy Williams comes to the ELC every Thursday and offers each classroom 30 minutes of music instruction. The 3-year-old students sing, learn about tempo and are taught to play different musical instruments. Students also get to take home a book, a CD and a small instrument of some sort each month.

"It teaches the children about high, low, fast and slow," explained Kathryn Nobles, director of Kindermusik. "It teaches them self-control, how to walk to a beat and it engages them. It is a fabulous fit for these children. Some of them are quite shy at first, but the music brings them out of their shell."

ELC parents also participate in the classes when they can, Nobles said. The classes are free of charge to the ELC students and are paid for by a combination of grants and donations from Kindermusik supporters.

"We reached out to parents who have had a child in Kindermusik before and we had several families step forward and offer to sponsor a child at the ELC because they believe in the value of the classes," Nobles said.

ELC teacher Cayce Jacobson said the program not only offers a musical component for students, but reinforces what they are learning in class.

"Wendy often sets her lessons to fit with what we've learned," she said. "When we learn about birds or farm animals, her lessons are suited to that. Music can aid their learning, and much of what we learn is set to music, because at this age especially, it anchors information in the mind."

Jackie McDowell, dean of the Charter School of Education and Human Sciences at Berry College, said the Kindermusik program builds early literacy skills — a major focus of the ELC — as well as vocabulary and helps the children learn to express themselves.

Terri Oberg, director of the ELC, said parents of the students at the center really enjoy the fact that they are able to easily participate along with their children.

"Because the CD, book and instrument are sent home once a month, the parents get to see what their child is experiencing at school," Oberg said. "Their child can show them how to play the instrument or they can listen to the CD together and read the book together."

The music instruction also offers children who may be more artistically inclined to shine.

"Some may find some parts of school more difficult or may not have confidence at first in a class setting with math or reading," she said. "But music gives them a different way to express themselves, which can build their confidence elsewhere in school."

The ELC also just opened up the registration process for next year, Oberg said. The school will be enrolling children from the South Rome community until June 1. Then they will open up registration — if space is still available — to the entire Rome City Schools system until July 1. After that, the enrollment will be available to Floyd County residents as well.

The two ELC class-rooms have space for 18 students in each.

Those interested may call the ELC and ask for Oberg at 706-232-4913.



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Zy'ion Wright plays with the zig zag blocks during Kindermusik at the South Rome Early Learning Center.



Kristina Wilder/Rome News-Tribune

Kindermusik instructor Wendy Williams talks to the South Rome Early Learning Center students Thursday about using their singing voices.



 Kristina Wilder/Rome News-Tribune

Johnny Strickland (from left), Cameron Carter and De'merious Pollard play the greeting game during Kindermusik class.