



MUSIC, MOVEMENT, AND MORE

WHY WE DO WHAT WE DO!

Tons of research shows that singing and language skills are interconnected! And language skills are important prerequisites to early literacy skills as well.

Singing not only expands your child's vocabulary, but it also builds on an early literacy skill called "phonological awareness". Simply put, it's the concept that words are made from sounds. In music, there is a musical note for almost every word in a song. Sounds also have rhythm. This is an important concept that will later impact reading and spelling skills.

WHY NOT HAVE NEW SONGS EACH TIME?

Good question! Singing the words of easy-to-remember repetitive songs helps young listeners develop language skills. Music's melodic and rhythmic patterns provide exercise for the brain and help develop memory.

WHY DON'T WE HAVE THE CHILDREN SEPARATED INTO AGE GROUPS?

Another excellent question! A child's stage of musical development, like any other area of development, does not strictly coincide with his or her age. The reason that we mix the ages is based on research showing that young children thrive and learn BEST when interacting with children of different ages. The mixed age class mimics a family environment in which the youngest often watch, imitate and learn, and the older children develop important social and leadership skills. The mixed-age setting also allows siblings to attend together and participate at their own level, free from any age-specific expectations!

WHEN YOU HEAR US TALK ABOUT "CROSSING THE MIDLINE"

First, let's talk about what "crossing the midline" is. It means that one hand spontaneously moves over to the other side of the body to work there. Before this ability is established, you may notice that your young child tends to use the left hand on the left side of the body and the right hand on the right side of the body. When children spontaneously cross the midline with the dominant hand, then that hand is going to get the practice it needs to develop fine motor skills. If a child avoids crossing the midline, his or her true handedness may be delayed. If both hands are being used, he or she may end up with two mediocre hands instead of one strong, dominant hand. Why is this important? We need a strong dominant hand for controlling a pencil and having good handwriting.

Children who have difficulty crossing the body's midline often have trouble with such skills as reading, writing, completely self-care skills, and participating in sports and physical activities. These skills require a type of coordination that comes from experience with "crossing the midline", which is movement involving the left arm and right leg, or the right arm and left leg at the same time. Many of the movements we do with the instruments and dance movements will involve crossing the midline.

(OVER)

Guess what another time of crossing the midline is? When we read from left to right! When a child has difficulty crossing the midline, it can affect his or her ability to read. When a child is moving his or her eyes across a page from left to right, the eyes will stop at midline to blink and refocus. When this happens, the child will frequently lose their place and become confused as to where they left off.

WHAT WE NEED YOU TO DO

It's simple: be involved with your child on each and every song! Sing along! Babies love it when you sing to them! It is part of the bonding process. As they mature, babies will begin to notice changes in your voice and patterns, speech and words. This helps with brain development.

Toddlers love music with a rhythm and a beat and enjoy hearing the same songs over and over.

Music itself evokes movement and children delight in and require movement for their development and growth!

Young childrens' musical growth occurs best in a playful, musically rich, and developmentally appropriate setting, free from direct instruction and performance pressure.

