



# Fine Arts

## Music: Rhythm

What: Rhythm is the repetition of a beat or sound in a predictable manner.

Why: Understanding rhythm is a key part of learning to read and play music. It also helps children express emotions, have fun with music, and gain confidence.

How:

### 1. Rhythm Sticks

- o Rhythm sticks are simple sticks that children tap together. Have children use the sticks to tap out simple repetitions. For example, *Ta-ta-tee-tee-ta*. Let children create their own repetitions for others to try, as well. Go outside and use real sticks, too.
- o Listen to how children are able to repeat the rhythm. Record what children come up with, and make note of how they create and repeat.

### 2. Clap Along

- o Listen to music and encourage children to clap along. Choose a variety of music genres so that children experience different types and sounds.
- o Observe how children are able to clap along with the music. How much do they rely on the adult model? How long are children able to clap in rhythm to the music? Is some music easier? Why? What kind of help do children need to clap in rhythm to the music?

### 3. Rhythm Names

- o Use children's names to highlight rhythm. Clap or play an instrument to capture the rhythm of a child's name.
- o Invite children to tap out the rhythm of their own name and their friends' names.
- o Listen to how children tap out the rhythm of their name. What kind of help do they need? Are some names easier than others? What kind of rhythms do children create?

### 4. Listen for Rhythm

- o The environment is full of different sounds. Make a game of guessing rhythmic sounds by drawing pictures of things that have those sounds (e.g., windshield wipers, clock, washing machine, toilet flushing, wind blowing, etc.). Let children choose a card and then act out the rhythm for other children to guess.
- o Video and make note of how children creatively display the different rhythmic sounds. What kind of patterns do they demonstrate? Are they able to create their own rhythm? What kind of help is needed?

### 5. Rhythmic Reads

- o Read rhythmic books with children, such as "Zin! Zin! Zin! A Violin" (Lloyd Moss), "The Bears' Picnic" (Stan Berenstain), and "Hairy Maclary from Donaldson's Dairy" (Lynley Dodd). Make up finger plays or actions to accompany the rhythmic bits in the book. For example, pretend to play the different instruments in "Zin! Zin! Zin! A Violin".



- Watch for and listen to how children demonstrate their understanding of rhythm. How much do they rely on an adult model? How much prompting do they need?

## 6. Family Chat

- Invite families to share the music they listen to at home. Talk about learning rhythm and how clapping along to music helps children learn rhythmic patterns. Ask families how their child does with moving to the rhythm of the music they like to listen to at home.





## Fine Arts

### Music: Response to Change

What: Response to change is the ability to recognize changes in music. It may be changes in speed, sound, pitch, tempo, etc. Recognizing, responding to, and identifying the different sounds are part of understanding music.

Why: Music is important for learning. Learning music and changes in music helps children understand and detect patterns. It also helps them focus, learn rules of pattern formation, memorize passages, and enhance auditory processing. These are all skills important for math and reading as well.

How:

#### 1. Talk About Changes

- When listening to music, playing instruments, and singing, point out changes in the music. Talk about the pitch (high, low), beat (fast, slow), and volume (loud, soft). Encourage children to listen for and identify changes in the music.
- Write down the changes children notice. Document the different ways children respond to changes in the music.

#### 2. Change The Words

- Try changing the words of a familiar song. For example, change the lamb in “Mary Had a Little Lamb” to a different animal (e.g., cat, fish, elephant, rabbit, etc.). Include actions for the animals, too.
- Video or make note of children's responses to the changes. Pay attention to what changes children suggest. How do they respond when the word changed has more syllables or less?

#### 3. If You're Happy and You Know It

- Sing this song and encourage variations in the movements and how the song is sung. For example, *If you're happy and you know it, sing out loud... sing fast, or sing high or low.*
- Make note of how children respond to the changes in the song. Are they able to adjust to the change?

#### 4. Background Music

- Play music in the class, making a point to play a variety of styles. Consider including classical, jazz, pop, country, and more. Comment on the music played, and invite children to listen and respond to the music, as well. Ask children about what they want to hear at different times of the day (e.g., *What dinner/lunch music should we play today?*).
- Ask children questions about the music being played. Make note of their responses, and prompt them to explain what they like/don't like and why. Encourage children to talk about the variations they hear in different types of music.

