



Learning to Grow

MAKING A DIFFERENCE TOGETHER

Enhancing Learning with Music

"I make music," said the child as she hits the pot with a wooden spoon. This simple activity demonstrates that children begin to identify rhythm, move to the beats of music, and manipulate objects (e.g., banging or shaking) to create sounds very early in their lives.

According to Zero to Three, music supports all areas of young children's development. For example, when using music with children, they can learn:

- ♥ Pre-math skills (recognizing patterns and sequencing) – Almost every piece of music has a pattern or sequence in its melody or lyrics. By introducing songs like "Old MacDonald Had a Farm," children learn to anticipate patterns because of the repetitive rhythm and lyrics.
- ♥ Language and vocabulary – Music allows for practicing language and understanding the meaning of words. By singing familiar songs, children will sing along and learn new words along the way.
- ♥ Self-regulation – From an early age, rhythmic beats and songs, such as lullabies, can help soothe very young children. As you help babies and young children calm down, they are learning how to soothe themselves.
- ♥ Motor skills – Dancing to fast and slow music or using their body to create music (such as clapping or playing instruments) helps children develop the muscles in their arms, legs, and trunk.

In this newsletter, we introduce ways to use songs, movement, and musical instruments in your daily routine, as well as give you activity ideas to use with infants, toddlers, and preschoolers. These strategies allow for engagement and fun as well as support developmental goals for children.



This newsletter includes:

- ♥ **Age-specific information and suggestions** about activities to do with your infant, toddler, or preschooler,
- ♥ **Featured activities** for each age group,
- ♥ **How This Helps:** a summary of your child's development by doing these activities together,
- ♥ **Resources:** for more information, and
- ♥ **Suggested Books:** a list of books to read with your child.

Infants

From an early age, infants look to you to provide support, meet their basic needs, and engage in activities when awake. They become familiar with the sound of your voice, are able to hear the difference between types of sounds, and can recognize the melody of a song long before they understand the words. In fact, by one month of age, infants can identify you by voice even if you're in the other room.

Infants prefer human voices and your voice is the best instrument for your infant. By talking and singing to her often, she learns how to have conversations, explore emotions, and begin to speak and listen by decoding sounds and words.

You can use music with your infant daily by:

- ♥ Singing a simple, soothing song. For example, sing "Rock-A-Bye Baby" while gently swaying side to side and making gentle movements to accompany the song lyrics. Your rhythmic movements help your infant learn early rhythm and patterns.
- ♥ Singing during routine activities like diaper changing and mealtimes. You can sing, clap, and count with your infant to rhymes like "Pat-A-Cake" and "Ten Little Fingers." Songs during



these times can keep your infant engaged as well as develop their listening skills.

- ♥ Incorporating an instrument, like cardboard box hand drums, when your infant is developmentally ready to play. Homemade or purchased instruments that allow infants to bang or shake stimulate their auditory and eye-hand coordination. As with any toy, make sure the instruments are durable, able to withstand chewing, and do not have small parts that may be choking hazards to little ones.

Activity for Infants: *Cardboard box hand drums*

What You Need:

- 2-3 different sizes of cardboard boxes
- Clear packing tape

What to Do:

1. Seal the openings of the cardboard boxes.
2. Drum by using your hands to tap rhythmic beats while singing.
3. Encourage and assist your infant to mimic you.
4. Show your infant the different tones it makes when you drum the different-sized boxes.



(See page 5 for information on how doing these kinds of activities with your child helps her development and school readiness.)

Toddlers

Toddlers like dancing to music and imitating your actions as they learn how to move their bodies. As children move with the music, they develop their eye-hand coordination, motor skills, and balance. They continue to respond to singing and may now have favorite songs that they want to sing over and over again. By singing these favorite songs often, you are building their vocabulary. Encourage your child's development by singing, dancing, and adding instruments to their everyday activities.

