

## **Nurturing a Musical Environment for Kids**

Listen to songs from the workshop and find helpful links at [www.earthjams.com/workshop.html](http://www.earthjams.com/workshop.html)

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### **Goals:**

1. Increase comfort level using your own voice singing and improvising
2. Show you how you can incorporate more music in the structure of the classroom

**Music Aptitude** – is the potential for music learning and growth. This can be influenced in most until the age of 5-6.

**Primary Music Development** – achieved when primary rhythmic and tonal development are achieved (keeping a steady beat and singing in tune).

**Cultural Laryngitis** – We tend to demonstrate that music is for consumption, not creation in this culture. Reverse this phenomenon by demonstrating that singing is fun. Model, encourage and praise singing. Observe musical behavior and mimic it back. Sing every day, and try not to rely on recorded music so much.

**Musical Memory tool** – ABC's. Use music to teach things you want kids to do. Compose Piggyback songs (new words to an existing tune).

**Importance of Movement** – Movement while singing allows children to incorporate the rhythm and beat at the muscular level. It augments primary rhythmic development and kinesthetic intelligence. Always demonstrate the beat when you are singing with children by clapping, rocking your body, tapping knees, etc.

**Call and Response songs** – encourage active listening and break songs into manageable chunks. Use tonal and rhythm patterns.

**Repetition, repetition** – Children learn through repetition. Be sure to use lots of repetition when you are teaching songs. Repetition is the key. Remember: Repetition.

**Simplify, separate, facilitate** – Keep songs as simple as possible at first. Choose songs that are not too complicated, and sing them at a slow pace. Separate the musical components (melody, rhythm, movement, and language) as much as possible by using vocables and chants.

**Audiation** – The process of “hearing” music internally. This is necessary for singing in tune. Use songs like Bingo or leave out words to other songs.

**Music sets the mood** – Use songs to transition from one thing to another.

**Instruments** – Accompanying the singing with instruments is not necessary. In fact, melodic or chordal instruments can distract children from singing, and become a crutch. Rhythm instruments are helpful. Refer to one of the links below for homemade percussion instrument ideas.

## **Some Pointers for working with Infants**

1. Exaggerate your mouth and facial expressions while singing to the baby.
2. Sing to the baby often. This is done for the same reason that you speak to the baby before he can talk. The ear is completely developed very early (first trimester).
3. Listen for cooing and crying on a particular pitch. Mimic their sound on the same pitch. You need to be a careful listener to mimic their pitch.
4. Emphasize rhythm by tapping on and stroking baby different places on their body.
5. Infants learn rhythm by feeling it through adult bodies as they move, so hold them close and move distinctly to the beat.
6. When using rhythm sticks try gently tapping on the stick the baby is holding
7. Drums-rest the baby's hands on top of yours and allow their hands to "ride along" while you gently tap the drum.
8. Share the music in a fun loving way.