

Developing Brains-
Ideas for Parenting and Education
From the New Brain Science
www.developingbrains.org

Training Module 4:

Music for the Whole Child

Learning Objective:

To increase understanding of the role of music and movement to music to all areas of a child's development.

To encourage reluctant teacher/caregivers to bring more singing, purposeful movement, and awareness of rhythm into their classrooms on a regular, if not daily, basis.

For a group, (such as the staff of a Child Care Center or Part-day Preschool) try to do this in a staff training where you have a total of about 2 hours for the training.

For an individual (such as a Family Home Child Care teacher/caregiver or a parent), try to find someone else who is interested in doing this training so you can have dialog with someone else for the application of the concepts.

Reading:

All participants will read the following articles under "Activities for Developing Brains"

"Music and Poetry for Young Children"

"Movement Activities for the Brain"

Application Activity:

Print out the following three pages as a handout for participants. Start with going over the handout and then plan for about an hour or so for participants to work on their creations.

Allow participants to work individually, in pairs, or small groups - whatever they choose. Allow about a half-hour at the end for participants to share what they came up with. Possible follow up: Type these all up and distribute to all participants at a later date.

Homemade Songs and Poems

Kathy A. Bobula, Ph.D.

www.developingbrains.org

We need music, now more than ever!

Many teachers want to bring music into their DAILY curriculum, but they don't know enough different songs to weave them into the children's current interests, a learning goal, or a theme that you are exploring.

What is it about music?

Most of us have heard about music being good for many forms of learning (math, self-regulation, etc.). However, music needs to be in our curriculum because of the value of music itself and how it brings people together.

Singing with children is a way to support a sense of community in your group. According to Daniel Goleman, "the more two people unconsciously synchronize their movements and mannerisms during their interaction, the more positively they will feel about their encounter - and about each other."¹ This synchrony happens in conversations, but it also happens in groups of people who are making music together.

When we sing, recite, or play music together, the neurons we are using to do this begin to "oscillate" together by "resetting over and over their rate of firing to coordinate with the periodicity of an incoming signal."² In other words, group singing and recitation³ connect us, brain to brain, as our neurons get firing in the same pattern. If we are having a good time doing this and we smile and laugh together, our good feelings become contagious -- we all feel great together! This kind of sharing helps us see each other in more and more positive ways. We make friends and build community.

I think we all agree that we want to build friendships and community, but what about not having enough songs or the "right" songs?

The answer to this dilemma is: *write your own!* If you work with school-agers, have them write songs and poems!

¹ Daniel Goleman. *Social Intelligence: The New Science of Human Relationships*. New York: Bantam Books, 2006, 31.

² *Ibid.*, 34.

³ By recitation I mean saying a poem or rhyme together as a group.

Here is my "formula" for writing songs and poems for young children:

1. Make a list of topics for the songs or poems.
 - a. What are the themes that are coming from the children?
 - what are the play themes you see?
 - what questions or topics have come up?
 - b. What do you know about your children's needs?
 - what skills or concepts are you helping individual children learn?
 - what goals do you have for the group as a whole?
 - c. What do you know about child development?
 - what are universal developmental experiences and challenges for the age group?
 - what is funny to the age group?
 - what is frustrating to the age group?
2. If you want to write a song, make a list of "stock" songs for available tunes to use. (See other handout)
Examples:
 - Muffin Man
 - ABC Song/Twinkle! Twinkle! Little Star
3. Pick your topic and brainstorm a list of ideas and words/descriptors that fit the topic, such as:
 - a. actions (riding a trike)
 - b. feelings
 - c. naming things (colors)
 - d. progressions (big to small)
 - e. characteristics of an animal, an object, etc.
4. Start writing! Have LOTS of scratch paper!!

**List of Stock Tunes
For Writing Your Own Songs**
Kathy A. Bobula, Ph.D.

This is a list of nursery rhymes and other children's songs that are common to many people in the U.S. These can be used as the **tunes** for "homemade" songs. Add some of your own to use!

Did You Ever See A Lassie?

Row Your Boat

Muffin Man

Pop Goes the Weasel

Three Blind Mice

Mary Had a Little Lamb

Twinkle! Twinkle! Little Star/ABC Song

She'll Be Comin' Round
The Mountain

The Bear Went Over the Mountain

The Eensy Weensy Spider (or Itsy Bitsy)

My Hat It Has Three Corners

Happy Birthday

Are You Sleeping?

London Bridge

Skip to my Loo
