



An Early Literacy and School Readiness Newsletter for Professionals

Why Music is Important in Learning

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All children are musical. It's always so refreshing to observe children dancing and moving to music. Do you realize the benefits of bringing music into a child's life early in their development?

From birth music training enhances brain function. Studies by Rauscher and Shaw show that early experiences of childhood determine which brain cells (neurons) will connect with other brain cells, and which ones will die away.

Because neural connections are responsible for all types of intelligence, studies also show that a child's brain develops to its full potential only with

exposure to the necessary music enriching experiences. If not stimulated during early childhood, these neuron connectors die, and cannot be



revived by any other activity.

Nurturing a child as you sing a lullaby actually may be beneficial even before birth. Scientists are learning more and more about babies and their ability to hear in the womb.

Today embryologists agree that the ear is the first organ to develop in embryo,

that it becomes functional after only eighteen weeks, and that baby listens actively from twenty-four weeks on.

Speaking, reading and singing to a baby before birth enhances its ability to distinguish among sounds after birth. This is known as "auditory

tracking." Some scientists believe that babies actually understand what is being said around them.

Music benefits the whole child. Preschool children need to be involved in activities that are experiential-based, not performance-based. Music and movement tend to go



Inside this issue:

Why Music is Important continued	2
Simple Songs	2
Brain Development and TV's Impact	3
Valentine Muffin Snack	3
Books for Storytime!	4
Crafting a Band	5
Fun with Songs	5
Free Informational Brochures Available	6

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Why Music is Important in Learning *continued*

hand-in-hand. Some children wiggle their toes or tap their feet while others will move their heads, and still others move their entire bodies to the music.



As children are experiencing enjoyment with music and action songs they are also gaining more discrimination, coordination, listening, attending, and communication skills.

Music meets children's needs as it benefits their whole being.

Music's melodic and rhythmic patterns provide exercise for the brain and help develop memory.

Remember singing the ABC song to learn your ABC's? The integration of music, movement, language, and listening seems to be the most important.

Dr. Warren Henry, chair of music education and director of the UNT Early Childhood Music in Denton, TX has the philosophy that children learn music in the same way they learn language. "Children need

to hear language in order to learn how to speak," Dr. Henry said. "Just imagine the linguistic skills of a child who was never spoken to during the first two years of life.

Music is learned in a similar fashion. In order to build a strong musical foundation for the future, children need to be exposed to music at an early age. Through this exposure, they will be better able to speak music' as they grow older."

Guest Columnist:

Leesa Albrecht is a music instructor with Arts 4 All and Forest Charter School.

Simple Songs

SILLY SONG

Sung to: *If You're Happy and You Know It*

By: Mildred Hoffman

If the sky is very high, wave
goodbye
If the sky is very high, wave
goodbye
If the sky is very high, wink your
eye and wave goodbye
If the sky is very high, wave
goodbye
If your toes are down below,
say hello
If your toes are down below,
say hello
If your toes are down below
Say hello, hello, hello

If your toes are down below,
say hello
If the trees never sneeze, bend
your knees
If the trees never sneeze, bend
your knees
If the trees never sneeze, blow
a breeze and bend our
knees
If the trees never sneeze, bend
your knees
If you think this song is silly,
well, it is!
If you think this song is silly,
well, it is!
If you think this song is silly,
move your shoulders willy-
nilly

If you think this song is silly,
well, it is!

BEAUTIFUL COLORS

Sung to: *Twinkle,
Twinkle Little Star*

By: Paula R. Westernen

Red, orange, yellow, green, and
blue
Purple, black, and brown so
true
Beautiful colors bright and
bold
These are just a few I'm told
Mix them, match them and
you'll see
How many colors there can be!



Brain Development and TV's Impact

We now recognize that the years from birth to age five are critically important in shaping a child's capacity and enthusiasm for learning. Although these



years were always thought to be vital to human development, new technological advances in brain research further support these theories.

We also know that it is not genetics alone

that determines human development. Nature provides a complex system of brain circuitry, but it is external forces such as diet, surroundings, and stimulation that determine how the circuits are wired.

The early wiring of the brain is critical to young children's development. It is the

stimulating and problem solving activities that children are engaged in that build this circuitry.

