



The  
Children's  
Home Society  
O F N E W J E R S E Y

# *the network*

## *news*



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### **Six Tips for Using Music in Therapy & Education**

**Use Silence.** Once we know a piece of music, we notice when it is interrupted. You can use unexpected pauses in music to get the attention of students whose attention has wandered. Once you have their attention back, you can resume exactly where you left off -- like the pause button on a tape player. No verbal cues necessary, just silence.

**Make Sure the Lyrics Fit The Music.** When you are using songs to teach academic concepts -- especially to students with language delays -- be sure that the words and phrases in the song are pronounced as they would be in speech. Often, when songs are piggybacked" (new words with a familiar melody) the words get distorted. Many children with special needs learn speech through singing; if they learn to pronounce words incorrectly, it may take a long time to unlearn.

**Use Quality Instruments.** Rather than buying a "bargain" box filled with instruments that have a bad sound quality as well as being breakable (or even dangerous), choose a few high-quality instruments that your students can share. We recommend a paddle drum, a wooden clatterpillar, a small cabasa and a transparent rainstick to start. All are visually interesting, appropriate for older as well as younger students, and have unique, intriguing sounds. Go to [www.WestMusic.com](http://www.WestMusic.com) and request a catalog -- they have all of these instruments and a music therapist on staff with whom you can consult about other ideas.

*Summer flew by as quickly as it settled in it seems. No sooner did we stop freezing, but started sweltering, and now, we're looking forward to the cooler temperatures of Autumn.*

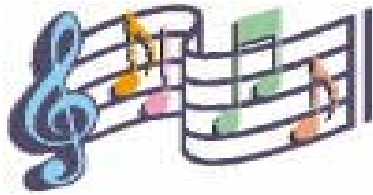
*This issue will be dedicated to **Music and Movement Experiences in Young Children**. Children love to move! Children enjoy musical movement and use it to learn about themselves and the world around them. A developmentally appropriate music curriculum can give children the practice and instruction necessary to refine their skills and expand their vocabularies. Although movement entails an additional challenge for children with special needs, movement education is important to these children. Music lends itself to inclusion and success for all children.*

*Coordination, listening skills, conceptual learning and expressive ability are enhanced through regular participation -- at whatever level possible. However, the greatest benefit is how it will contribute to the child's self confidence and the opportunity to be part of a group. As self confidence develops the child will be better able to relate to others and receive greater acceptance from his peers. Being part of a group, making contributions, taking turns, following rules benefit the social-emotional development of the child*

*Remember to meet the challenges of ALL children. Adapt, don't eliminate!*

*Joanne Nelson*

Special Needs Family Child  
Care Coordinator



## MUSIC AND THE SPECIAL NEEDS CHILD

Music can be used in early intervention settings to address the developmental needs of children with special needs as well as typically developing children.

### Why Music?

- Music and movement activities can easily be integrated within a child's natural environment (home and community settings) and within naturally occurring routines and activities.



- Music is a vehicle of expression and an alternate means of communication. Many children

express themselves more readily through music than in other ways, especially children who have language or emotional problems.

- Music is a developmentally appropriate medium that teaches and reaches the whole child; music and movement activities activate both left and right hemispheres of the brain.



Music and movement related activities address various areas of a child's development:

- Socio-emotional development (group participation, social interaction with peers, sharing and turn-taking)
- Cognitive development (learn concepts through songs and movement, sequence events, organize, memorize)
- Fine and gross motor development (playing instruments relies on eye/hand coordination; moving to music develops body-awareness, spatial relationships, and directionality)
- Motor planning (rhythm overrides poor motor patterns, improving balance and coordination)
- Receptive and expressive speech and language skill development (many "natural" opportunities to work on vocalizations, sound awareness, sound production, phonemic manipulation, and vocabulary building)
- Listening and attending skills (music lengthens a child's attention span and ability to concentrate; when learning is structured with music, young children are more likely to maintain focus and better understand the concept of time, i.e.: "when the song is finished you are all done")

- Critical thinking-children use thinking skills when making musical judgements and choices (i.e.: picture board with icons of familiar songs to choose from)

- Motivation- music provides enjoyment while helping children reach higher functional levels (familiar songs can also reduce frustration when children are faced with non-preferred activities such as cleaning up, washing hands)



- Self-confidence and self-esteem (children can participate at their own level of functioning/ability and have multiple opportunities for success)
- The child's imagination (music and movement activities offer endless possibilities for exploratory and creative play)

*NAEYC Conference 2000, Rosella Dilberto, Music Specialist, Elwyn, Inc. Phila PA*

find it on the web....

