

# Timing (moving to a steady beat) . . .

## . . . increases the ability to attend and focus.

- Attention is handled by the same part of the brain as rhythm.
- Internalizing the movement needed to keep a beat wakes up the vestibular system (the part of the ear that controls balance). This helps with listening and focusing.

## . . . is necessary for reading fluency and speech flow.

- When someone has no timing, language processing is slowed down in the brain, so both speech and reading fluency are involved.
- Writing is slowed down without a beat because there is no fluidity of movement.

## . . . is the basis of patterning, which is necessary for developing sequencing skills in math.

- Unless someone can chunk things into groups, patterns and sequencing don't make any sense.
- It's important to see and hear groups. Both visual and auditory skills are developed with beat work.

## . . . is needed for coordination!

- There are many sports applications! Dribbling a basketball while running requires a high level of beat competence.
- Dancing is almost impossible without beat competence.

## . . . helps with spatial awareness.

- The ability to find the correct position and catch a football pass requires both timing and spatial awareness.
- Passing another vehicle on the road requires timing and spatial awareness.
- Deciding how long it will take to top at an intersection requires timing and spatial awareness.

# The Importance of Movement

**Movement is a child's way of learning about the world.** By exploring his surroundings a child begins to understand and find a place within the environment. By experimenting with movements of the body he begins to understand how the body functions and where it fits in the world around him.

**The need to move is biological.** It is the developmental process (that takes time, practice and repetition) of making a person who can function in the world with grace and assurance. Awareness of the body fosters control of the body.

**Movement experiences give the brain input that benefits and integrates information from all the senses.** A child who can't experience the touch of something won't be able to describe it with language just as a child who has never experienced calm cannot be expected to find a state of calm on his own.

**Movement contributes to other developmental processes.** Movement gives the brain input that directly helps develop **language**. The part of the brain that processes **attention** is the same one that processes rhythm and regulates impulses. Without rhythmic timing **impulse control** and many brain processes (language and **sequencing** included!) slow down. The brains of children with attention problems process information more slowly than normal, so they feel the need to move on the outside to speed up the processing on the inside.

**Movement stimulates good listening.** The vestibular sense (the balance function of the ear) is governed by the bones that lie next to the cochlea (the gateway to the hearing function of the ear). Stimulation to one affects the other since they dwell in such close proximity. Movement is often accompanied by sound and bombardment with sound often produces movement.

# Using Music with Young Children

## Does music really make children smarter?

- Music stimulates the brain in unique ways.
- Children who actively making music use more regions of the brain.
- During music activities the brain makes connections with language, listening, and movement parts of the brain simultaneously. The earlier these connections are made the more likely they are to be retained.
- Music helps to strengthen the parts of the brain that deal with academic subjects like math and reading as well as attention.

Music education for children is not a frill.  
Good music instruction touches the child's mind where it lives—in the body.  
It is essential for the rhythm, the balance, the social awareness,  
and the increasingly sophisticated thinking of the  
kindergarten and elementary school child. Don Campbell, author  
*The Mozart Effect, Healing at the Speed of Sound*

Through purposeful movement children associate movement with conscious thought and begin to plan movements beforehand and recall them later for discussion.

Phyllis Weikart,  
Physical Education/Dance  
teacher, author *Teaching  
Movement and Dance*

## Making healthy choices about screen time

- Nothing replaces lap time. Children need to learn by interacting with people. Children learn to speak by having conversations with adults.
- Years 1-5 are a time of exploration and phenomenal growth. Hands-on activities are better for children than vicarious experiences.
- Too much screen time disrupts the proper development of attention and patience. Children who are most successful in school can focus and listen to something brand new. Even if they are not exceptionally bright children they can surpass children with more intelligence who are not paying attention and listening.
- Recommendations from the American Academy of Pediatrics
  1. For children younger than 18 months, avoid use of screen media other than video-chatting. Parents of children 18 to 24 months of age who want to introduce digital media should choose high-quality programming, and watch it with their children to help them understand what they're seeing.
  2. For children ages 2 to 5 years, limit screen use to 1 hour per day of high-quality programs. Parents should co-view media with children to help them understand what they are seeing and apply it to the world around them.
  3. For children ages 6 and older, place consistent limits on the time spent using media, and the types of media, and make sure media does not take the place of adequate sleep, physical activity and other behaviors essential to health.
  4. Designate media-free times together, such as dinner or driving, as well as media-free locations at home, such as bedrooms.
  5. Have ongoing communication about online citizenship and safety, including treating others with respect online and offline.

Check the AAP website for video resources and a Family Media Use Plan tool

<https://www.aap.org/en-us/about-the-aap/aap-press-room/Pages/American-Academy-of-Pediatrics-Announces-New-Recommendations-for-Childrens-Media-Use.aspx>

# Sequence of Early Childhood Music Skills

## Pitch

- Explore animal sounds and high and low sounds
- Echo patterns from songs
- Sing solo patterns or parts of songs
- Call and Response songs
- Sing songs together

***Remember: The voice is a beautiful instrument on its own. It doesn't need other sounds to make it complete.***

***So, it's a good idea to . . .***

- sing for children, not with them.
- encourage use of the head voice, not the chesty speaking voice.
- sing acappella whenever possible.
- let them sing solos when they are ready. (Children need to hear themselves sing in order to develop confidence.)

## Rhythm

- Steady Beat
    - on the body (Use two hands simultaneously before trying to alternate.)
    - on instruments
    - rocking the body
    - rocking a stuffed toy
  - Echo rhythm patterns
  - Start and Stop activities
  - Subdivide the beat
    - Use two little beats to each big beat for marching songs.
    - Use three little beats to each big beat for most rocking songs.
  - Elongate the beat - put two beats together into one long sound (This is hard for most children, you need to be patient.)
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- Layer beats - Assign little beats to some and big beats to others then play them simultaneously. (Some children understand the elongation better at this point.)
  - Patterns - Use steady beats on different parts of the body before using long and short sounds in patterns.
  - Play patterns on rhythm instruments.

## Movement

- Explore animal moves
  - Explore different ways to walk
  - Explore different levels: high, middle, low
  - Explore other childhood movements
    - jumping (with two feet)
    - crawling
    - spinning
    - galloping
    - rolling
    - hopping (with one foot)
  - Movement to fit stories
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- Perform a sequence of movements
  - Layer different durations of the beat
  - Rhythm patterns

***The activities in these three columns should be done simultaneously.  
The line in each column represents the end of what most preschool children can do.  
Depending on their level of experience, some are able to accomplish tasks below the line.***