#### 5. Listening Center

- In a listening center, include different types of sing along picture books. For example, *Five Little Ducks, Row Row Row Your Boat, The Wheels on the Bus*, etc. Include the books and the accompanying music for children to explore. Invite children to share their music books with peers, and provide opportunities for them to share the books with their families, too.



- As children explore the music books, notice how or if they sing along. Make note of how they use the books or tapes to help them.

## 6. Family Chat

- Share your observations about children's awareness and responses to music with their families. Ask families about the music in their lives. Invite them to share music that could be listened to in class. Share music that you play, as well.





## Fine Arts

### Music: Singing

What: Singing is making musical sounds with your voice.

Why: Singing is a great way to engage children and enhance literacy learning. Children learn through singing, as it helps them break information into memorable pieces. For instance, think about young children learning the letters of the alphabet through the alphabet song.

How:

#### 1. Transitions

- Sing songs to facilitate transitions and encourage children to sing along (e.g., the clean-up song).
- Notice how children sing along. Do they know the entire song or just parts of it? Do they vary their voice or make other changes as they sing along?

#### 2. Concept Songs

- Use songs to augment teaching other concepts and topical units in areas like rhymes, colors, numbers, shapes, and opposites. Also use songs to help teach vocabulary and discrimination of sound. For example, “Willoughby Wallaby Woo” is a fun song for learning rhymes.
- Listen to children singing and note how they sing familiar songs. How do they modify songs?

#### 3. Karaoke

- Use or make microphones and invite children to play karaoke with their favorite songs. Consider setting up a center that includes opportunities for children to video themselves and play it back.
- Observe and review videos that children make. Notice how they sing their favorite songs. How do they use their voice in the song?

#### 4. Music Props

- Include props with music. Props might be cut outs, scarves, musical instruments, stuffed animals, etc. Encourage children to use and share the props during songs. Children can also use props to identify songs they want to sing. Modify props as needed so everyone can participate.
- Notice how the children use the props. How do props help the children identify or remember different songs? Video children singing and using the accompanying song props.

#### 5. Song Books

- “There Was An Old Lady Who Swallowed A Fly” (Simms Taback) is a classic board book that is fun for preschoolers. Read the book and encourage children to sing along. Talk about what happens in the book, and explore other ways to add actions or props to the book.
- Observe how children join the activity. Notice how they sing along. Do they know the words?

#### 6. Family Chat

- Make videos or write the words to children's favorite songs and share with families. Encourage children to teach their favorite songs to their family. Ask families if they hear their child singing songs outside of school. Does the child sing songs he hears in class? Does he know all or part of the words to the songs?





## Fine Arts

### Music: Playing Rhythm Instruments

**What:** Rhythm instruments are those that play a single note, such as a drum, bell, or cymbals. Playing a rhythm involves playing a regular or predictable pattern.

**Why:** Learning to play rhythm instruments helps children develop motor skills and hand-eye coordination, gain a sense of beat and rhythm, increase listening skills, learn patterning skills, develop a sense of teamwork, appreciate cultural awareness, and build self-esteem and self-control.

**How:**

#### 1. Rubbish Instruments

- o Make instruments from recyclables. For example, you can make a drum from an oatmeal container, maracas from egg cartons, or a flute from a cardboard tube with holes punched in it. Let children have fun exploring and figuring out different instruments they can make using recyclables.
- o Take pictures of children's creations. Observe how they play around with making their instruments. Notice any rules they assign to how their instrument is played. Listen to the rhythms they make create.

#### 2. What's That Instrument?

- o Introduce new instruments to children. Consider creating an instrument center where instruments can be kept and explored. Introduce homemade instruments, too. Add one or two instruments each week, and rotate and shift them depending upon children's interests. Ask children about the different sounds each instrument makes, and encourage them to create music with the instruments.
- o Make note of how children explore and use the instruments. How do they respond to questions about the instruments? How do they demonstrate use of the instruments?

