



SMALL GROUPS WITH ENORMOUS BENEFITS

NEW POSSIBILITIES FOR YOUR
EARLY CHILDHOOD CLASSROOMS

Small Groups (3-5 children) allow children to follow their interests, make decisions that influence their play, and use their language in meaningful situations. They are able to identify and solve problems, collaborate with others, and think creatively as they have conversations with others.

Additional ideas for centers and choice time can be found in *The Complete Learning Center Book (Revised)* available on the website below.

MUSIC CENTER



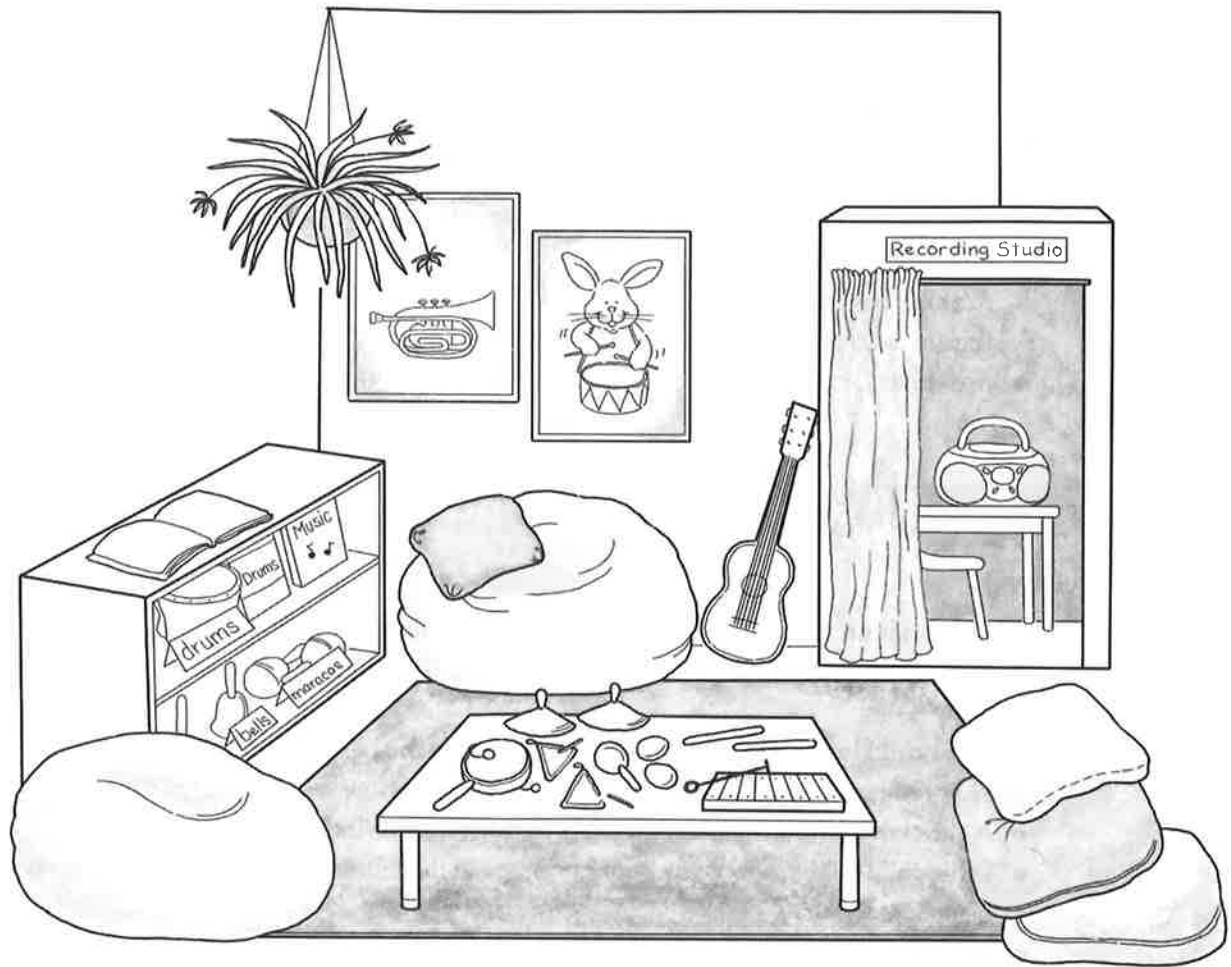
This center activates children's brains as they listen, produce, and compose or improvise music.