Excessive TV viewing can rob young children new opportunities to make brain connections. During TV viewing alpha brain waves are produced, as in sleep, that create a trance like state that allows one to take in information without processing or analyzing it.

TV viewing also effects eye development. Eyes need to move to stimulate develop. When watching TV, the eye reduces its movement and therefore there are less opportunities for the eyes to be stimulated.

To succeed at reading, children need to develop eye movement that is rhythmical and

controlled; this doesn't always occur when viewing TV.

TV viewing can also impact children's speech and language development. Language development requires listening, interaction, and speaking.

TV only addresses one of these elements - hearing. Children who watch excessive amounts of TV have been found to lack verbal language skills. Lack of stimulation will cause less of the brain wiring to occur.

Children's moral and social development can be influenced by TV viewing. Young children often lack the skills to

differentiate between real life and fiction. This can create anxiety and stress in children when watching dramatic and violent shows.



Valentine Muffin Snack

Kids learn so much from helping in the kitchen and preparing food! This recipe allows an opportunity to talk about halves and wholes. Try this simple snack for a holiday treat.

WHAT YOU NEED:

Half an English muffin (one per child)

Low-fat cream cheese
Half a strawberry (one per child)

WHAT YOU DO:

1. Wash hands.
2. Wash, stem strawberries and set aside.
3. Toast English muffins in the toaster or under broiler
4. Allow to cool slightly.

5. Spread with cream cheese.
6. Cut strawberries in half lengthwise to make two heart-shaped pieces.
7. Place one half on each muffin.
8. Enjoy with a glass of milk, water, or 100% fruit juice.



Books for Storytime!

VALENTINE'S DAY

Featured Title:

Happy Valentine's Day, Mouse!
Laura Numeroff

Join Mouse from *If You Give a Mouse a Cookie* in his latest adventure!

The Biggest Valentine Ever
Steven Kroll

Keeping Up With Grandma
John Winch

The Night Before Valentine's Day
Natasha Wing

Roses are Pink, Your Feet Really Stink
Diane De Groat

The Day it Rained Hearts
Felecia Bond

The Best Thing About Valentines
Eleanor Hudson

My Fuzzy Valentine
Naomi Kleinberg

The Story of Valentine's Day
Nancy Skarneas

The Great Valentine's Day Mix-up
Saxton Moore

How Many Hearts?
Chuck Murphy

Be Mine, Be Mine, Sweet Valentine
Sarah Weeks

My Funny Valentine
Harriet Ziefert

The Great Valentine's Day Surprise
Suzy-Jane Tanner

GIVING

Featured Title:

Ordinary Mary's Extraordinary Deed
Emily Pearson

An ordinary girl from an ordinary school, on her way to an ordinary house ~ who stumbles upon ordinary blueberries. When she decides to pick them for her neighbor, she starts a chain reaction that multiplies.

Alejandro's Gift
Richard E. Albert

Do You Know What I'll Do?
Charlotte Zolotow

The Giving Bear
Isabel Gaines

The Giving Tree
Shel Silverstein

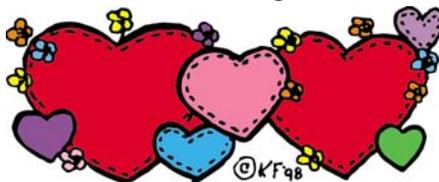
Harlequin and the Gift of Many Colors
Remy Charlip & Burton Supree

I'll Build My Friend a Mountain
Bobbi Katz

A Kiss for Little Bear
Else Holmelund Minarik

Star Mother's Youngest Child
Loise Moeri

The Tomten and the Fox
Astrid Lindgren



MUSIC and MOVEMENT

Featured Title:

First Songs
Jill Harker

A delightful collection of timeless songs - perfect for young children everywhere...*Rock-a-Bye Baby*; *Yankee Doodle*; *Pat-a-Cake, Pat-a-Cake*; *Pussy Cat, Pussy Cat*; *Georgie Porgie*; *Hickory, Dickory, Dock*; *Here We Go Round the Mulberry Bush*; *It's Raining, It's Pouring*; *Lavender Blue*; *Simple Simon*; and many more.

