

Rock-A-Bye Babies: Music & Movement for Infants & Toddlers

The essence of this presentation is to not only provide ways to use music & movement throughout your day, but to acknowledge the magnitude of your profession. What you do is the most important work I know of. Many children in your care get their first view of the world from you. They learn about love and trust from you. Thank you for what you do.

Infants are born, seemingly, pre-wired for music and movement and that is how they learn. With hearing being the 2nd sense to develop in utero, babies are born ready and expecting to move. Everything about appropriate musical experiences is positive. Year after year, the research builds in support of the importance of music in a young child's life.

Movement is now 'moving' into the spotlight with an emphasis on increasing learning. We know that music and movement affect all areas of development, nourish the brain, can help to strengthen learning, listening, literacy, body and spatial awareness, co-ordination, language, problem solving, motor skills, and perhaps, most important create opportunities for social success and emotional well-being.

Music will enrich children's lives and tap into their creative energy. It has the power to slow things down, instantly transforming a cranky environment into one of harmony and joy. With infants often coming to programs as young as six weeks, a simple song can calm the uncertainty of the transition for baby, mom and dad. As an infant-toddler care provider, music can be your best friend.

The current focus on academics may leave the crucial role of social-emotional development behind. It is difficult for children to develop cognitively if the emotional component is not stable. Trust lays the foundation for that social-emotional piece and music can greatly enhance that sense of trust. Musical experiences can be at the core of the social connections formed between children and their significant others. Music can be a dialogue for bonding, a dance between baby and caregiver. These early musical experiences will affect the children and their families for years to come and it is a gift that will last a lifetime.

Making music is a very easy skill to learn. There just has to be somebody willing to teach it. So if you think, "What, Me Teach Music?". You can and you must. For some toddlers it may be their only form of self-expression and for some parents it may be the only tool readily available to help them out of a frustrating situation.

In our hurry up dot com world, we are sitting children as young as 12 months in front of computers. We need to nurture their natural love of music and movement. They desperately need their childhood and often, we are taking it away sooner and sooner. The media is telling us what our children need. But what is important for healthy development has not changed. Love them, hug them-hold them close, keep them safe, sing and read to them-babies too, dance with them, do open-ended art, write down their stories, tape record their songs, make eye contact with each child everyday. Take time to listen-time to just be.

But it's not just for the children. It's for everyone. Musical experiences can positively affect staff efficiency, productivity and stress levels. Invite your families for a potluck, an evening program to celebrate the seasons and to join together in Music, Movement and More.

So when all else fails, try Singing A Song and Dancing Along. It really works!
No talent necessary.

Did you know?

- By 5-6 months in utero the fetus can process sound, which stimulates muscle tone, (especially core muscles) equilibrium and flexibility. *Campbell*
- What happens during the first few months and years of life matters a lot, because it sets either a sturdy or fragile stage for what follows. *Shonkoff, Jack P. & Phillips, Deborah A. (eds.) 2000*
- During the 1st year of life, rhythm is the element of music that has the greatest effect. *Ortiz*
- The brain's ability to recognize melody moving up and down is present in babies. *Balaban et al.*
- Since the fetus experiences all kinds of movements, the vestibular system is already programmed at birth to expect movement. Movement is necessary for stimulating the nervous system, with vestibular stimulation alerting, but also calming the infant-as in soothing effect that comes from rocking. *Mahler*
- Rocking is a natural tranquilizer, with the movement reminding the baby of being in the womb. In soothing infants, we introduce cadence and patterning in our voices; we rock, walk and they suck-all forms of rhythmic stimulations associated with the temporal patterning of social interaction. *Mahler*
- Hugging is a universal component of songs for little children. Thus, preparing a baby lesson that includes touching, singing and playing is not that difficult. Babies are always interested in sounds, language and music, and they thrive on contact through touch. *Mahler*
- Have children pass rhythm sticks to the beat from side to side in front of them and follow with their eyes. This teaches the eyes how to follow words in a book and prepares them for reading.
- The ability to perform cross-lateral movement is necessary to be able to read. If you want to get your child reading, music, movement and soccer (or just kicking a ball around) will do it. Don't waste your money on flash cards or other inappropriate (and unnecessary) products. Just have fun.
- The cerebellum is larger in musicians by up to about 5%. This suggests that finger exercise (as used in fingerplays for younger children) may prompt additional nerve growth. *Schlaug et al 1998*
- Music & movement activities provide vehicle to teach steady beat. Steady beat is linked to adequate linguistic development. This should be in place before Kndg. Less than 50% adults can keep steady beat. and 10% of Kndg.
- One song can appeal to all 8 of multiple intelligences. *Gardner*
- Children who lack play and touch have 20-50% smaller brains (Perry 1998)
- Standing can increase heart rate (blood flow) as much as 5-8% *Krock & Hartung 1992*
- The brain and heart are electrical and need water and oxygen to run effectively. Getting physically involved in a good song helps both organs.
- Movement is most important to increase learning. Active moving helps brain focus, practice & rewire. Novelty wakes up, repetition wires. Information Travels to the brain side to side back/front up/down. Motor, balance, vestibular developed properly. i.e. missed crawling. *Jean Blaydes Madigan*
- As we experience and learn more about the positive effects of music and touch and as we understand that affective touch combined with music is needed for healthy development and bonding, we realize that the next step is to implement music contact games in early childhood. *Mahler*