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Summary

Music is an essential element in the development of the “whole child” and should be an integral part of an early childhood classroom. This Music and Sound Center provides a meaningful way for young children to develop an interest in music as they select instruments, recordings, and activities. They also have the opportunity to return to favorites that will allow for both experimentation and expansion of their musical ideas.

Introducing the Center

Music and sounds captivate young children. Beginning in infancy and continuing into childhood, music inspires joyful responses to sounds and rhythms. A Music and Sound Center is an environment where children experience sounds and create their own music. In this center, young children are the musicians, composing and often sharing their music with others. Share a ukulele, an Autoharp, a triangle, or other musical instrument that children may not have seen during circle or group time. Let children strum the strings and listen to the sounds the “new” instrument produces. Place this instrument in the Music and Sound Center at the conclusion of circle or group time.

Learning Objectives for Children in the Music and Sound Center

1. To enjoy making music and participating in musical activities.
2. To explore sounds produced by many different objects and instruments.
3. To listen to a variety of music: vocal, band, orchestra, instrumental, and group.
4. To experiment with new ways to produce music and sounds.
5. To build confidence as they gain musical experience.

Time Frame for the Music and Sound Center

Rotate the Music and Sound Center in and out of the early childhood program throughout the year, keeping it set up for approximately two to three weeks at a time. Each time the center returns to the classroom, it should renew the children's interest in making music. Sometimes, the Music and Sound Center remains in the classroom throughout the year. This generally occurs when children express continued interest in the area if the teacher has a special reason to keep it set up longer. If the center is in the classroom for an extended period, it is essential to add new elements to it frequently and to rotate different recordings in and out of the space.



Note: The attached CD contains a sample letter to send to families, introducing them to the Music and Sound Center.



