

## **Placing Children in Appropriate Classes - Guidelines**

---

Children vary in their rates of physical, cognitive, and emotional development. The following are guidelines to consider when determining in which class to place a child. You can use these criteria to gauge the appropriate time a youngster is ready to begin the My Gym program and/or to move up or down in age groups.

### **Parent Participation Classes**

#### **- Tiny Tykes**

- Class Age Range
  - Tiny Tykes should be between the ages of 3 months and 12 months.
- Requirements and things to consider:
  - Be alert to their surroundings and stimuli
  - Be able to make eye contact
  - Have already developed head and neck control
  - Be able to (or almost able to) sit up on their own

#### **- Waddlers**

- Class Age Range
  - Waddlers should be between the ages of 12 months and 20 months.
- Requirements and things to consider:
  - Be able to understand very basic direction
  - Be reacting emotionally to their surroundings and/or stimuli
  - Be walking confidently or beginning to run
  - Be able to concentrate and stay alert for an hour of activities
- When to consider graduating the child to the Gymsters class:
  - When the child is close to reaching 21 months of age
  - When the child begins to mimic and follow directions during circle time
  - When the child begins to show an increased attention span throughout class

#### **- Gymsters**

- Class Age Range
  - Gymsters should be between the ages of 21 months and 2½ years.
- Requirements and things to consider:
  - IMPORTANT NOTE: To be placed in our Gymsters program, a toddler should typically be able to run assuredly. The youngster should be able to sit during structured activities and to understand and comply with simple instructions. His size and level of concentration are determinants as well.
  - Be running and climbing comfortably
  - Be able to sit for at least portions of structured activities
  - Be physically big enough to be safe in an older class
  - Be able to comprehend and follow simple instructions
  - Be able to separate from parents for short periods of time
- When to consider graduating the child to the Terrific Tots class:
  - When the child is close to reaching 2½ years of age

- When the child is fully engaged and following the directions throughout class
  - When the child is participating in all Gymsters class ingredients
  - When a child who has been participating well begins to become bored, disenchanted, or begins to misbehave in the class
- **Terrific Tots** - *This age group is considered a transitional class. This class is meant to prepare children for the independent program where they will participate without a parent/adult. Terrific Tots should be ready to sit and follow along with all structured activities.*
  - Class Age Range
    - Terrific Tots should be between the ages of 2½ years and 3 ½ years.
  - Requirements and things to consider:
    - IMPORTANT NOTE: A child who has been in a program since the Waddlers or Gymsters level will be better prepared for a Terrific Tots class than one who has never been previously enrolled.
    - Be able to sit for all structured activities
    - Be speaking and interacting verbally more regularly
    - Be able to comprehend, respond to, and follow instructions
    - Be able to separate from parents for longer periods of time
  - When to consider graduating the child to the Preschool Gymnastics or Ninja Jr. class:
    - When the child is close to reaching 3 ½ years of age
    - When the child fully demonstrates the ability to sit, wait, and participate in structured activities throughout class
    - When the child develops full confidence to interact during class without the constant need for parent involvement
    - When the child demonstrates the social desire to communicate with his peers

## **Independent Classes**

- **Preschool Gymnastics or Ninja Jr.** - *This level can be tough, since it is the youngest independent class. A child who still needs her parent alongside may not be ready to handle one of these programs.*
  - Class Age Range
    - Preschool Gymnastics and Ninja Jr. should be between the ages of 3 ½ years and 5 years 11 months old.
  - Requirements and things to consider:
    - Be comfortable separated from their parents
    - Be able to comprehend, respond to, and follow semi-complex instructions
    - Be avidly using their imaginations
    - Have a long enough attention span to follow directions and participate in an hour of structured activities
  - When to consider moving the child over to Ninja Training or Gymnastics
    - When the child is close to reaching 5 years of age to try either of these programs
    - When a child is no longer challenged by Preschool Gymnastics or Ninja Jr. skills
- **Gymnastics** - *Emphasis in gymnastics should include effort, diligence, and teamwork. Consider the following when placing a child in a gymnastics class.*

- Class Age Range
  - Gymnastics kids should be between the ages of 5 and 10 years old.
- Requirements and things to consider:
  - IMPORTANT NOTE: The child's physical size is an additional component in the evaluation. While physical ability is not the deciding factor, certain activities and skills may not be appropriate for overweight children. Recommending a Cardio Kids class to build strength and endurance may be more suitable for some children's needs.
  - Be able to support their bodyweight in the handstand or support position on the parallel bars (with help from a teacher on balancing)
  - Be able to perform a forward roll independently
  - Be emotionally mature enough to handle a learning environment that is more intensified but still noncompetitive and fun
  - Be able to execute and communicate the concept of teamwork with teachers or other children
  - Be physically fit enough to participate in all aspects of the class (Please see "IMPORTANT NOTE" in the Cardio Kids section below.)
- **Ninja Training** - *Emphasis in these classes includes strength, stamina, and agility. Consider the following when placing a child into the Ninja Training classes.*
  - Class Age Range
    - Ninja Jr. kids should be between the ages of 3 ½ and 5 years 11 months old.
    - Ninja Training kids should be between the ages of 5 and 10 years old.
  - Requirements and things to consider:
    - Be emotionally mature enough to handle a learning environment that is more intensified but still noncompetitive and fun
    - Be able to execute and communicate the concept of teamwork with teachers or other children
    - Be physically fit enough to participate in all aspects of the class

Following these guidelines will enable you to place children properly in the appropriate programs.

Most parents have specific goals when enrolling their children at My Gym. For some, it is social interaction, confidence building, or increased physical ability. For others, it is simply to have fun. Be sure to inquire about and consider their various goals when recommending placement.

Keep in mind that a parent will usually glorify his/her child. If a youngster is on the border between two levels, try offering the younger class first, with the intention of moving him up if necessary. This is preferable to doing the opposite, should it become apparent that the child is not ready for the older class. Remember, you are the expert. Do not allow a parent to choose the class level without your professional opinion.