

Tips for Sharing Music with Your Two- to Three-Year-Old



Here are some tips and suggestions for sharing music and movement activities with your child:

- Make up songs to familiar tunes. Use daily routines as subjects for your songs, such as making dinner or getting ready for bed.
- Provide pots, pans, and other kitchen or household materials to make music. Play upbeat recorded music for added fun. You can also use commercial rhythm band instruments for playing along with music.
- Share a variety of music styles (country, classical, pop, rock, jazz) with children.
- Hold babies while singing. Sway and rock to the beat of the song. Dance with little ones in your arms while singing.
- Sing songs that tell a story. Make up a song about a story.
- Keep songs short for babies and toddlers. Increase the length of the song for older toddlers and preschoolers.
- Sing new songs slowly so that children can clearly hear the words. After singing the song a few times, you can pick up the pace.
- Use traditional motions and movements or make up new motions to accompany songs. Not only do motions help children remember the words for a song, but moving also optimizes the benefits of singing.
- When singing familiar songs, pause occasionally to let children fill in a word.
- Encourage preschoolers to make up songs about things that happen in their life.
- Play music by children's musicians.

Sample Music Experiences

- Let toddlers play simple musical instruments: maracas, rattles, sand blocks, wrist/ankle bells (jingle bells on yarn or attached to Velcro), or small drums.
- Provide rhythm or lummi sticks to keep a beat.
- Encourage children to dance freely to different types of music.
- Have children move to music with scarves, rainbow ribbon sticks, or streamers.
- Invite toddlers to clap their hands to the beat of the music.
- Use a parachute or a blanket with musical games (to bounce stuffed animals).
- Provide egg shakers for each child to use to accompany songs.
- Make shakers for children by filling small water bottles with gravel. Be sure to attach lids firmly.
- Provide colorful beanbags for children to use rhythmically while singing songs or with recordings of beanbag songs.
- Provide simple movements when using shakers, beanbags, and bells: hold hands high above head; tap knees, feet, or tummy; or hide behind back.
- Create easy-to-hold streamers by attaching brightly colored ribbons to canning jar "screw bands" or craft rings. Encourage children to wave the streamers to favorite songs or music.
- Have children each hold one hand on a hula hoop while walking in a circle to music.
- Let children strum a chord or two on an auto-harp or guitar held by an adult.