Barnyard Dance!
Sandra Boynton

I Make Music
Eloise Greenfield

The Animal Boogie
Debbie Harter

Down by the Bay
Raffi

Peanut Butter and Jelly: A Play Rhyme
Nadine Bernard Westcott

Today Is Monday
Eric Carle

A, You're Adorable
Martha Alexander

Moo, Baa, La La La!
Sandra Boynton

Toes, Ears, and Nose!
Marion Dane Bauer

Oh Where, Oh Where Has My Little Dog Gone?
Iza Trapani

Crafting a Band!



We know the beneficial role that music plays in children's development. Try one or more of these ideas to create your own classroom band!

Put your creativity and imagination to work in creating a variety of instruments for the children to use.

Consider putting on a show for families...the kids will love performing!

DRUMS

A variety of drums can be made using all types of large

containers with lids:

- Ice cream tubs
- Oatmeal cans
- Large coffee or fruit cans
- Large yogurt, cottage cheese, or sour cream containers

Decorate the containers with supplies of your choosing to make them festive!

SHAKERS

You can use empty water bottles, old baby bottles, or any container with a lid to make shakers! Fill the bottles with beads, beans, popcorn, buttons, or any other small hard objects. Glue the lids in place so the children won't be able to take

them off the bottles. You can also use all sizes of plastic eggs!

JINGLERS

Sew different sizes of bells onto pieces of elastic. Children can wear them on their wrists to make the noise. (Be aware of the potential choking hazard with small children...always supervise when in use!)

DANCING RIBBONS

Tie lengths of colored ribbon onto elastic hair ties. Children can wear them on their wrists while dancing, twirling, and moving to the music!



Fun With Songs

BUILD A SNOWMAN

Sung to: *Frere Jacques*
By Sandra Winnett

Build a snowman, build a snowman
Big and round, big and round,
Sun is shining on him
Sun is shining on him
He's all gone, he's all gone.

VALENTINE'S RED

Sung to: *Lavender's Blue*
By: Eleanor G. Thomas

Valentines red, dilly, dilly
Valentines blue,
Valentines all pink and frilly

Say, "I love you!"

Flowers and lace dilly, dilly
Pretty cards, too,
Valentines covered with hearts,
Say, "I love you!"

SNOWFLAKES FALLING DOWN

Sung to: *Row, Row, Row Your Boat*
By: Susan A. Miller

Snowflakes falling down,
(wiggle fingers downward)
Falling on the ground.
Great, big, white flakes
(make circles with thumbs and

forefingers touching)

That do not make a sound.
(finger to lips and shake head no)

MY VALENTINE

Sung to: *The Muffin Man*
By: Frank Daly

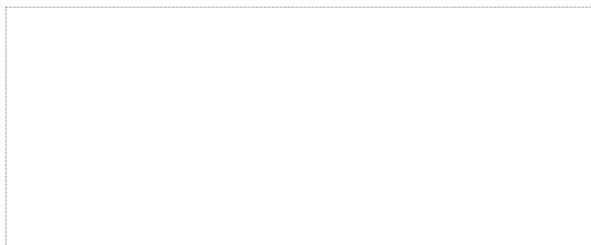
It's nice to have a friend like you.
I'll tell you what I'm going to do.
Because you make me feel so fine,
I'll take you for my Valentine.





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Brochures Available to Give to Parents



Free informational brochures are available to Placer County providers through our program. We have created easy-to-read brochures on many different topics of interest to parents of 0-5 year olds. They make a nice display in your parent

area and provide parents with valuable skills and knowledge.

Call Paula or visit the Ready to Succeed web pages online to request any or all of the following brochures for parents:

- Reading With Infants
- Tips for Reading to Toddlers
- Reading With Your Preschooler
- Tips for Bedtime Reading
- Early Literacy Stages
- Reading Wordless Books
- Catch a New Book Category
- Kindergarten? Is My Child Ready? Am I?
- Turn Your Television Off And...
- Before Once Upon a Time
- Beyond Happily Ever After
- Healthy Brain Development
- Tall, Talk, Talk With Me!
- Sing a Song...Song a Rhyme
- Learning Tips for Busy Families
- Reading Aloud with Your Child

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