



WEE LEARN – MUSIC & CHILDREN'S DEVELOPMENT

Children who grow up listening to music, moving to a beat and singing songs are enjoying a rich sensory environment. Every area of development can be fostered by including musical experiences for your child each and every day.

WEE BEGINNERS – 0 to 18 months

Musical experiences support the formation of important brain connections that are being established over the first three years of life. Singing a lullaby while rocking a baby stimulates early language development while at the same time promotes attachments. Music lifts everyone's spirits and provides a wonderful bonding experience together.

Benefits of Music with your Wee Beginner:

Social-Emotional Skills: Music is almost always shared with others, whether singing, dancing or playing instruments thus providing a wonderful social experience.

Self-Regulation: When adults help babies calm down, they are supporting the development of self-regulation and the ability to manage their emotional state and physical needs. Music can provide an opportunity for babies to learn to soothe themselves.

Self-Esteem: Babies and young toddlers develop a sense that they are smart and competent when they can make an impact on their world and receive positive reinforcement from those around them. Think of a baby's eyes wide open and giggle as she makes a rattle make noise, with mom and dad clapping in excitement or when your child is able to remember some of the hand movements to Twinkle Twinkle or Pat A Cake.

Activity for Wee Beginners:

Egg-celent Shakers

Materials Needed:

Plastic Eggs

Fillers (pennies, pasta, beans)

Glue/tape



Directions:

Fill pairs of plastic eggs with different types of fillers (2 with pasta, two with beans, two with pennies, etc.)

Glue or tape securely the halves together.

Let your baby work those arm muscles and shake the eggs. Older children can match the sounds.





WEE EXPLORERS: 18 Months to 3 Years

Music is a natural part of life for toddlers. They might wake up in the morning singing to their stuffed animals or clap to the rhythm of a nursery rhyme during story time. There should be plenty of opportunities for children to actively experience music. The best way to do so is to include songs that require movement like the Hokey Pokey or finger plays such as “Itsy Bitsy Spider”.

Benefits of Music with your Wee Explorer:

Cooperate and Build Relationships: Music often involves more than one person participating, adding a voice or sound. Music experiences, in which children use their own voices or play instruments, are good choices for young children. Because music activities typically do not require sharing, this allows your toddler to experience positive peer interactions without having to share or take turns, something that toddlers are still working on.

Understand Emotions: Singing about feelings helps toddlers learn the words to describe their emotional experience (If You’re Happy and You Know it....). They can often associate songs to certain feelings/moods depending on the beat/tempo of a song.

Boost Language Development: Songs help children increase their repertoire of words. Use old nursery rhymes accompanied by simple melodies and use them as part of your daily routine. You may get bored of the rhyme but your child will quickly learn the words and start singing to you!

Activity for Wee Explorers:

Tambourines

Materials needed:

2 clear plastic plates

Colourful pompoms, sparkles, beads, ribbon

Glue gun

Directions:

Let your child pick out colourful materials and place on top of one of the plastic plates (don’t forget to name the colours as she does).

Glue the edges and place the other plastic plate on top securely. Let dry.





WEE BUILDERS – 3 – 4 Years:

When children are around three years of age, they begin to take a real interest in music activities of all kinds. It is a good time for parents to begin mixing music games that require body movement such as clapping, waving, jumping and dancing. Sing-along games are ideal for initiating movement and bringing children together in enjoyable group activities, something that will enhance their social development.

Benefits of Music with your Wee Builder:

Motor Development: Dancing with scarves high in the air work on his large leg and arm muscles while his small muscles are being enhanced through finger plays such as Open, Shut Them.

Share and Take Turns: Music encourages children to take turns such as taking turns on toy drums or repeating the sounds others make. Circle time each day can promote children sharing stories, songs and work towards a common goal: a fun musical experience.

Pretend Play and Symbolic Thinking: Learning that one object can represent another object is a major leap in children's thinking skills. Use music to build on this growing ability to use symbols by providing props to go along with songs.

Activity for Wee Builders:

What Makes a Sound

Materials Needed:

1 tray or baking pan

scarf for a blindfold

objects that make noise such as drum, keys, paper to crumple, plastic egg with rice inside, water in a bottle, bell, coins in a purse, squeaky toy, Velcro, zipper, etc.

Directions:

Together, let the children take turns making sounds with the objects.

Let each child take turns being blindfolded while another child holds an object and makes a sound with the object.

Can he guess what made that sound? Continue taking turns.