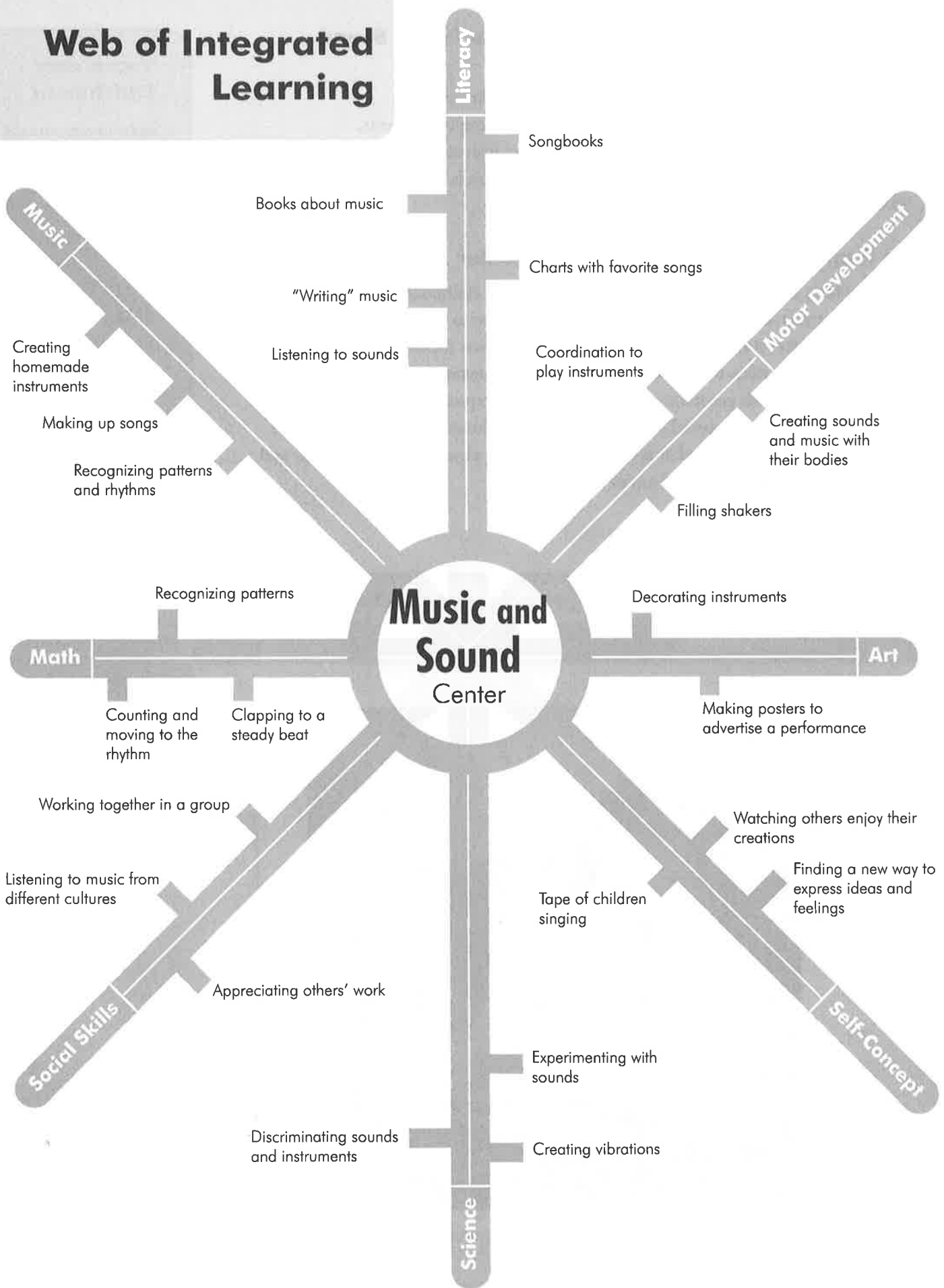
Various instruments provide a way to experiment with rhythm.

Vocabulary Enrichment

accompany sounds
band
choir
drum
duet
fast/slow
guitar
high/low
instrument
keyboard
listening
loud/soft
musician
orchestra
performance
piano
recording
rhythm
steady beat
time
vocal



Web of Integrated Learning



Family- or Teacher-Collected Props for the Music and Sound Center

- During the early years, it is important to expose children to a variety of music as they begin to develop preferences.
 - CD or tape player and media (Include a variety of performers on recordings: children singing, professional performers, orchestras, and bands.)
 - recordings of different types of music (folk, classical, bluegrass, rap, or rock)
 - recordings of music from different cultures with appropriate instruments
- rhythm instruments:
 - bells
 - cymbals
 - drums
 - rhythm sticks
 - sand blocks
 - shakers
 - triangles
 - xylophone



These girls are creating rhythm patterns on the drums.



Child-Created Props for the Music and Sound Center

Sing a Song!

SELF-CONCEPT

CD or tape recorder
crayons or markers
homemade instruments, or other small instruments
paper
pictures of children
glue or tape
cardboard rolls (from paper towels or wrapping paper)
small rubber ball

- During circle or group time, make recordings of the children singing their favorite songs.
- Set out various homemade and other small instruments for the children to use as they record their songs or replay the recordings.
- Set out paper, markers, and crayons for the children to use to make covers for their album. Add pictures of the children to the covers, as well as their names.
- Set out the recordings for the children to listen to their singing or to solos by their classmates.
- Make a microphone by gluing a small rubber ball to a cardboard roll and setting it out in the Music Center for the children to use when singing. This prop often motivates the young singers to give amazing performances.

Musical Body Sounds

MOTOR DEVELOPMENT

chart tablet paper
markers

- Ask the children to find ways to make music with their bodies (clapping, tapping feet, patting chest, popping lips, and so on).
- Use these sounds to create a song.
- Set out paper and markers for the children to use to draw pictures or symbols on chart paper to make a written record of the music and to repeat the composition.
- Place these charts on the walls in the Music and Sound Center for other children to use.

