



Music and Young Children - Tips For Parents, Educators, and Caregivers

Young children love music. They experience music by *hearing* it, by *moving* to it, by *banging* to it, and by *playing* with their voices. Music is a part of the young child's world.

Sing with your child:

- With a quiet lullaby at bedtime.
- Make up songs about activities of his or her day. Change the words to a familiar song or make up your own melody.
- Sing children's songs that are familiar to your child. Sing them over and over. The song's familiarity is comforting.
- Sing your favorite songs.
- Sing as you transition between activities or places. The music will help your child accept and anticipate change.

Make sounds and music with your child:

- Make music with your bodies (clapping, tapping and patting)
- Make music with pots and pans or plastic containers (and other things found around the house).
- Use music boxes or musical toys.
- Play by imitating sounds in the environment (trains, the wind) and animals.
- Use songs that have surprises (like "Pop! Goes the Weasel").

Move to the music with your child:

- Move, dance, and rock with your child as you sing or listen to music
- Clap, stomp, pat, spin – dance freely or create your own choreography

A few ideas for using music with your child:

- Be playful and silly!
- Don't be shy about singing – your child will welcome the chance to share this time with you.
- Match your child's energy level - upbeat songs when she's ready for play and lullabies when she's tired.
- Repeat, repeat, repeat. Children love repetition and learn from it.
- Expose your little one to many different types of music. Borrow CDs from the library or listen online. Play your favourite music.
- Share traditions of your culture in making music.
- Let your child lead in singing and playing; comment on and praise his ideas to help build his confidence
- Relax and enjoy this special time for interacting and sharing with your little one.

www.pathwaysmusictherapy.ca

This document is adapted from:

McLaughlin, B. (2010). National Children's Mental Health Awareness Day: Promoting the Inclusion of Creative Arts in Early Child Development. *Imagine* 1 (1), 25-26.