

Music and the Young Child

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<http://familyplayandlearn.com>

Having operated a successful Family Child Care in my home for over 10 years, I have had many opportunities to introduce various aspects of the Arts to young children. Being naturally musical myself, providing a musical curriculum to my kids was a simple and obvious way to enhance the daily activities of my child care and my own children as well.

Children respond to music at a very young age. Nearly everyone can remember their mother or grandmother singing nursery rhymes to them as little children. I have vivid memories of swinging outside and singing 'Hey Diddle Diddle' as loudly as I could just to hear the sound. With my own children I have always used music to calm and entertain them; singing softly to them in the rocker or energetically leading them in finger-plays and sing-a-longs. However you may choose to do it, singing or playing music with children gives them a beginnings of music appreciation, not to mention the special memories that are created.

My son is a wild and wholly two-year-old, and greatly affected by his environment and the sounds and sights he encounters. Getting out of control is very easy with this little boy, and it's up to me to find ways of calming him down and quickly distracting him and hopefully changing his mood. Music affects a child's mood, and quiet, comforting music can relax an anxious child. It's amazing the way my son reacts to his special CDs that he knows and enjoys. Often he'll just stop what he is doing and I'll see him stand and look toward the stereo and just sway and sing to himself.

Children will naturally relate movement with music giving them the opportunity to explore their own creative expression. They love to act out movements to the songs such as moving around the room like different animals based on the type of sounds they hear. They can explore how their bodies move and their physical coordination begins to grow and develop as a result.

Music activities in group settings help children develop social and interactive skills by sharing the activity with the other children around them. They love to join hands and form circles while singing simple nursery rhymes and dancing around together. Friendships are made easily when children share musical activities and even the shyest child can join in and become part of the group.

Introducing music to young children will provide them with a foundation to help develop language and listening skills, along with enhanced coordination and emotional development. Little children love to express themselves through music and given the opportunity, will reap the benefits of a lifetime of music appreciation.

About the Author: *Sherry Frewerd is a Proud Work At Home Mother of 3 musical children. A Family Child Care Provider for 10 years, she also publishes several websites, specifically <http://familyplayandlearn.com>, Family Play and Learn: Play and Learning Resources for Parents and Family Child Care Providers.*