

Music Monday

Music Monday is more than singing and dancing, it's a way to encourage children to be active while developing their early literacy skills and having fun with friends and family!

Step It Up Activity

Articles on Playing and Learning with Music

For the Classroom:

- [Teaching and Learning with Hip-Hop Culture](#)
- [Integrating Music, Drama, and Dance Helps Children Explore and Learn](#)
- [Now Sing This! Ella Jenkins](#)

For Families

- [Playing with Music at Home](#)
- [Support Math Readiness Through Music](#)
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- [10 Ways Babies Learn When We Sing to Them](#)
- [Message in a Backpack™—Make Animal Music](#)

Music Monday

- Teach the children how to sing a round such as “Row, Row, Row Your Boat.” Songs that can be sung in round require concentration, good listening skills, and teamwork.



- Bring out a parachute during music time to promote teamwork, as well. Play songs with different beats and melodies and invite children to wave the parachute to the beat/melody. Place balls on top and see how long children can keep them in the air. Invite children to take turns running and dancing under the parachute.

Social and emotional development: Express yourself!

Hip-hop encourages children to share their thoughts and feelings in creative ways. It supports children's experimentation while building their self-esteem.

To make hip-hop part of the curriculum:

- Introduce children to different hip-hop experiences or elements, such as rap, break dancing, and word art. Ask them how the music, beat, art, or dance makes them feel.
- Talk together about a particular classroom activity, such as the emergence of a butterfly from its chrysalis or a chick from its egg. Support children in sharing their ideas and feelings by offering social and emotional vocabulary (*excited, exhausted, surprising*) for them to use in a rap, a break dance, or word art to describe their response to the activity.
- Provide children with opportunities to discuss emotions. After listening to a rap, ask them how they think the author/rapper felt, or invite them to listen again and then create word art based on the rap.

Language and literacy development: Just say it!

Many preschoolers enjoy experimenting with and exploring early literacy components—letters, words, sounds in words. Music is an effective way to engage children and supports both phonemic awareness and language development. Use hip-hop elements to foster language and literacy development:

- Record children rapping. Combine the “tracks” to create a classroom rap album. Create accompanying lyric booklets for children and families, so they can follow along or perform them at home.
- Create raps for each letter of the alphabet: “C is for cat / She sleeps on the hat.” Encourage children to explore the rhymes and rhythms in raps: “Sat, bat, hat, cat, I like to dance on my mat.”
- Find or create a simple poem—or use a poem the children are already familiar with—and read it aloud. Pronounce words slowly and clearly to allow the children to feel the words and sounds. Invite children to recite the poem to the rhythm of different beats.

Cognitive development: Think about it!

Preschoolers are naturally curious about the world around them. The following approaches can help you learn more about the children in your program, using hip-hop to support you in differentiating instruction.

- Have children create and recite simple rhymes or raps about topics they are studying. Ask open-ended questions about the poems or raps.
- Encourage children to ask each other questions about their raps, word art, or break dance moves. They will gain new perspectives about their classmates and friends.
- Provide opportunities for children to compare and contrast their hip-hop projects. Children learn how their ideas are similar and different while also appreciating their own work and the work of others.

Physical development: Move with it!

Children and teachers build a sense of community by learning from and supporting each other’s creative movements. Children move for fun—but they also express themselves through their bodies.

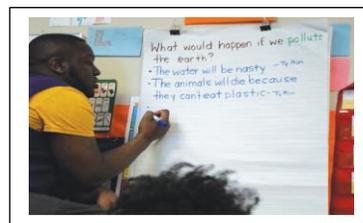
- Provide instrumental hip-hop music or classroom-created rap music so children can act as class deejay by choosing music for the class to dance to.
- Have children create dance moves alone, with partners, and as a whole class.
- Create a class music video of the children performing their rap and dance moves. The video can serve as documentation of children’s physical development.

Mr. B’s Class Creates a Recycling Rap

After outdoor play one day, Mr. B’s preschoolers were upset about all the trash on the playground. Talking with the class about the problem, Mr. B asked, “What happens if we pollute the Earth?” The children responded with thoughts like, “The water will be nasty” and “We will breathe dirty air.” Mr. B helped the children craft a rap about recycling.

RECYCLE RAP

Helping our planet begins with you!
 Polluting our Earth is the wrong thing to do!
 Helping hands is what you should give!
 Many things will happen to the place that we live!
 Animals don’t eat plastic for food!
 So we have to stay in the recycling mood!
 We can’t breathe dirty air!
 Recycle! Recycle to show that you care!



<https://www.naeyc.org/resources/pubs/tyc/dec2016/teaching-and-learning-hip-hop-culture>

Young children love to sing, make music, and move to the beat. They feel competent when they learn a new song, powerful when they pound a drum or shake a tambourine, and proud when they invent a new dance. As children explore and enjoy music, they can develop skills in math, literacy, and social studies. Teachers relate music to diverse subjects and your family can continue this learning at home.

Young children explore music through play. They make discoveries through trial and error—"If I hit the tambourine lightly, it makes a soft sound. If I hit it hard, it makes a loud one." They listen to the musical beat and dance along with it. They make up new words or add choruses to familiar songs. They ask parents and other family members to sing with them or, in some cases, ask to perform a solo.

Here are some tips on how your family can play with music and connect it to learning at home.