[www.kinderstart.com](http://www.kinderstart.com)

[www.family-friendly-fun.com/music/](http://www.family-friendly-fun.com/music/)

[www.zerotothree.org/music/childcare.html](http://www.zerotothree.org/music/childcare.html)

[www.nt.net/~a815/music.htm](http://www.nt.net/~a815/music.htm)

[www.kindermusik.com/LicensedEducator/SpecialNeeds](http://www.kindermusik.com/LicensedEducator/SpecialNeeds)

**"Music hath charms to soothe a savage breast,**

**To soften rocks, or bend a knotted oak."**

N.B.: This quote is commonly misquoted as "savage beast."

**-William Congreve**



## Try doing some of the following:

Sing and don't be critical of how you sound! The person you are singing to will respond to the music and your enthusiasm, not whether or not you have perfect pitch. When singing you must remember

- -SLOW DOWN! Singing too fast is the most common mistake.
- -repeat, repeat, repeat and then repeat again
- -use simple language that is at the level of the listener
- -let your listener learn at their own pace
- -make up songs about what you are doing to reinforce language, driving, walking, playing, a certain toy, brushing teeth, getting dressed, etc.
- 



2. Move to music. Clap, stamp, blink, wave, wiggle or tap. Use any actions you both can do.

3. Play instruments or toys to music. Start and stop with the music. Take turns. Play together.



4. Be a model and do what you want your partner to do. Don't expect your child to sing or move if you won't.

5. Listen to music. Choose different styles of music, classical, country, rock, vocal, jazz, bluegrass, opera, instrumental, etc.



6. Exaggerate what you do to encourage imitation. This includes facial expressions, body movements, vocal expression and oral movements.

7. Remember to praise participation at any level.

8. Do not "over music" your child. Be aware of how much time your child is exposed to music and sounds, including radio and television. Getting too much makes each experience less meaningful.



9. When doing music activities with your child get rid of distractions like TV, toys, outside noise and interruptions.

10. Have fun with music! Music is a natural teacher so keep music time enjoyable for

**Save  
the  
Date !!!**

### **Tuesday, Oct 7: Friends Helping Friends Day at Boscov's**

Enjoy great shopping discounts, refreshments and door prizes. Discount shopping pass for \$5.00...the entire \$5 will benefit The Children's Home Society of New Jersey! Call us for more info.

### **Saturday, Nov 1: Vanity Fair (Reading PA) Shopping Trip**

\$32 includes transportation from and to CHS, refreshments, \$20 coupon for Vanity Fair and dinner at the Old Country Buffet. Call us for more info.

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**Use Music With Discretion.** Do you hear your refrigerator buzzing? Most of us don't -- because we've gotten so used to it, we block it out. If music is an effective tool, use it when you most need it. Playing music all day won't make children smarter; it will just teach them to tune it out.

**Include by Adapting.** A few simple adaptations will help in including children with special needs in regular education music settings. If the class is learning to play the recorder, for example, the music teacher can identify one or two "pedal" tones for each piece: the child with special needs can play just those two notes on a recorder, or on a resonator bell, for example. Children who cannot participate in singing can play rhythm to accompany their peers.



**Use Live Music -- You \*Can\* Sing!** Live music is, in most cases, much more effective than recorded music. If you sing the songs, you can change the tempo and volume according to the mood and behavior of the class, you can pause to allow time for responses or to cue attention (see above), and you can change the words to fit your lesson. You CAN sing. If you have trouble, (1) learn to sing in the range of your speaking voice -- you'll hit more notes; (2) practice to the radio/tape/CD in your car -- and if you're trying to learn a particular song, have a musical friend tape it for you so you can practice singing along; (3) sing louder and slower -- you may not think you have a good voice, but your students will be far more responsive if you sing with conviction and enjoyment than quietly and quickly.



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