You can use music with your toddler daily by:

- ♥ Singing songs with repeating phrases. Songs like "Wheels on the Bus," "Open Shut Them," and "If You're Happy and You Know It" have simple phrases that help your child remember the words. Singing these songs often and adding motions to the song helps strengthen memory and helps her connect actions to words.
- ♥ Singing a silly song. For example, sing a familiar song and insert a silly word in place of the correct word, like "Mary had a little *spider*" instead of *lamb*. In addition to bringing your child's silliness out, this encourages vocabulary growth.
- ♥ Letting your toddler reproduce rhythms by clapping or tapping objects. Homemade instruments like finger cymbals support eye-hand coordination by encouraging communication between her brain and body.



Activity for Toddlers: *Finger Cymbals*

What You Need:

- Frozen juice lids or jar lids (4 lids)
- Cardboard
- Glue

What to Do:

1. Cut cardboard into 2 long strips, approximately 6 inches in length by 3 inches in width. Then fold the cardboard strips in half.
2. Glue the lids in the folded cardboard strips. One on each inner side of the cardboard strips.
3. Once the glue has dried, your child can tap away to the beat.

(See page 5 for information on how doing these kinds of activities with your child helps her development and school readiness.)

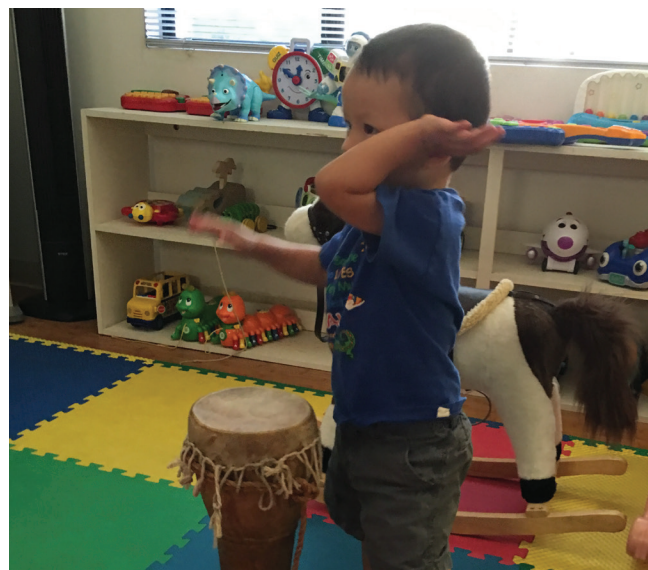


Preschoolers

During the preschool stage, your child develops the ability to repeat patterns of rhythm and pitch, remembers whole songs, and has greater muscle control and coordination. As you incorporate music into her daily activities, allow her to initiate tunes, make up songs, and dance to her own tunes. This allows her to put words and movements she learns into context.

Here are some examples of music activities for preschoolers:

- ♥ Set up an obstacle course where your child must move and respond to the music's tempo and style. For example, have your child crawl through a cardboard box tunnel during slow music and hop through hoops during fast music. This will encourage her to listen and move at the same time.
- ♥ Initiate a familiar or favorite tune and let your child lead the singing. To enhance her auditory discrimination ability as she notices more subtle differences among tones and rhythms, you can add musical instruments or objects that produce a variety of tones, such as homemade



panpipes or glasses with different levels of water.

- ♥ Act out a story like "We're Going on a Bear Hunt" by Michael Rosen and Helen Oxenbury with your child, using musical instruments or objects to create sounds for each movement. For example, rub 2 small pieces of cardboard against each other or shake a shaker to make a swishing sound as the characters in the story go through the grass..

Activity for Preschoolers: Panpipes

What You Need:

- Straws (approx. 8)
- Glue
- Popsicle stick (optional)
- Scissors
- Pen

What to Do:

1. Lay the straws flat next to each other on a table with the top edges lined up.
2. Mark them with a pen, then cut them to different lengths.
3. Glue the straws together side-by-side from longest to shortest. If you are using a popsicle stick, then apply glue to the popsicle stick and place straws on it in order from longest to shortest. Make sure every straw touches. Let it dry.
4. Show your child how to create different tones by blowing across the top of the different-sized pipes. To create a louder sound, hold your finger on the bottom of the straw.
5. Make a few and your family can create music together.

