

Early Childhood Music

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The Musical Child

- All children are born with the potential to be musical. This potential is music aptitude.
- Music aptitude is not hereditary and stabilizes at **age nine!** At that point, music educators are working with solely achievement.
- Early childhood music experiences are vital to the development of the musical child.

Music Acquisition

- Music development is similar to language development.
- We learn first by listening, speaking, thinking, reading and writing.
- Audiation is the ability to think in musical sounds.
- Initial musical experiences should focus on singing, chanting, movement, improvising, and creating.
- Initial musical experiences should always be presented in the context of play with no formal expectations of correctness.
- Initial musical experiences should include repetition, variety, contrast, anticipation, and silence. All of these help to elicit responses from the child.



Tonal/Singing Voice Development

- All humans have the ability to sing.
- Learning how to sing is developmental in nature and may occur over years.
- Children begin by babbling musical sounds, echoing musical sounds, singing in their speaking voice, echoing pitches directionally, and coordinating breath with singing before emerging with singing voice.
- Initial singing voice range is very small! Teachers should be careful to pitch songs within a child's singing range. It is also important to use a consistent starting pitch each time you sing a song.



Initial singing voice range

Rhythmic Development

- Also developmental in nature and occurs over a period of several years.
- Initial experiences should focus on energy efforts (Laban): flow, weight, space, and time and developing body awareness.
- Children move to internal tempo before moving to adult tempo.
- Initial beat movement should focus on gross motor before fine motor and primarily locomotor movement.
- Beat competency activities should be presented in the body first before instruments with bilateral movement preceding alternating movement.