

Sounds and Music



"Before children can learn phonics, they must learn to be able to discriminate a wide range of sounds becoming aware of the tiny differences between them. Try making the sounds / k/ and /g/, and you'll see how important discrimination is".

(Sue Palmer) 11

Private Concert

We wanted the children to hear live music so we asked our local primary school if their orchestra could come and play for us. It had a huge impact on the children and after playing for them, the older children showed little groups how to play and also let them have a go.

Lights, Sound, Action!

We borrowed a 'Digital Blue' movie camera from the ICT team at Beaumanor and used it to collect sounds (and actions) on a sound walk. Now they are on our computer and the children often revisit them - remembering the walk, the order of the sounds we heard and imitating the sounds in various ways. The camera was so easy to use that even the children recorded sounds.

Noisy Toys

When using any programmable noisy toys (e.g. the electronic till or tractor that revs up and sings 'Old McDonald'), the children got very noisy. We now either use them outside or inside with a piece of blue-tac over the speaker part, just to lower the volume, but still hear it.

Pass the Ted

Play pass-the-parcel with a favourite class teddy or a toy. Each time the tape stops that child has to do a forfeit. This could potentially be anything but we link it to sounds and music. For example; repeat a clapping rhythm, find a rhyming word for cat, make the noise of an ambulance, or recognising sounds of concealed objects. We find this works best with a small group, especially where the adult has thought through the forfeits for each child.

Sounds Around

We play a game when we're out and about. Children have to listen to environmental noises very carefully with a partner. They have to recreate those sounds with their voice and practice them with their partners. Adults help children sometimes to really listen to the sound and discuss if its loud or quiet, short or long, and which part of the body/mouth might help to recreate it. Back inside, children take turns to perform the sounds for others to guess. Sometimes they choose other materials to create the sounds with. The more time we give the children to practise and refine their sounds the more accurate they become in identifying their peers' sounds. This is because the sounds have been thought about carefully and children are finely tuning their auditory discrimination.

"Young children can never have enough of music, interesting sounds and of course, nursery rhymes..."

(Jacqueline Harding) 11





Role Play Ideas:

- Clock makers
- Farmyard
- Pop studio
- Music shop
- Printers' works
- · Builders' yard
- Plumbers' merchants
- TV Studio
- Puppet show
- Scrap yard
- Space ship
- Bandstand
- (also ideas in Writing supplement)

Resource links:

"Playing with Sounds: a supplement to Progression in Phonics" DfES, July 2004, ref:DfES0280-2004 (Prologistics tel: 0845 60 22260, email: dfes@prolog.uk.com)

"Progression in Phonics" DfES, Sept. 1999, Ref DfES0126/2001 (Contact as above)

National Literacy Trust (support for developing children's literacy)

Basic Skills Agency (supports early literacy and numeracy, lots of ideas including working with parents) www.basic-skills.co.uk tel: 020 7405 4017

Multicultural, RE & Curriculum Resource Centre, Quorn Hall, Tel/fax: 01509-621579 email: BLofthouse@leics.gov.uk



Water Music

Try putting some percussion instruments in the water tray just to see what happens.

Cardboard Box Band

How many sounds can you make on a large cardboard box?

Background Music

We often have a tape playing during the session. Music changes the mood and so we try different types at different times during the day and week.

Down the Tube!

Use a hosepipe as a speaking tube from one end of the setting to the other. Attach some jingle bells to both ends by a long piece of string. When this is pulled it 'rings' for someone to answer at the other end.

One Man Band

Play 'one man band' where children see how many instruments they can play at once.

Sound Tunnel

We made a sound tunnel, using a fabric tunnel and attaching real and homemade instruments to the outside. We put the 'Funky Footprints' (Early Learning Centre) underneath and as the children crawled through their whole body became an orchestra.

"Music allows children (and adults) to express themselves and communicate in a special way. All children need to be presented with a range of opportunities to experiment with sounds and discover the different languages of music"

(Robin Lever) 11

Walkie-Talkie

Walkie-talkies are great outside and in. They can be used on their own as an activity or as part of a role play e.g. astronauts on the moon or divers on the sea-bed.

Festival of Noise

After reading the story 'Five Minutes Peace' (Jill Murphy), we planned six noisy activities based on the story. The children trundled round the activities, including homemade instruments and two keyboards. After the session children invited their parents to join in.

Sound Tent

We used a pop-up beach tent with a drape on it as a sounds tent. Inside, it was secluded and cosy with cushions. Sometimes we put tape recorders and microphones in, sometimes story tapes, instruments etc...

Song Time

We sing everything we do from saying good morning and putting on coats to tidying up. It's really good to get the children's attention because you're singing the words and not shouting them. The children just tune in.

"The music of early childhood also exists in the spontaneous vocal noises made absent mindedly while playing."

(Robin Lever) 11

Rhyme Time

We made a 'rhyme time' sack for Humpty Dumpty and included horses, egg-shaped shakers and a shaker made from broken crockery. Not only is it great to help listening to rhyme but also to other sounds associates with the horses' hooves and breaking eggshells etc...

Bear Hunt

'Going on a Bear Hunt' (Rosen & Oxenbury) can be used to make a sound story. Children can make the sounds of the grass and wind etc... using instruments, packaging, natural materials or body percussion.



Music treasure box

A treasure or skills box is a collection of artefacts that stimulate discussion, understanding, skills and knowledge for a particular area of a learning, cluster or theme. As with story sacks, presentation is really important so that children truly see the contents as 'treasures'.

A sounds and music treasure box might contain:

fire bell, fire exit map, smoke alarm, telephones, electronic toys (e.g.: fairy's wand), tape recorder and microphone, noisy book, noisy electronic toys, letter shapes, radio, sheet music, nursery rhyme props, vehicles, voice wobbler, natural materials (especially shells), animals (plastic and stuffed toys that make sounds), tapes or CDs (jazz, classical, folk, pop etc...). Instruments/objects that can: shake, rattle, bang, blow, twang, buzz, hum.