

"THE BEAT GOES ON!" - SONNY & CHER

by Karen Davidson of Weeny Boppers.co.uk

We all know that babies and young children learn through – and love, music! It's never too early to sing, dance or tap out a rhythm with a young child. In fact the research about music and children's development is truly jaw dropping and shows it can have a remarkable effect on all areas of learning.

Music, movement, actions and rhythm are all important tools for encouraging healthy development in young children. Whether your musical experiences consist of attending a local class or sing-alongs during a journey; play-alongs with home made instruments and dance-a-thons all around the front room, you can be sure you're helping your child's learning and growth during these important early years.

Songs & Rhymes - as children start to grasp the simple rhyming words in catchy songs and rhymes, they will start to build up a collection of word associations that will help them develop their language. Songs with movements and actions reinforce learning and help improve memory and recall, listening skills, creativity and confidence. That's because "doing" is more effective than "listening" where learning is concerned.

Movement - whether moving all around the room, stomping, jumping, stretching or swaying, such movement activities enhance physical balance, control and co-ordination; increase health and fitness; strengthen little limbs and muscles and give everyone something to smile, rock, bounce, or dance about! Physical activity to lively music has a real 'feel good factor' too.

Beat & Rhythm - awareness of a rhythmic pulse is important in everyday



life tasks that require a regularly-paced repeated motion such as walking, running - and for older children, bouncing a ball, riding a bicycle, handwriting, using scissors and so on. Clapping, tapping, swishing and moving in time to music help build an awareness of ratios and proportions and help develop sequencing, pattern recognition, number and maths skills.

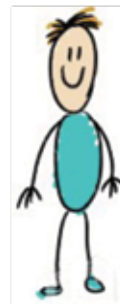
Instruments & Props - children love using and exploring all sorts of instruments and play equipment, which can be done to music to increase the sense of enjoyment and emotional security. A variety of multi-sensory experiences can be provided at home with a little improvisation and imagination - eg. scarves, instruments, balls, drums, puppets, bubbles and so on.

Musical Concepts - babies and young children will adore the fun and suspense of start/stop; loud/quiet; fast/slow; bumpy/smooth etc. which can all be easily created with your volume control, pause button and a few different pieces of music. Having fun with your toddler in this way helps build important preschool and life skills such as listening skills and awareness of contrasts.

Music has many benefits for children and can so easily be enjoyed at home with very little effort, or by joining a class which holds the added benefit of helping improve turn-taking, social skills, confidence and providing interaction with other children.



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