

TIP SHEETS

Play and Creativity Using Music at Home



Play is one of the most important parts of early childhood.

When children play, they are laying the foundations for math, reading, and social skills. They also build their imagination and creativity as they plan, solve problems, and talk about what they are thinking. Parents can help children by encouraging play and creativity through music at home.

SING!

Children love to sing and they love to hear their parents sing. Sing while feeding, bathing, changing your child, or running errands. Adding song to daily experiences creates a sense of ease and relaxation.

Pick out a favorite baby doll or stuffed animal and sing soothing bedtime songs together. Or, find a familiar song that can become a utility song. (This is a song where you make up new words to fit the situation).

Repeat favorite songs and create new ways to sing them. Singing familiar songs develops self-esteem, literacy, and the recognition of patterns.

EXPLORE NEW MUSIC

Children love to dance and move to the beat. Create a child-appropriate playlist with different types of music and have a family dance party. Your playlist might include jazz, hip-hop, classical, pop, bluegrass, soul, and country.

During the dance party, play a game of copying each other's moves. Your child can think about new ways to move their body and how to be a leader. Hold younger babies as you gently dance to music. They will feel the pulse in different ways based on the sounds.

INSTRUMENTS ARE ALL AROUND

Children love to make their own music. Get out your pots, pans, and kitchen utensils and let your child play along to a song or create their own beats. This builds listening skills and the ability to hear contrasts in sounds and rhythms.

Use a paper towel tube as a pretend microphone to encourage children to play with the sounds of their own voice. Fill empty plastic water bottles with materials such as beads to make shakers. Use new vocabulary like *rhythm* or *melody* to describe sounds.

MUSICAL GAMES & CREATIVE PLAY

- Singing during Peek-a-Boo is fun and teaches children that even though they cannot see something, it still exists.
- Make roads on your floor or sidewalk with tape. Sing songs like *Wheels on the Bus* while you drive cars and trains through the roads.
- Finger paint as you listen to various kinds of music to explore texture and reflect the music's mood.
- Mimic your baby's babbling and cooing sounds back to them. (This is the idea of Serve and Return).
- Encourage older children to sing or chant while they play dress up or build with blocks.



ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Playing with Music at Home

<https://www.naeyc.org/our-work/families/playing-music-home>

Play in Early Childhood: The Role of Play in Any Setting

<https://developingchild.harvard.edu/resources/play-in-early-childhood-the-role-of-play-in-any-setting>

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