Tummy Time

- More children skipping crawling stage, considered crucial-strengthen muscles, support handwriting & endurance. Support midline to swing bat & catch ball & have hand-eye coordination.
- Snowball effect. Cognitive development delayed, visual motor skills delayed. 1 in 5 visual processing disorder.
- Establishes upper body strength that babies will use for rest of their lives, to read & write, hold scissors properly, catch a ball, climb a jungle gym. *Amy Vaughan*
- Supports neck development, which supports jaw, supporting talking and eating.
- Hold a mirror and other interesting objects while singing.
- Lack of can create developmental delays and sensory processing problems.

Fingerplays-Massage

- Help in development of early speech, rhythm and timing, dramatization skills, coordination of hand-foot movement and body awareness.
- Develop hand and finger strength and coordination, necessary for holding and controlling a pencil.
- Encourage communication and touch between adult and child.
- Unclench tight little fists. *Eve Kodiac*
- Tickles to stimulate response and promote separateness.
- Help practice pincher movements.

Rhymes-Peek A Boo

- Provide basis for development of good listening skills. Words supported by the action.
- Encourage mental images-develop vocabulary for creative thinking-make new connections.
- Pleasure from coordination hand-foot or body movements with rhythm of the verse.
- Aware of hands and feet before fingers and toes.
- Peek-a-boo exercise in object permanence. *Eve Kodiac*

Moving

- Bouncing and rocking replicates motion in utero. Helps to get cerebrospinal fluid circulating as well as encouraging growth of new neural pathways, integrating the primitive reflexes. *Eve Kodiac*
- Pony trots-babies learn quickly where WHOOPS comes & show with body anticipate surprise.
- One of 1st things to master control of the body. Sense of balance precedes- facilitates capacity to move.
- 3 planes of movement-rotation around vertical axis-spinning...horizontal...rolling or back and forth...side to side, tilting or up and down
- Children gain control of body in space through planes of movement.
- Ring a Roses-how to fall and get up again and learning how NOT to fall again.
- Classical music, especially Mozart, Vivaldi, Baroque-found to stimulate the brain.

Lullabies

- A form of universal language. The human interaction is the important thing rather than individual lullaby.
- Structure, like a story with a beginning, middle & end, appeals to children.
- Pattern helps learn structure and order, and exercise imagination.
- Slow pace, mimick many of movements experienced before birth.
- Help to strengthen bond formed before birth.

Bedtime Stories

- Create space to spend a few treasured minutes together everyday sharing an activity and language, which goes beyond mundane, daily conversation.
- Regular basis most likely to succeed. Key predictor in terms of educational success. *Pie Corbett*
- Told stories boosts language, by feeding imagination, develops abstract thought. Best writers are avid readers. Establish bedtime routine and wind down at end of the day.

