

# New program teaches children through rock music

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Kidzrock is a new program at Centerstage Academy that teaches children music through easy and fun rock songs. (WYDaily/Courtesy Centerstage Academy)

A new music program is coming to Yorktown and it will teach even the littlest of musicians how to rock out.

Centerstage Academy, a “kids conservatory” specializing in theater and music, has started a new program that teaches children between the ages of 4 and 7 how to play rock music. The program, Kidzrock, is part of a nationwide initiative started by Dave Simon in Missouri.

Kidzrock takes the themes and styles of classic rock and condenses them into songs that are simpler and easier for small children. The songs have clean lyrics, simple chords and easy to master rhythms, said Rebecca Lowe, studio director for Centerstage.

“What this does is give them a good, positive foundation so they can find their passion and pursue it in more detail,” she said.

Lowe said the academy was looking for a way to engage younger students because staff noticed they were interested in learning more modern and pop music. The way the program is designed doesn't make it a huge, long-term commitment for students and parents.

Students take classes and learn how to play on the drums, the guitar, the piano and have a chance to sing. Instead of having to pick one instrument, they get to experiment with a variety.

"This is going to be a game-changer for parents who want to encourage music in the lives of their young children, but don't see traditional lessons working for them," Lowe added in an email. "And often music lessons don't work for young children — practicing can be a chore, families' schedules are limited, and who wants to invest in an instrument before they know if their child will stick with it?"

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The instruments are provided for students and are built for smaller hands. This helps the students more easily learn how to be comfortable with an instrument as they grow.

Students also learn music differently than they would at an older level. They are learning to read music through a combination of color coding and simple scores. For example, students will see a green "E" note on the staff and learn to associate the note with the color which helps them to learn to read music easier.

The program lasts as long as the students and parents want because the students are preparing for small performances every three months with larger performances in between.



The program provides students with instruments that fit small hands and bodies to help them get more comfortable while learning music. (WYDaily/Courtesy Centerstage Academy)

Lowe said those smaller performances also help students become more confident on stage and in front of audiences. This is just one of the goals of the program, but Lowe said there are many benefits not just to Kidzrock but also to starting students in music at an early age.

“Generally, their brains are still developing and forming,” she said. “And music is a really good way of forming all those little synapses that help them later on in life. So students learning to play an instrument now will reap the benefits for the rest of their life—even if not in a music sense, at least in brain development.”

Each class has about four students of various ages. Lowe said students who are older are taught more advanced techniques but all of the students are learning the same songs to play together.

In teaching the students this way, she said they learn what it means to work as a team as well as how to progress through music.

“Even beyond that, it’s our hope that they can use music in different ways,” she said. “In developing social skills, developing a team and using music to express themselves.”

The first class of Kidzrock started in October and there are currently two other classes that are accepting registration. Classes run from September to June.

To learn more about registration and fees, [visit Centerstage online](#).

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