(See page 5 for information on how doing these kinds of activities with your child helps her development and school readiness.)



How This Helps

The activities suggested in this newsletter help promote many different aspects of development:

Physical Development

- ♥ Learn through senses: seeing, hearing, smelling, tasting, and touching
- ♥ Learn to use body with intention

Social and Emotional Development

- ♥ Feel important and good about herself
- ♥ Develop a close bond with you

Language and Literacy Development

- ♥ Develop early reading skills and a love of reading
- ♥ Build verbal skills and vocabulary



Cognitive Development

- ♥ Develop her creativity and imagination
- ♥ Begin to understand cause and effect

Kids in the Kitchen

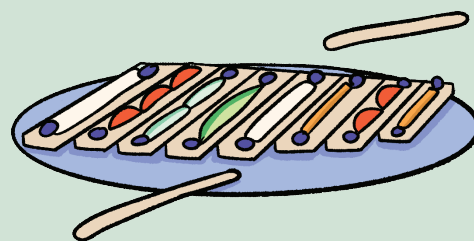
Cooking teaches valuable lessons such as math (quantity, size), science (texture, appearance), fine motor skills (cutting, peeling), and literacy (print awareness). As you make this recipe with the child, talk about kitchen safety. Show her how to handle items safely and allow her to do as much as she is capable of. Praise her efforts and ask questions throughout the process to encourage her thinking skills. Most of all, have fun!

Xylophone Snack

Adapted from <https://laurieberkner.com/blog/make-a-xylophone-veggie-snack-in-5-mins>

Ingredients:

- Whole wheat bread (1 slice)
- Carrot (2 sticks)
- Cucumber (2 sticks)
- Grape tomatoes (2, cut in halves)
- Blueberries (16pcs)
- Pears (1pc)
- String cheese (1pc, cut in half)
- Breadsticks (2pcs)



Directions:

1. Cut the bread into 8 different-sized slices to make the base of the xylophone bars.
 2. Cut the carrot, cucumber, grape tomatoes, pears, and string cheese into slices to put on the bread slices. Make sure they match the size of each xylophone bar.
 3. Place blueberries on top of the xylophone bar edges as the pins of each bar.
 4. Use the breadsticks as the mallets of the xylophone.
- Enjoy playing and eating the xylophone!

Resources

Beyond Twinkle, Twinkle: Using Music with Infants and Toddlers

Music has a power that goes beyond words. Zero to Three shares how music supports young children's social-emotional, cognitive, language and literacy, and physical skills.

<https://www.zerotothree.org/resource/distillation/beyond-twinkle-twinkle-using-music-with-infants-and-toddlers/>

Music in Child Development

Music is a great way for adults to connect with young children and provide learning opportunities to develop skills.

<https://headstart.gov/curriculum/article/music-child-development>



Suggested Books

Discover these books and more at the **Hawai'i State Public Library** www.librarieshawaii.org.

Infants and Toddlers

Let's Make Music by Alexandra Penfold

All are welcome to celebrate music by clapping hands, strumming the guitar, shaking the maracas, and dancing to the beat of drums.

Everything a Drum by Sarah Warren

The little boy turns everything into a drum. Follow along with the story to celebrate the rhythmic sounds he made from pots and pans to muffin tins to his parent's heartbeat.

Preschoolers

88 Instruments by Chris Barton

Of the 88 instruments, a little boy can only pick one instrument he wants to learn to play. Which instrument will he choose?

What Makes Music by Betty Schwartz

Little birds want to learn about music, so Mama bird teaches little birds note by note.

Music is in Everything by Ziggy Marley

Listen to the ocean sing, the wind blow, pots and pans, rice shakers, the tune from the river, birds sing, and bees dance. Everyone gathers around for a concert spreading joy all around.



Learning to Grow is a project of the University of Hawai'i, Windward Community College, with funding from the Hawai'i Department of Human Services. Visit our website at www.learningtogrowhawaii.org or visit us on Facebook at www.facebook.com/learningtogrowhawaii and Instagram @uhlearningtogrow