Resource: *The Genius of Natural Childhood and The Well Balanced Child-Sally Goddard Blythe*, unless otherwise noted.

A TODDLER'S RULES OF POSSESSION

1. If I like it. It's mine.
2. If it's in my hand, it's mine
3. If I can take it from you, it's mine
4. If I had it a little while ago, it's mine.
5. If it's mine, it must NEVER appear to be yours in any way.
6. If I'm doing or building something, all the pieces are mine.
7. If it looks just like mine, it's mine.
8. If I saw it first, it's mine.
9. If you are playing with something & you put it down, it automatically becomes mine.
10. If it's broken, it's yours.

Source Unknown

DOWN IN THE MEADOW

Down in the meadow in an itty bitty pool. (scissor movement with legs)
Swam 3 little fishies and a mama/daddy fishy too. (bend knees to chest)
Swim said the mama, swim if you can . (legs up & down like swimming)
And they swam and swam all over the dam .(circle legs around, rotating hips)
Boop, boop, Ditta-datta. What-em Shoo! (3) (crossing left over right & right over left) (kiss baby on shoo)
And they swam and they swam all over the dam. (circle legs, rotating hips)

Six Pre-literacy Skills

- **Narrative skills.** Talk about what you are doing as you go through your day
- **Vocabulary.** Speak clearly, encourage babbling and attempts at saying words; point to pictures and objects and name them
- **Letter knowledge.** Help children see shapes and name them, read alphabet books and say the names of letters; point out letters on toys, food boxes, and other places.
- **Phonological awareness.** Use songs and nursery rhymes to help young children learn the sounds of language; add actions to the sounds

- **Print motivation.** Begin reading right from birth; make book sharing a special time and visit the library often to find appealing books.
- **Print awareness.** Use board or cloth books and let child hold the book; read aloud every day; point out labels, signs, and other sources of print and read them out loud.

Babies and Early Literacy

- Babies learn about language right from birth.
- Reading, singing, and using nursery rhymes and language play throughout the day teaches children about the sounds of our language.
- It is helpful, but unless at risk, not critical, if children have the six pre-literacy skills when they begin school.
- When children are prepared for school, they are much more likely to succeed.

INFANT-TODDLER PICTURE BOOKS

A You're Adorable-M. Alexander... Baby Dance-Ann Taylor... Bumpety Bump-Kathy Henderson... All Fall Down-Clap Hands Say Goodnight-Tickle-H. Oxenbury... Bedtime-Joan Blodgett... Big Red Barn-Margaret Wise Brown

Come Along Daisy-Jane Williams... Everywhere Babies-Susan Meyers... Eyes, Nose, Fingers & Toes-Judy Hindley... From Head to Toe-Eric Carle... Home For A Bunny-Margaret Wise Brown... Hush Little Baby-Sylvia Long... I Kissed the Baby-Mary Murphy... I Went Walking... Sue Williams
Jammy Jam-Bruce Degen

Listen To The Rain-Here Are My Hands... Bill Martin Jr. Miss Spider's Tea Party... David Kirk Oh My Baby, Little One-Kathy Appelt... Patrick Paints a Picture-Saviour Pirotta... Peekaboo Morning-Rachel Isadora

Raccoon Tune-Sheep Out To Eat-Nancy Shaw... Runaway Bunny-Margaret Wise Brown ... Row Your Boat (many others) Iza Trapani ... Silly Sally-Audrey Wood... So Much-Trish Cooke Snuggle Wuggle... John London... Snappy Little Farmyard

The Little Old Lady Who Was Not Afraid of Anything-Linda Williams... Ten little fingers and ten little toes-Time For Bed Mem Fox-Treasury of Poetry and Rhymes... Selected by Alistair Hedley... Christopher Robin A.A. Milne

Water, Water-E.Greenfield... What Makes a Rainbow-Betty Schwartz Where
is My Baby?-H.Ziefert & S. Taback... Where is Baby's Belly Button?-Karen
Katz