



Peak Rhythms, Inc.

www.peakrhythms.com

303-499-0520

Successful Child Conference “Making Music for Teachers and Children”

May 14, 2011

I. Principles

- Create a balance of rhythmic structure with musical space in which children can create and play
- Empower their imaginations, creativity, and ideas to connect music and sound with animals, nature, people, jungles, sounds they experience, stories, etc...
- Gradually rhythmize them beginning with simple claps, movement, etc... before handing out instruments.
- Important to build musical awareness of volume, different kinds of sounds, tempo, etc... Don't have to do this thru locking into and playing a specific rhythm together. Games are great to accomplish this.
- Meet them where they are musically and rhythmically.
- Adapt well known songs to drums and percussion instruments
- Circle is an important structure for everybody to be seen, heard, and participate
- Sound levels- Be aware of the drums and instruments you use and how to soften sounds such as soft mallets, facilitating volume, kinds of drums/instruments, games you use, etc...

II. Intro Activities

- Playing a simple rhythm and giving space within the rhythm for children to clap, snap, make animal sounds, animal movements, etc...
- Can vary volume, tempo, etc...
- Animal dance- Children dance and make favorite animal sounds when music is playing. Freeze when it stops. Engage their imagination i.e. jungle, forest, night (soft/slower sounds, lower volume), morning, etc...

III. Games

- Rumble Game- Demonstrate and model shaking in the center. Children rapidly play drums and/or instruments when child shakes in the middle. When child stops shaking, then everybody stops. Can ask children what do they know that shakes? Washer, blender, etc... How does it feel to be still? What's still in their lives?

- Step Game- Demonstrate big steps, jumping, dance, rhythmic steps i.e. 1, 2, 3 then 1, 2. Everybody plays one time each time child steps in the middle. Can create rhythms, run, jump, dance, etc... Can build on it so that different body parts become an instrument i.e. raised hands become the shakers. Hips could be wood blocks or triangles. Again, empower their ideas.
- Echo Game- Demonstrate and model rhythms and sounds on instruments and how to echo you. One child plays something, then everybody plays it back. Can make this an animal sound on the drum like a spider, cat stalking, elephant, snake, etc... Depending on motor skills and ages, Follow the Leader game might work better. If you arrange drums in a circle so that children are outside of the drums and can see each other, then they can easily see and follow another child as they play.
- Follow the Leader- Play and everybody follows you.
- Make a Wish- Everybody imagines a wish. When they have one, everybody rumbles playing drums and instruments together, then “Whoosh” stops playing and sends it off wherever it needs to go to come true.
- Frog Pond- I like to use different sizes of frogs so there are different sounds. Can create a frog pond at night. Create rhythms with frogs. Frogs can talk to each other. I liked somebody’s idea of putting the frogs in the middle and letting the kids play and create something.
- Jungle- Create a jungle. Use swirling hand on the drum to create wind. Tapping fingers on drums creates rain. Wooden frogs are great. Invite children to offer sounds from a jungle. The spring drum creates thunder for a rain storm. Can tap the bass sound once on a drum for lightning.

IV. Songs

- Old McDonald- On this farm he had some drums, shakers, frogs, triangles, buckets, etc... with a boom boom (shake, shake) here...
- If You’re Happy and You Know It, Play Your Drum/Shaker/Triangle...
- BINGO- Playing drums and instruments when singing B-I-N-G-O.

V. Stories

- One participant mentioned telling a story and using the instruments to make sounds like a cheetah stalking and walking on the drum, then running, etc... Lots of possibilities here.
- Create a story- Make different sounds, ask children what the different sounds sound like to them, then create a story using those sounds. Or tell them you need 5-10 sounds for an existing story and invite them to find something that makes a sound like those things.

VI. Rhythms

- Can use an elephant walking in the jungle as a bass beat. Tell them that we always want to hear the elephant in our jungle (helps them hold a bass beat), but we’d like to add some other sounds, animals, etc...

- Can use simple counting like “Play One Time, Play Two Times, etc...” to create rhythms. Can play twice then three times to create a 1, 2 and 1, 2, 3 beat like B-I-N-G-O. Or reverse it- three times, then twice.
- Stop/Start technique to help them work together and create a rhythm
- Lots more here once they begin to be able to play and create a rhythm together.

VII. Resources

- Frogs, Boomwhackers, etc... www.shakerman.com Kerry's a great guy and friend dedicated to empowering people to make music.
- Boomwhackers, Drums, etc... www.westmusic.com They are a great resource particularly for educators. They also have music therapists on staff you can call and talk to.
- Local music stores. It's always good to support them and have a local music store in your community.