

The Music Ring

Percussion Song

The Music Ring requires a considerable level of concentration, understanding of rules, turn-taking and waiting, so ensure that the group is focused and engaged before starting. The long list of extension activities for this song allows you to sing it many times, while frequently changing and adapting it to retain the groups' interest, and to embed new learning.

Percussion songs are great team games, involving everyone and allowing children to develop at their own pace. There are also many benefits that feed into PSE development, including waiting, turn taking and choice making.

Areas of learning & development

Personal, social and emotional development:

- Self-confidence and self-awareness
- Managing feelings and behaviour

Communication and language:

- Listening and attention

Resources

1. A colourful piece of cloth
2. A drawstring bag
3. Three different types of percussion instruments - tappers, scrapers and bells.

Song words

You can play anything in the music ring, the music ring, the music ring.

You can play anything in the music ring, but now it's time to stop.

Audio: 14.1 The Music Ring
Full song

Words and music by Jim Montague

How to...

1. Sit the children in a circle and spread the cloth on the floor in the middle. Because the cloth creates a focused space, it will help the children to understand they cannot grab the instruments as soon as they come out of the bag.
2. Take the instruments out of the bag according to their type, for example all the scrapers first. State clearly what they are, encouraging the children to repeat the names after you.
3. Allow every child to pick an instrument, one at a time. To promote fairness, be careful to ensure that once they have an instrument they don't play it until everyone else has chosen theirs.
4. Once everyone has picked, begin playing together by chanting "ready, steady, off we go" to the group. They are likely to be very excited by the instruments initially, so allow the group to play them however they wish to begin with. After a while get the children to stop, then play together in a variety of ways, including fast, slow, holding them high and holding them low.
5. When they are used to this start singing the song as they are playing, and after a while they will begin to join in.

Extension & development

1. Experiment with playing together in a specific way, such as slow, and all following the beat as accurately as possible.

Audio: 14.2 The Music Ring
Slow

2. Encourage the children to play two ways simultaneously, for instance quiet and fast.

Audio: 14.3 The Music Ring
Fast and quiet

3. As their confidence grows, you can progress to playing in small groups and eventually performing solos.

Audio: 14.4 The Music Ring
Solo

4. Over time, the children will become so familiar with this song and the instruments involved that they will be able to identify them just by the sound they make. Ask them to put their hands over their eyes, or have the leader play the instruments in the drawstring bag, and ask the children to guess which type is being played.

Extension & development cont...

- 5.** Encourage the children to take turns to be the leader, allowing them to lead the song and activities in the session.
- 6.** When the children are experienced in the activity, experiment with leaving the instruments in the main nursery space to encourage peer-led music-making.

Learning outcomes

Personal, social and emotional development: Self-confidence and self-awareness

Early learning goals

- 1.** Children are confident to try new activities, and say why they like some activities more than others.
- 2.** They are confident to speak in a familiar group, will talk about their ideas, and will choose the resources they need for their chosen activities.
- 3.** They say when they do or don't need help.

Activity contribution to goals

Children are encouraged to perform solos, lead the group and contribute ideas.

Children learn the rules gradually through repetition, and trial and error.

Personal, social and emotional development: Managing feelings and behaviour

Early learning goals

- 1.** Children talk about how they and others show feelings, talk about their own and others' behaviour, and its consequences, and know that some behaviour is unacceptable.
- 2.** They work as part of a group or class, and understand and follow the rules.
- 3.** They adjust their behaviour to different situations, and take changes of routine in their stride.

Activity contribution to goals

Children understand that both waiting and turn-taking are important parts of the activity, and the reason this is important is explained to them.

Communication and language: Listening and attention

Early learning goals

- 1.** Children listen attentively in a range of situations.
- 2.** They listen to stories, accurately anticipating key events and respond to what they hear with relevant comments, questions or actions.
- 3.** They give their attention to what others say and respond appropriately, while engaged in another activity.

Activity contribution to goals

Children are encouraged to listen carefully to the different instruments and to learn to differentiate them;

Children understand the importance of following directions from the leader and their peers;

Children understand that the directions will change from time to time and they must continue to follow them.