#### 3. Chicka Chicka Boom Boom

- o The book "Chicka Chicka Boom Boom" (Bill Martin, Jr.), is a fun book to read and accompany rhythm instruments. Invite children to play maracas, shakers, rhythm sticks, or other instruments. Reinforce the patterning and repetition of the words "Chicka Chicka Boom Boom" as they are read in the book, and have children make up other catchy word patterns and tap out the rhythm on their instruments.
- o Listen for how children play the rhythm on their instruments. Do they keep a steady beat? What kind of help do they need? How long can they keep the beat? What if the beat is more complex?

#### 4. Animal Rhythms

- o Using a variety of rhythm instruments, invite children to experiment with making rhythms of different animals. What does a cat running across the couch sound like? What does an elephant crossing a field sound like? What is the rhythm of a horse galloping? A worm slithering?
- o Observe how children create the different rhythms. How do they do creating a steady beat? How complex are the beats they create? What kind of help do they need?



## 5. Ditto Drum

- o Using drums or other rhythm instruments, invite children to work in pairs or small groups. Let the children take turns tapping a rhythm on the drum, and then encourage their peers to ditto (copy) the rhythm sound.
- o Notice how children are able to listen to and copy rhythm. Make note of how they work together.

## 6. Family Chat

- o Ask families if they play any instruments and if their child has had any experience with instruments. Talk with families about learning rhythm in class, and share some of your related activities. Ask families if they've noticed their child playing rhythms on an instrument or created instrument.





## Fine Arts

# Music: Following Directions and Cues

What: Following directions and cues means understanding and following what peers are doing to participate in musical activities.

Why: This is an important skill for participating in many different kinds of group activities. The skills of following directions and using cues to understand directions are foundational for higher level academic and social skills.

How:

### 1. Hokey Pokey

- This is a fun activity for preschoolers. Introduce the game “Hokey Pokey” and the directions. Once everyone understands the game, mix it up by adding more difficult or complex directions. For example, *do the hokey pokey and clap your hands just 2 times*, or *do the hokey pokey and wiggle like a leaf*.
- Watch how children demonstrate understanding the directions to the game. What happens when the directions are less familiar? What environmental cues do children use to understand the directions?

### 2. Finger Plays

- Children love finger plays, and there are many to choose from. For example, the “Itsy Bitsy Spider,” “Five Green and Speckled Frogs,” “The Ants Go Marching,” and more. Do finger play songs with children at different times in the day. Have fun with them outside, too.
- When doing finger plays, notice how much of the song children understand. Pause and see if they know the remaining parts. Encourage children to start the finger play and then help out as needed. Make note of how children do following directions as they participate.

### 3. Pass the Hat

- This is a fun musical game to introduce who is here today. Sitting in a circle, have one child start with the hat. Sing the lyric, *Jayne (child's name) has the hat. What do you think of that? Take it off pass it to Art (another child's name)*. Then sing, *Art has the hat. What do you think of that? Take it off pass it to (name another child)*. Continue singing through everyone’s name.
- Notice how the children are able to follow the directions. Do they remember the words to the song? What cues do they use to understand and keep the game going?

### 4. Maypole

- Make a maypole in the room or outside using ribbons tied to a ring. Hang the ring from the ceiling or a pole. Introduce a game of dancing, skipping, tiptoeing, or sliding, while holding the maypole streamers. Invite children to suggest other ways to move (e.g., slow, really slow, super fast, etc.).
- Document how the children do following the directions of the game. What happens if the rules or ways of movement change? What cues do children use to follow along?

### 5. Jump Rope Rhymes

- Encourage children to play in small groups. Have two children each hold an end of the rope and slowly swing it back and forth. Sing a jump rope rhyme, like *Blue bells, cockle shell, easy ivy over*. Invite another child to jump over the swinging rope as children slowly swing it and sing the song.





Depending upon children's abilities, they may or may not swing the rope over (e.g., when the blue bell song goes to *easy ivy over*). Easier versions are to move the rope on the ground and not swing it at all.

- o Video or document how children engage in the game. What directions do they add or change?

## 6. Family Chat

- o Ask families about songs or finger plays they sing or perform at home. Share the finger plays you do in class, along with the learning progression. Together, determine their child's level. Acknowledge progress made and opportunities available in class, and brainstorm ideas to help the child move to the next level.

