

Planning and Teaching Preschool Music (the easy way)

Iowa AEYC Fall Institute

October 1, 2022

Holiday Inn, Des Moines-Airport

Initial thoughts

For the child . . . it's about

1. having experiences with music—exploring NOT performing.
2. building the ear through the body.
3. learning that they can make beautiful music.

For the teacher . . . it's about

1. setting up experiences to move children toward primary music skills:
 - finding and maintaining the pulse or beat of the music
 - finding the singing voice and matching pitch
 - listening to music and reacting musically
2. planning a menu of activities so children are comfortable making music but also challenged to grow.

Definitions

steady beat: not the “dance beat” of a song; the heartbeat of the song; what you tap your toe to or sway your shoulders to

singing voice: higher than speaking voice; free sound made without straining or pushing

matching: making something sound exactly like the model:
same time for the beat, same pitch for the voice

Developing Timing – probably the most important thing I do

- whole-body rocking
- patting, instrument playing
- moving through space
- value for learning/attention

Singing

- importance of the upper register: foreign language learning
- using the singing voice: D-A (use a pitch reference like a Zenergy Chime)
- not too low – pop songs are in the speaking register; singing voice is higher
- give examples and practice them

Class Flow for Music Time

This is set up for 20 minutes once a week. If time is shorter, include movement and voice exploration each week but alternate between, instrument work, stories, listening activities and skip the parade.

<i>up</i>	Parade – Give each child a small shaker instrument and play an orchestral march rather loudly. Let them march and play, using entrainment to pull them into playing the beat.	I use this the first couple classes to see how children react to the music and to each other. The goal is to have them move and play their instrument without talking and to stop when the music stops.
<i>down</i>	Hello song – Use the same song each time. Children can show ways to keep a steady beat on the body or instrument. By spring they will be singing along.	This gives them a familiar beginning, a chance for you to say each name, a chance for assessment of rhythm or pitch.
	Vocal exploration – sirens, books that require a bit of singing, echo songs, familiar songs	To find and strengthen the singing voice.
<i>up</i>	Purposeful Movement– creative movement piece or game, circle dance	This is a chance for children to explore developmental movement or interpret the song/game.
<i>down</i>	Instrument work/beat work – playing various instruments	Exploration of instruments and playing the steady beat. Each child has same instrument.
<i>down</i>	Listening activity – short snippet of sound like an instrument or environmental sound	Prepares them for the idea that music is not background noise.
<i>down</i>	Goodbye song - Use the same song each time. Children can explore ways to rock to the beat. By spring they will be singing along.	They can rock the whole body, parts of the body, or move with a partner holding hands, bands or hoops. This is hard to do because children don't have great capacity to be calm and still.

Kindergarten Readiness

Large Motor Skills

move through space
let children suggest the way to move (have them name the movement)

The Hunters are Creeping
Old Gray Cat
Underneath the Willow Tree
I'm a-Rolling

Impulse Control and Self-Regulation

steady beat activities

Allee Galloo
Sally Go 'Round the Sun
Boat Song
Fais Do Do
Goin' to Kentucky
Hey, Mister!
I'm a-Rolling
Little Shoemaker
Swinging
The Old Gray Cat
There's a Cobbler Down the Street
Underneath the Willow Tree

Social Skills

taking turns
taking care of equipment
being part of a group
doing something alone

Fine Motor Skills

Fingerplays

Five Little Ladies
Two Little Blackbirds
Eensy Weensy Spider
Grandma's Glasses
These are Mamma's Knives and Forks
There Was a Little Turtle

Playing instruments

shaker eggs: *Wake Me, Shake Me*
rhythm sticks: *I Can Hammer with One Hammer*

drums: *Old Gray Cat*
jingle bells: *Jingle Bells, Bell Horses, Wake Me Shake Me*

Listening Skills

singing
taking turns singing or playing an instrument
matching the steady beat

Letter and Number Recognition

incorporate into the teaching process

Counting songs

This Old Man
Ten in the Bed

Other Resources

Dino Rice. *Rounds, Rhymes and Silly Songs*. Amazon.com

Phyllis S. Weikart. *Movement Plus Rhymes, Songs, & Singing Games*. High/Scope Educational Research Foundation.

John Feierabend. *First Steps in Music*. GIA Publications