Play music made for children

Many musicians write and sing about topics of interest to young children. Their songs' lyrics and melodies are catchy and easy to learn. The children's room at most libraries offer CDs. You can download free songs from websites and purchase CDs at the dollar store or from remainder bins at music and bookstores.

Develop reading readiness skills through rhymes

When children listen to, repeat, and create rhymes, they learn to match the sounds of language. And what could better inspire rhyming than playful children's songs? As you listen together, repeat the rhyming words and encourage your child to do the same. Take turns making up your own rhyming verses.

Sample music from around the world

Play classical, salsa, jazz, and folk. Chat about the music you like: "I really like the jazz—it helps me relax." Ask questions: "I hear horns. What instruments do you hear?" Listen for details. Ask your child to focus on the sounds of different instruments, the rhythm of the music, and the words of new songs. This will help your child learn to be a good listener in school.

Make and play instruments

To make a simple shaker, put dried beans between two paper plates and staple the plates together. Find rhythm sticks outdoors. Use pan lids as cymbals, and march around the house. Try a slow march first, then a faster one.

Expand vocabulary

As you listen to music together, introduce and talk about new words like *rhythm* and *note*. Listen for new words in song lyrics and talk about what they mean.

Recognize and repeat patterns

Children can develop this math skill while listening to music. Take turns copying patterns in your favorite music, and then create your own. Start with five or fewer beats before moving on to longer patterns.

Source: Adapted from the Message in a Backpack for K.M. Hemple, J.J. Batey, & L.C. Hartle, 2008, "Music Play," *Teaching Young Children* 1 (2): 10–12.

<https://www.naeyc.org/our-work/families/playing-music-home>

Steady Beat

Activities to try: While singing a song, emphasize the words that fall on the beat by stomping or clapping on each beat. You can even have children stomp or clap harder on the downbeat (the most accented note in each measure). There is no wrong way to do this, so feel free to experiment.

To work on one-to-one correspondence, try having your child repeat a basic clapping sequence. Ask, “Can you clap as many times as I do?” As your child gets better at this, you can add rhythm to your clapping. You could also play a drum or even sing instead of clapping.

Songs that build on themselves, such as “There Once Was an Old Lady Who Swallowed a Fly”) help children grasp the idea of “more.” After each verse or every few verses, you can ask, “What’s next?” or “Should we sing more?” Songs that invite children to join in with each verse also promote this concept.

Rhythm

Activities to try: Even newborns can learn about rhythm as their parents sing lullabies to them. Rock with your child while you sing, and pat gently on your child’s back so that he can simultaneously hear and feel the patterns in the music. If the words themselves make a pattern, your child can also see a pattern in your mouth movements. Here is one example of a song you could sing:

(Sung to “Hush, Little Baby”)

Verse 1: Little baby, *don’t you cry*. Little baby, *don’t you cry*.

Pattern: A B A B

Verse 2: Mama loves you *don’t you cry*. Mama loves you *don’t you cry*.

Pattern: C B C B

Invite toddlers and preschoolers to repeat, predict, and/or extend rhythmic patterns. For example, sing “Old MacDonald Had a Farm” with your toddler. Stop after “With a moo-moo here,” and wait for your child to repeat the phrase or extend the pattern of the song by adding “and a moo-moo there.”

Melody

Activities to try: Offer instruments like a xylophone (or piano, if you have one in your home), shaker, drum, or even a pot and a wooden spoon to play a song. Ask your child to play her instrument at a specific note of a simple song (such as on “star” of “Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star”) as you play the rest.

¹Bonny, J.W., & S.F. Lourenco. 2013. “The Approximate Number System and Its Relation to Early Math Achievement: Evidence From the Preschool Years.” *Journal of Experimental Child Psychology* 114 (3): 375–88.

<https://www.naeyc.org/our-work/families/support-math-readiness-through-music>

SING WITH ME BABY!

Singing to a child is a great way to encourage musical development; but what are some additional ways to support very young children in this developmental milestone? Here are developmentally appropriate expectations for music development for young children of various ages.

Newborns should be bathed in song all day long. The most comforting sound in the world is their parents' voices—especially the mother's, they were listening to her for the last nine months. At this stage, they are taking in everything around them, so sing everything! Sing while making a grocery list, sing favorite songs from the radio, sing songs from your own childhood, etc.

Infants respond to familiar songs and tunes by smiling, babbling, and repeating the resting tone (the last note the adult sings). They show reactions to songs used throughout the day, such as transition songs, bath time songs, and lullabies. The most common response is intense staring, sometimes smiling! They actively listen, process, and try to figure out what is going on in the song. For instance, singing a tune the child is familiar with, such as “Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star,” but changing the words to “Now we’re going to the bath, You can sit and make a splash!” will have the baby thinking about the new words used and what will happen. Infants synthesize beats and patterns when adults tap out the rhythm of a song.

Older infants and young toddlers show more purposeful responses to music, such as babbling along during a song, tapping their hands or feet with the beat, and shaking rhythmic instruments. Adults should remember to give children space to sing and to repeat sounds. Singing without pause will limit what the child feels he or she can contribute.

By the time children are older toddlers—through age 2—they remember the words to familiar songs and sing along, like adults do. They remember the tune of a song and can sing in various pitches. When a rhythm is patted or clapped, toddlers can repeat what they just heard.

<https://www.naeyc.org/resources/blog/sing-me-baby>