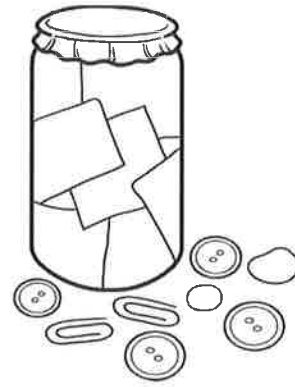
Shakers

MOTOR DEVELOPMENT

aluminum cans
beans, rice, bells, nuts, pennies, rocks
masking tape or contact paper

- Create shakers that vary in the sound they produce.
- Set out the various materials for the children use to fill the aluminum cans with varying amounts of beans, rice, bells, nuts, pennies, nails, or rocks.

- Help the children cover the openings on their cans with masking tape or pieces of contact paper.
- Invite the children to decorate the outsides of their can with small pieces of contact paper.
- The children shake their new instruments together, learning how each shaker produces a different sound.
- The children use the shakers to make music or accompany their singing.



Activities for the Music and Sound Center

Combo

SOCIAL SKILLS

recording device

- Ask the children to work together to create the accompaniment for a favorite song. Record their creation and place the recording in the center.

Swinging and Playing

MUSIC & MOTOR DEVELOPMENT

clear plastic containers

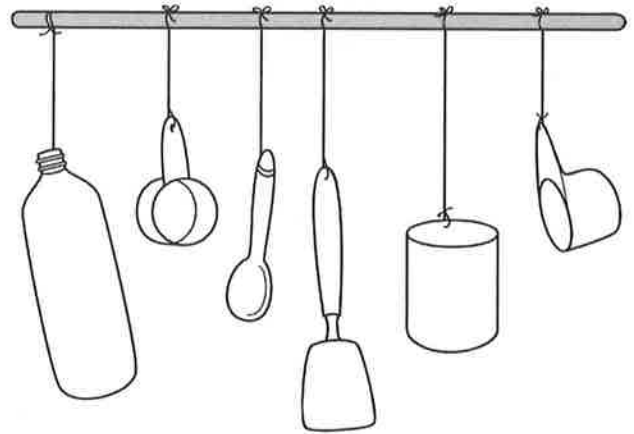
large screws, bells, pieces of wood, forks, spoons, plastic measuring cups, plastic bottles, and so on

rhythm sticks

twine or rope

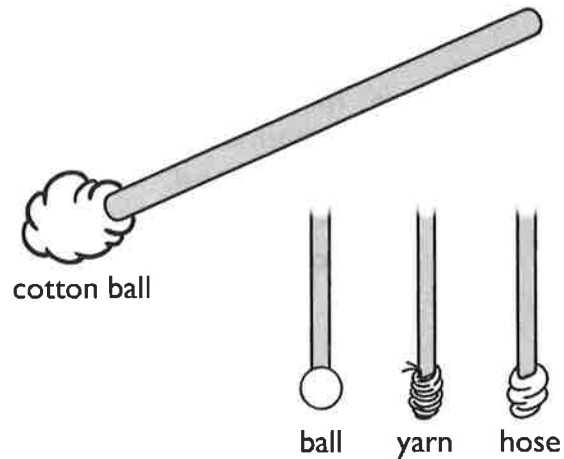
wooden dowel

- Suspend a wooden dowel rod from the ceiling in the classroom, or hang it between two bookcases.
- The children select some of the following items: large screws, bells, pieces of wood, forks, spoons, plastic measuring cups, plastic bottles, and so on. The children use twine or rope to attach their items to the dowel rod.
- The children select the items they want to hear and then tap them with a rhythm stick or drum mallet to create a sound.
- Children can create songs by arranging a group of items on a string and playing them in sequence.



cotton
discarded pantyhose, rubber ball, or thick yarn
dowel rods (6" x ¼"–½")
glue
plastic bottles, drums, or a xylophone

- Use a dowel rod, ¼"–½" in diameter, as the handle for the mallet.
- Make the head of the mallet by gluing a rubber ball to the base, gluing cotton to the end, wrapping pantyhose around the end, or wrapping thick yarn around the end of the dowel rod.
- Let the children experiment with the different sounds the various mallets produce when they strike plastic bottles, drums, or a xylophone.



