

MUSIC

Music should play an important role in the early years of development. Brain research has found that listening to music in the first three years of life can form brain patterns critical to learning. Listening to music aids memory, attention, motivation, and spatial temporal reasoning. It also acts as a stress reducer. Young children can participate in four types of musical experiences. These are singing, listening, using instruments, and moving/dancing. These experiences may be used to build concepts, motor skills, language skills, self-expression, and self-concept.

Singing

1. Young children have a small vocal range.
2. Songs for young children should be short.
3. The words and melody should be repeated in a song.
4. Songs which are accompanied by action – either body movement or gestures – help the child to internalize meanings.
5. Children learn about language – grammatical structure, vocabulary, and sounds – through songs.
6. Children should be encouraged to use “singing” voices, not “screaming” voices.

Listening

1. Provide opportunities for the child to hear a variety of music.
2. Encourage the child to become an attentive listener.
3. Use listening activities to develop auditory discrimination skills.

Using Instruments

1. Using rhythmic instruments helps develop motor coordination.
2. Simple melodic instruments such as xylophones, and keyboards can be provided.
3. Many simple rhythm instruments can be made.
4. Introduce concepts of fast/slow, loud/soft, high/low.

Moving/Dancing

1. Allow children freedom to express themselves through movement.
2. Most children have an inborn sense of rhythm and will generally pick up a rhythm accurately on their own.
3. Encourage the use of the whole body and explore the various ways in which the different parts of the body can move.
4. Movement activities can be used to interest children who would not otherwise participate.
5. Use creative movement to interpret moods and discriminate speeds.

Suggested Activities

Singing

1. Use a variety of children's song CD's.
2. Let children record their singing and then play back.
3. Set up a stage, microphone, and costumes for children to perform songs.
4. Sing favorite songs with children at group times.

Listening

1. Set up a CD player with an assortment of good CD's.
2. Add crayons and paper so child may express mood of music through drawing.
3. Use records which give directions for actions.
4. Play music at quiet times before lunch or before nap.
5. Hum songs and let children guess the titles.
6. Use records to discriminate instruments, moods, speed, volume, etc.

Using Instruments

1. Walk to beat of drum. Increase and decrease speed.
2. Use rhythm instruments to accompany songs or records.
3. Color code instruments – organ, xylophone, etc. – and make song charts to children can accompany themselves.

Moving/Dancing

1. Perform locomotor movements such as skipping, galloping, and hopping to music.
2. Clap a rhythm and have children reproduce.
3. Use scarves or streamers with records.
4. Provide various dance costumes and stage for performing.
5. Let children jump on trampoline or use rocking boat while listening to records.
6. Let children interpret songs, poems, or stories through movement.