

# Music in Early Literacy Storytimes

## Phonological Awareness

All music helps with Phonological Awareness. Singing helps kids hear the smaller sounds that make up words because each note gets a sound. When picking music that enhances Phonological Awareness, try songs that are slightly slower so that the kids can sing and hear every note. Rule of thumb: If you can't understand every word perfectly, pick a different song. Also, songs that include animal noises or other sound effects are great for this skill. Some great songs for Phonological Awareness include "Old MacDonald," "A Cat Had a Birthday" (from *Happy Birthday from Sesame Street* CD), anything by Debbie Clement, and "Song in My Tummy" (from *Under a Shady Tree* by Laurie Berkner). All nursery rhyme and "Toddler Favorites" collections are also great for this skill.



## Vocabulary

This is another skill that almost all songs have. For younger children, any kind of "naming song" where you are singing a long list of animals, foods, or any other objects will work. For older children, provide pictures and text that go along with the unfamiliar words in a song. Try a song like "I Am the Music Man" (I like the version on *Seamus Kennedy Gets on Everybody's Nerves* by Seamus Kennedy), and provide labeled pictures of each instrument you imitate in the song. Also, try Greg & Steve's *Kids in Motion* CD when you're learning body parts. I particularly like the "Beanbag Boogie" for a mixed group.

## Narrative Skills

Repeat, repeat, repeat. That's the key to a song that strengthens Narrative Skills. Songs like "The Cat Came Back" (Sharon, Lois, and Bram do a great version on *Singing and Swinging*) are great for this because the kids know when the chorus is coming and they can sing "meow." Also, try songs that build upon themselves like Debbie Clement's "Everybody All Together Now" (on *Debbie's Ditties 3: At the Library*). This song has them add a move in each new verse.



## Letter Knowledge

Be very careful how you select alphabet songs. Most of them blur L, M, N, O, and P. Try slower versions, or songs that highlight one letter at a time. You can have children listen for one particular letter, and when they hear it, their hands go up or down. I like "Jamaican ABC's" by Vincent on *Vincent and the Big Bad Kitchen Band*. Also, try "ABC Gospel" by Choo Choo Soul on their self-titled CD. For older kids, try the classic Sesame Street song "ABC-DEF-GHI" (found on various albums) and discuss with kids why Big Bird might think the alphabet was one big word.

## Print Awareness and Print Motivation

Pick music that goes with a book. Read it and then sing it! Nursery rhymes are great for this, or adapted songs like “The Wheels on the Bus.” You can also sing the song and then read something like *The Seals on the Bus* by Lenny Hort. Another good pair could be “Today is Monday” with the Eric Carle book of the same name. You can sing along to *I Ain’t Gonna Paint No More* by Karen Beaumont and then play “It Ain’t Gonna Rain No More.” Some books even contain parts of songs within the text, like *Punk Farm* by Jarrett J. Krosoczka or the Skippyjon Jones series by Judy Schachner. You can even play music to go with wordless books or pair an art book with music from the period. And don’t forget to write the words out for kids to sing along and read! Even non-readers can learn sight words as you point to the word and sing it.

## Some Great Music to Try in Your Storytime

*Kids in Motion* by Greg & Steve

*Vincent and the Big Bad Kitchen Band* by Vincent

*Debbie’s Ditties 5: Jump, Jam, Jive* by Debbie Clement

*Ralph’s World: Green Gorilla, Monster & Me* by Ralph Covert

*The Muppet Show 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Collection*

*It’s Toddler Time* by Kimbo

*Jack’s Big Music Show Season One*

*Seamus Kennedy Gets on Everybody’s Nerves* by Seamus Kennedy

*Dancin’ Magic* by Joanie Bartels

*Under a Shady Tree* by Laurie Berkner

*Buzz Buzz* by Laurie Berkner

*Songs from the Street: 35 Years of Music*

*Kid’s Dance Party Volume Two*

*Disney Pixar Buddy Songs*

*Strawberry Shortcake: Let’s Dance*

*Whaddaya Think of That?* by Laurie Berkner

*Sesame Street: Hot! Hot! Hot!*

*Philadelphia Chickens* by Various Artists

*Victor Vito* by Laurie Berkner

*Ralph’s World: At the Bottom of the Sea* by Ralph Covert

*Yummy Yummy* by The Wiggles

*Shake, Rattle & Rock* by Greg & Steve

*Imagination Movers: For Those About to Hop* by Imagination Movers

*Choo Choo Soul* by Choo Choo Soul

