

Sharing Thoughts About Music and Movement

Dear Families:

Listening and moving to music are important for children. Newborns are comforted when they are rocked or gently bounced to a steady rhythm. Older infants, toddlers, and twos have favorite songs and love making music by banging a pot with a spoon. In addition to being pleasurable, these experiences are important to children's overall development. Here are some examples of what children learn.

When your child...

- is soothed when you play soft music
- holds hands and dances with another child
- stomps around the room to a march
- joins a fingerplay

Your child is learning...

- to comfort himself
- about playing with other children
- to use his large muscles
- fine-motor skills

What You Can Do at Home

It's easy to make music and movement a part of your child's life. Here are some suggestions to try at home.

- **Call your child's attention to a variety of sounds.** Listen to the ticking clock and a singing bird, and talk about them.
- **Sing to your child.** Start with simple songs, including those that you particularly enjoy.
- **Make up songs with your child.** To start, use a familiar tune and just substitute a few words, such as a person's name or an event. For example, you might sing, "Sarah had a little doll, little doll, little doll..."
- **Play different types of music.** In addition to children's music, your child may enjoy listening to a variety of melodies and rhythms: folk songs, reggae, jazz, classical music, popular music, and so on.
- **Move and dance together.** It's fun to take giant steps and then tiny steps during a walk. You can even try to hop like a frog or wiggle like a worm!
- **Offer your child simple rhythm instruments.** You can make a drum from an oatmeal box, cymbals from metal pie pans, and shakers by filling containers with rice or buttons and fastening them securely. Your kitchen is a child's orchestra. Listen as your child bangs on your pots, pans, and unbreakable bowls.

It doesn't matter whether you can carry a tune or play an instrument. Sharing your enjoyment of music and movement with your child does matter. We'll be happy to share the songs we sing, and we'd love to learn some of your family's favorites.

Sincerely,