



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.

Music can:

- Nurture attachment.
- Provide a safe environment for realizing, exploring and sharing creativity.
- Calm when words cannot.
- Offer an outlet for coping with emotions.
- Give structure and information in a non-threatening way.
- Provide opportunities for making a unique contribution to a group experience.
- Foster self-confidence and feelings of success.

Sing with your child:

- Sing a quiet lullaby at nap and bedtime as you rock.
- Sing about activities of the child's day. Change the words to a familiar song or make up your own melody. Making up words is fun and shows your interest in your child's world.
- Sing children's songs that are familiar to your child. Sing them over and over. The song's familiarity is predictable and comforting.
- Sing your favorite songs.
- Sing as you transition between activities or places. The music will help your child accept and anticipate change.

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.

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.
- Make silly sounds and animal sounds and imitate sounds in the environment (trains, the wind).
- Sing or play songs that have surprises ("Pop! Goes the Weasel").
- Echo back or acknowledge your child's sounds and music. Sounds help children to express themselves in and their feelings in a safe and acceptable way.

A few ideas for using music with your child:

- Be playful and silly! Be expressive and dramatic in facial expressions, singing, and body language.
- Don't be shy about singing – your child will welcome the chance to share this time with you.
- Repeat, repeat, repeat. Children love repetition and learn from it.
- Match your child's energy level - upbeat songs when they are ready for play and lullabies when they are tired or,
- Change the pace – slow the music to bring down the level of excitement or speed up to focus attention and energize.
- Stop and Go, Pause and Wait – silence engages attention and builds the anticipation for what comes next.
- Expose your little one to many different types of music. Explore music online or at library. Play your favourite music.
- Share traditions of your culture in making music.
- Let your child lead in singing and playing; comment on and praise their ideas to help build confidence.
- Relax and enjoy this special time for interacting and sharing with your little one.

www.pathwaysmusictherapy.ca

This document is adapted from:

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