Adding Spark to the Music and Sound Center

Invite a middle school or high school musician who plays in the band or orchestra to the Music and Sound Center. Ask this musician to play her instrument for the children to enjoy. This also encourages developing musicians.

The Essential Literacy Connection

Reading/Writing Opportunities

- Children “write” songs with pictures or symbols.
- Children “write” invitations or flyers for a concert or special performance.

Other Printed Materials

- Bring in music books of children’s songs. Display catalogs of musical instruments.
- Write words of the children’s favorite songs on chart paper and display them in the center.
- Provide programs from musical performances and advertisements of coming events in the newspaper.

Books for the Music and Sound Center

- Brown, M. 1993. *Hand Rhymes*. New York: Puffin. *This book consists of various nursery rhymes. It includes diagrams, which allow children to reproduce fingerplays.*
- Cox, J. 2003. *My Family Plays Music*. New York: Holiday House. *A musical family with talents for playing a variety of instruments enjoys getting together to celebrate.*
- Isadora, R. 1979. *Ben’s Trumpet*. Illustrated by David Antsey. New York: Greenwillow. *Ben pretends to play the trumpet in this story. His dream comes true when the trumpeter from the Zig Zag Jazzy Club lets Ben play his trumpet.*

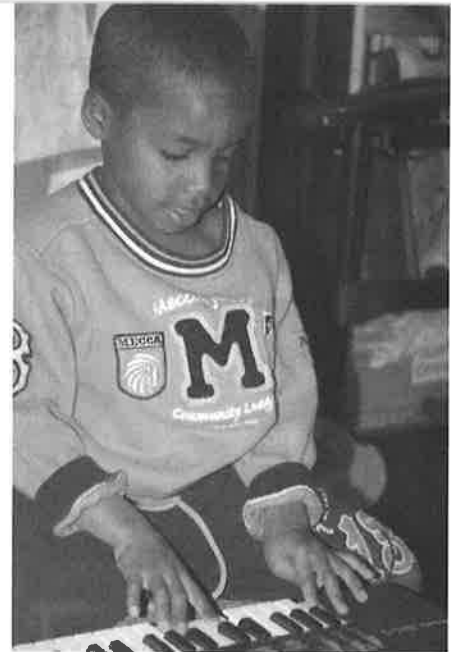
- Johnson, A. 2004. *Violet's Music*. Illustrated by Laura Huliska-Beith. New York: Dial. *From the days she banged her rattle in the crib, Violet has been looking for friends to share her love of music.*
- Pinkney, B. 1997. *Max Found Two Sticks*. New York: Simon & Schuster. *The peace and quiet following Max's decision to put his instruments away drives the neighbors just as crazy as his constant practicing.*
- Thaler, M. 2000. *Music Teacher from the Black Lagoon*. New York: Cartwheel. *A boy contemplates all the horrible stories he has heard about the music teacher, Miss LaNote, and the ordeals she forces her students to endure.*

Evaluation of the Music and Sound Center

(This form is on the CD that comes with this book.)

Ask yourself the following questions to evaluate the Music and Sound Center in your classroom:

- Are children using the musical instruments included in the center?
- Are children experimenting with different sounds the instruments and everyday objects produce?
- Are children making instruments and combining materials to create music?
- Are children enjoying different kinds of music?
- Are children gaining confidence in their musical abilities?



A keyboard provides another way to compose music.

Observation of the Individual Child

(This form is on the CD that comes with this book. Always date observations of each child.)

- Is the child choosing to go the Music and Sound Center? What is she doing in the area?
- Have you observed the child experimenting with different sounds and instruments? In what ways?
- Is the child listening to different types of music? Is there a specific type of music in which she indicates a special interest?
- Is the child performing individually or with others? In what way?
- Is this an area of special interest for this child? How was this determined?

