

Making Music a Learning Time for Babies & Toddlers

Babies brains are wired to respond to music. They learn to “sing” before talking. Music has been the traditional way that love & learning has been passed to babies & brain research supports the learning opportunities that music offers.

Music Can Support:

Critical windows of opportunity for brain development. In the first year of life the brain is wired for trust (the basis of emotional intelligence). Fun, joyful, musical experiences support positive relationships between babies and carers. Caring, sensitive musical interactions contribute to the developing structure and capacity of the growing brain.

Emotional Intelligence. Cuddling, singing, smiling, being sensitive to babies and young children’s sense of play and enjoyment in music activities support strong attachment and resilience.

Social skills. Music can help develop a sense of self. Simple songs and music games, like peekaboo are beginnings of learning about social interaction.

Motor development. The more babies move (and are moved), the stronger their muscles and balance system will be. Limit time spent in strollers and high chairs and try lots of rocking, twirling, bouncing, dancing to music and tummy time as a child explores on the floor.

Vision. Things to touch, feel, hold and move help with eye tracking, eye convergence and adjusting to vision in a three dimensional world. Instruments, puppets and props in music activities are valuable for vital learning in this area.

Language development. Babies and toddlers brains are hyper sensitive to language: the developing brain in the first two years has a greater capacity for sorting sounds than at any other time. They are also wired to respond to musical sounds. Songs with sounds to imitate and rhyming for aural discrimination give maximum support for language development.

Thinking skills. Simple songs and rhymes are neurological games for young children as they involve sight, sound and emotions. Many parts of the brain are involved simultaneously, supporting maximum learning.

Include experiences of touch, sound and movement in lullabies, touch and tickle rhymes, fingerplays, body awareness songs and music to bounce and dance with your children. Remember, you don’t have to be an expert. Musical learning is about fun, play and engaging the child’s interest. Where there is a pleasurable response from the child, new brain connections are created, and therefore learning is happening.