

Music in early childhood



We all know that music is one of the first and most important methods of communication experienced by infants. Young children may lack the gift of speech, they are deeply responsive to the emotions created by music. Lullabies sung by parents help to soothe babies, while nursery rhymes express infants' joy and delight, and teach them that the world is a pleasant and exciting place to be.

As children grow and develop, music continues to be a medium of self-expression, expanding their memories and assisting in developing crucial language skills. It also reinforces such logical ideas as beginning and ending; cause and effect; sequence and balance; harmony and dissonance, as well as arithmetic concepts such as number, enumeration and timing. Songs in early childhood are often used to teach vital information about the world around us, - counting; colours; relationships between ideas; social skills and the wonders of the natural world. Sesame Street is a great favourite for this very reason.

And, of course, music can also communicate the full range of human emotions appropriate to the children's experience. Some, who may not be able to express verbally their happiness, sadness or anger, can often find in music the right outlet for all their moods.

Pre-school children always love to make music together, singing, dancing and playing instruments together, and thus learning vital life skills, such as co-operation; collaboration and group-effort.

Gradually, as they mature, children may begin to know what makes 'good' music, thereby developing the rudiments of an aesthetic sense. When children develop musical skills and understanding, they are developing basic cognitive, social and motor skills necessary for success throughout the educational process. They are preparing skills that will apply not only to language and literacy but also to life itself.

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