WEE LEARNERS 4 – 5 Years:

Children between ages four and five are more consistent music-makers and also are more aware of the messages in song lyrics. As music is a natural memory booster, this is a great opportunity to use songs that incorporate numbers and letters or boost your child's vocabulary with new rhymes and songs and repeat them each day so that they become familiar and part of your child's personal vocabulary book. Increasing his vocabulary and assisting him with his listening skills, both will help him to read later on.

Benefits of Music with Your Wee Learner:

Skills: Music quite naturally provides opportunities to practice patterns, math concepts, and symbolic thinking skills.

Counting: Many songs introduce numbers and counting "Five Little Monkeys". The rhythm and repetition of songs may make it easier for very young children to remember the name and sequence of number patterns.

Patterns and Sequencing: Almost every piece of music has a pattern built into the melody or lyrics. Learning to anticipate patterns and place objects or events in sequence builds critical early math and early reading skills. Choose songs that are repetitive in rhyme.

Memory: Music holds a powerful place in our memory. Providing consistent experience with the same song (nap time) helps children link music with a particular experience.

Musical Maracas

Materials Needed:

Plastic Eggs

Masking Tap

Markers, stickers

2 plastic spoons

rice/beans as fillers

Directions:

Place fillers into the plastic egg.

Place the egg in the middle of two spoons and assist your child in taping around the egg and the spoons to hold the egg in place.

Let your child decorate the maracas with stickers, markers, etc.





WEE EXPERTS – 5 – 6 Years:

Children at this age are starting to develop an appreciation and preference to certain music. It is a good idea to make sure that children are exposed to a wide variety of music whether it be classical, country or jazz. Children begin to analyze and pay more attention to lyrics as well so as parents, we need to ensure that the message being expressed in the song is appropriate. Children will incorporate music into their daily routine for entertainment, for relaxation or for creative expression.

Benefits of Music with your Wee Expert:

Develop Cultural Awareness: Playing songs and using musical styles from children's home cultures create continuity between home and other settings. This nurtures children's feelings of safety and security and validates the Importance of their culture and language.

Relaxation: Music therapy is being used more and more to complement more traditional forms of medicine. Music can aid relaxation by lowering heart rates and blood pressure.

Creative Expression: Whether your child uses classical music to daydream and reflect or pop music to role-play as a singing diva, music can be used as an outlet for children as they deal with friendship conflicts or happy family times.

Promote Dance: Music can introduce your child to a wide variety of tempos, beats and rhythms that normally they may not be accustomed. Some cultures offer music that promotes children to move their bodies gracefully while others are more upbeat and invigorating. Either way, your child would be bending, stretching and twirling which is great for gross motor development.

Activity for Wee Experts:

Chinese Style Gong

Large cardboard tube, Metal roasting pan, Paint, Wrapping paper, Glue, scissors, Pipe cleaners
Wooden spoon

Directions:

Let your child paint the underside of a metal roasting pan. Let dry.

Your child can then decorate the cardboard tube with paint and/or wrapping paper.

Cutting two holes at the top of the roasting pan, have your child thread the

Pipe cleaners through the metal pan and attach to the cardboard tube. Use a wooden spoon as the gong striker.





WEE MENTORS – 6 Years+:

Children at this stage start learning that music has structure. Rhymes, repetition and experimenting with different sounds can be used for reading and language development. This is the ideal time to actively teach a musical instrument. The piano and guitar are both good choices as wind instruments tend to be more physically challenging until fourth grade. As long as your child continuously expresses an interest in learning an instrument, it will not feel like a chore when it comes to practicing. But don't limit your child to just musical instrument instruction. She may also want to try voice lessons or join a singing group.

Benefits of Music with Your Wee Mentor:

Concentration: Learning a musical instrument will help your child develop concentration as they focus on a particular activity over extended periods of time. This in turn will help them focus in school.

Coordination: practicing a musical instrument improves eye-hand coordination. Children develop important motor skills when playing music just as they do when playing different sports.

Patience: In order to learn a musical instrument, children must develop patience, which will help later in life when tackling difficult challenges.

Self-Confidence: The act of learning and playing an instrument, the encouragement of a teacher and proud parent will build in a child a sense of pride and confidence. It also provides an outlet for self-expression and creativity.

Activity for Wee Mentor:

Water Xylophone

Materials Needed:

8 sturdy glasses

water

food colouring

metal spoon

Directions:

Let your child fill each glass with different amounts of water. Add food colouring for visual effect.

By tapping the glasses individually, your child should arrange the glasses in order from highest to lowest sound.

Suggest he practice a simple song on the xylophone for family members to guess.

