

## Nursery Music Basics

*by Sharla Dance*

### Consider the one year old:

- newly mobile and anxious to go and see new things, thus hard for them to sit in one place. Curious. Needs to move.
- loves using newfound physical skills of walking and climbing
- sees objects with hands, wants to touch, feel, and inspect things, not just gaze at them.
- a watcher before a doer, especially of group experiences
- very few words to express who they are, yet communicates.
- because of limited words, watches for visual cues from the adult to understand meaning
- fascinated by new sounds and learning to discriminate between them.
- will learn and do the movement of a song though not yet singing
- copies the inflections, not the necessarily the words, of singing better than speaking, but hears expressive speaking as singing...so copies those inflections, too!
- begins to exhibit separation syndrome from a parent

### Consider the two year old:

- active, but can sit longer if interested. Curious. Needs to move.
- loves to jump, clap, march and use growing physical skills
- still wants to touch and feel things with hands, rather than just gaze at them, but gaining more self control to just look.
- still watches, but may more readily join in a group activity
- more words, but not fluent sentences, yet communicates.
- understands meaning with many words, but still watches for visual cues to understand;
- can discriminate between most sounds around him or her...beginning to learn about slows and fasts, highs and lows, starting and stopping
- will do the movement of a song and occasionally add a word or two
- copies inflection and begins to use words with the musical inflection and expression
- starts to accept other adults in addition to parents, but still attached.

## Consider music:

- is movement of sound, and thus encourages movement of the body
- one of the primary carriers of language and culture
- Forms of music...rocking, singing, song/verse play with its inherent touching, and motherese...are the primary communication with a toddler in the absence of a language system. Motherese (mothers pre-verbal communication with her child) has dynamic, pitch, and rhythm variations and is heavily laden with emotional communication, much the same as music. These forms of music communicate security, love, playfulness, and nurturing.
- the songs of young childhood are joyful, delightful, soothing, playful, and expressive.

## What does it mean for nursery?

1. Music is essential for this age child and nursery music can be a delightful, playful; interesting, expressive, bonding experience.
2. Expect children that will watch only. Expect the youngest children to wander away at times (although if your older children wander away, you are probably not doing developmentally appropriate songs and activities).
3. Expect to be the only one singing.
4. Many songs should use some kind of manipulative that the child can touch and feel as you sing.
5. Each song should use some kind of movement appropriate to the physical skill level of this age.
6. Expect to give visual cues: Does your face show light and interest?. Do your hands show what movements to do? Do your visuals and manipulatives invite the child into the song?
7. Use starting and stopping, highs and lows, and fasts and slows as a natural part of your music presentations.
8. Introduce new sounds: instruments they can touch and hear, recorded bird songs or recorded sounds from the environment along with the new songs.
9. Recognize what a bonding experience it is to share music with these little ones.

# Nursery Music Ideas

## RAINBOW ROPE

- Wheels on the Bus
- Mexican Hat Dance
- In and In and In...and Out (round, jump, shake)
- Here comes the chu chu train
- Row, Row your boat
- Chu, chu the big train (get inside rope like a train and follow the leader w/ caboose at end)
- Row your boat
- Limbo

## PARACHUTE

- Shake and shake and shake and STOP
- *Popcorn, popcorn put it in the pan*  
*Shake it up, shake it up, bam, bam, bam!* (with white kneehighs stuffed with cotton)
- Red and yellow, green and purple (three times)  
These are the colors over you.
- London Bridge is falling down
- Washing Machine (wash on tummy, back)
- Up x3 we go, down x3 we go, raise your colors to the sky, count to 3 and watch them fly!

## BUBBLE SONGS

- There are bubbles in the air, ...reach up high and touch a bubble, put your finger on a bubble...
- Pinch, pinch, pinch (stomp, etc.) those bubbles
- Popping bubbles, we love popping bubbles
- We want, we want bubbles (stomp x2 clap-repeat) ...bubbles up high, down low, here we go!...
- If you wanna pop some bubbles clap your hands...

## CHANTS

- Shake it to the east, shake it to the west, shake it to the one that you love best
- ABC, Tumble down D, Cat's in the cupboard and you can't catch me!
- One. Two. Buckle my shoe
- 1 to go to London, 2 to go to town, 3 to go to the top of the hill and 4 to fall right down!
- Wee willie winkie
- Up Like a Rocket

# Nursery Activity Ideas

- **Musical Statues** – dance to music and freeze when the music stops
- **Cheerio Jewelry** – make a necklace or bracelet with yarn and cheerios!
- **Play Dress Up** – bring some hats and some fun dress up items for pretend play
- **Bowling** – use empty water bottles for the bowling pins
- **Musical Instruments** – you can also make your own by using an empty water bottle and rice, small pots and pans with a spoon, etc.
- **Duck, Duck, Goose** – this classic is always a fun activity for the kids
- **Butcher Paper Art** – cover the nursery table with butcher paper and let the kids draw and color
- **Follow the Leader**
- **Puppets** – put on a puppet show with the children using finger puppets, sock puppets, paper bag puppets, etc.
- **PlayDoh** – let them play with homemade playdough and plastic cookie cutters. (Could get messy check with rules of the building.)
- **Bubbles** – you can never go wrong with bubbles.
- **Building Blocks** – so many building possibilities with wooden blocks, foam blocks, Lincoln logs, mega blocks, etc. Don't have access to blocks? Remember to ask ward members and see if you can borrow them on a Sunday.
- **Lacing Cards** – kids love to play with lacing cards (especially the older nursery children)
- **File Folders** – create some file folder games and let the kids play with them while waiting for their parents to pick them up.
- **Magnet Letters on a Cookie Sheet** – play with plastic magnet alphabet letters on a cookie sheet
- **Ball Games** – throw a ball (preferably soft) in a basket, kick a ball into a goal, play toss, etc.
- **Read a Book** – I would try to keep it about a church topic. examples: sharing, kindness, etc.
- **Car Mat with Cars** – use a large white board and create your own if you don't have one on hand!
- **Paper Airplanes** – Make some paper planes ahead of time and watch how much fun they have flying them.
- Remember there is valuable information in the *Behold Your Little Ones: Nursery Manual* when it comes to activities, too!