

Overview

All children play but, more importantly, all children learn through play. Specifically, musical play in the early childhood classroom empowers young children to participate in and learn to enjoy music. They can engage in imaginative play, create their own musical vocabularies, and learn to self-regulate emotions—all while reaching musical milestones such as steady beat-keeping and matching pitch. Additionally, singing supports pre-language and language development, while movement and dancing teach body awareness.

The activities described in Tool Kits I–III are inspired by MIM’s collections and Geographic Galleries.

- **Arts-Integrated Movement:**
Musical Play Through Feathers
- **Math and Visual Arts:**
Musical Play Through Scarves
- **English Language Arts:**
Musical Play Through Finger Games

They extend and deepen the learning on a prekindergarten “Sounds All Around” field trip.

Essential readings listed in the Additional Resources complement the tool kits and provide justification for a play-centered curriculum.

The following activities address Arizona Early Learning Standards in these areas:

Fine Arts
Language and Literacy
Mathematics
Physical Development
Social Studies



MIM Field Trip Highlights

By enjoying video clips of musicians and ensembles, looking at instruments on display, and using touchable materials, prekindergarten students will begin to understand how musical instruments are made and played. With the guidance of a MIM museum guide, everyone will dance, play, and make music!

To book a “Sounds All Around” field trip for your prekindergarten students, visit:

[MIM.org/field-trips/](https://mim.org/field-trips/).



Objectives

- Explore slow, intentional movement with musical accompaniment.
- Identify body parts and improve full-body coordination while utilizing different levels (high, low), directions (forward, backward), and movement prompts (quickly, slowly, on tiptoes, etc.).
- Increase language skills by naming body parts and identifying movement prompts.

Arizona Early Learning Standards Addressed

1. **Physical Development:** Moves with balance and control, demonstrates coordination, and identifies body parts
2. **Fine Arts:** Experiments with a variety of vocal sounds, instruments, and creative movement

Materials

- 1 lightweight feather per child
- Musical accompaniment (sung or prerecorded sound)

Music and Context

Africa | Folk Songs

Within cultural groups in Africa, songs are often passed down orally. Some of the lyrical meanings have been lost; others utilize vocables (a meaningful sound rather than a word). These simple and tuneful melodies are easy to remember and effective at different speeds (tempos) and volumes (dynamics).

Musical Selections

1. “Obwisana” from West Africa
2. “Abiyoyo” from southern Africa

Europe | Classical Music

European classical music—from the Medieval Era (circa 500–1400) to contemporary compositions—provides a variety of accompaniments to promote active listening and intentional movement. Instrumental music enables young learners to listen for different speeds (tempos), volumes (dynamics), and instrumental combinations (textures), which contribute to cognitive development.

Musical Selections

1. The Carnival of the Animals by Camille Saint Saëns
Movement VII: “The Aquarium”
Movement XIII: “The Swan”
2. Cello Suite no. 1 by Johann Sebastian Bach



The lightness of the feather requires prekindergarten students to explore slow, intentional movement.

MUSICAL PLAY THROUGH FEATHERS

Arts-Integrated Movement

Activity

1. Pass out feathers. Ask children to describe their feathers.
“Are they very soft? Are they very light? Are they very colorful?”
2. Raise the feathers high up in the air and let them drift to the ground. After a few repetitions, try to catch them as they fall.
Sing a descending melodic pattern or vocalize descending pitches while the feathers fall.
3. Place a feather in the palm of your hand and move very slowly. Sing a folk song slowly or play slow classical music (see Musical Selections below).
“I have to move very slowly to keep my feather from falling. Can you move slowly, too?”
4. Continue with music; adjust the feathers to different body parts, levels, and movement prompts.
Ask the children to choose where the feather goes next and how to move.

Assessment

1. How children move through the space.
Are they in control of their bodies?
Are they able to move slowly?
Are they able to utilize different heights and levels with their feathers?
2. Hand-eye coordination.
Are they able to release and catch their feathers?



Using feathers, prekindergarten students respond to movement prompts and identify body parts, such as the top of the hand.

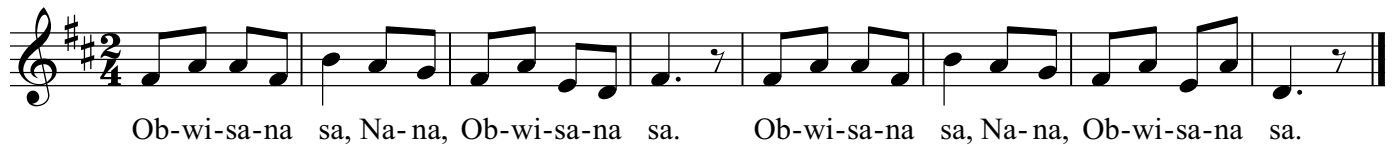
MUSICAL PLAY THROUGH FEATHERS

Arts-Integrated Movement

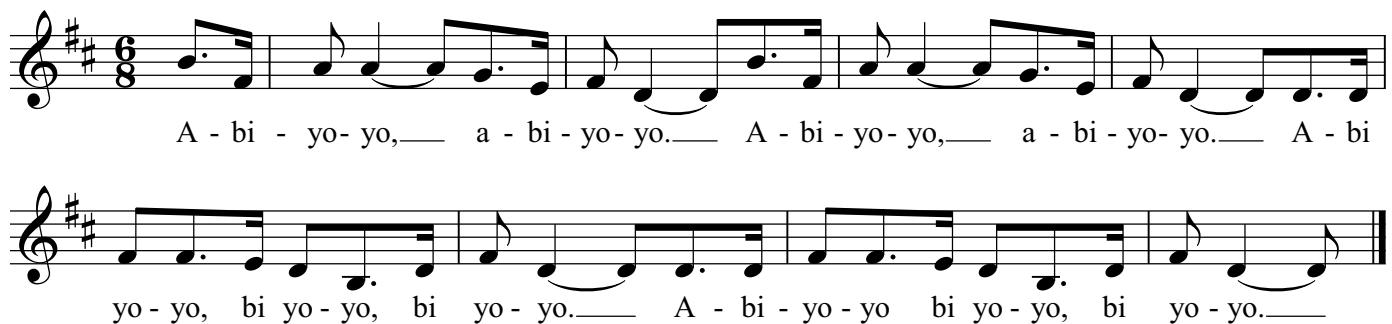
TOOL KIT I

Musical Selections, Suggested Videos or Citations, Lyrics(when available)

“Obwisana” from West Africa



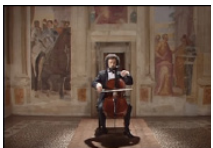
“Abiyoyo” from southern Africa



Camille Saint-Saëns. Movement VII: “The Aquarium” in “Complete Recording.” 8:20 of 22:52. International Music Score Library Project. https://imslp.org/images/8/8d/PMLPo6099-Saint-Saens_Carnival.mp3.



Camille Saint-Saëns. Movement XIII, “The Swan.” 17:50. International Music Score Library Project. https://imslp.org/images/8/8d/PMLPo6099-Saint-Saens_Carnival.mp3.



Lemon77UG. “Mischa Maisky plays Bach Cello Suite no. 1 in G (full).” YouTube video, 19:27. Posted [October 2011]. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mGQLXRTl3Zo>.



Reading Rainbow. “Pete Seeger Reads ‘Abiyoyo’ on Reading Rainbow.” YouTube video, 6:49. Posted [January 2014]. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cPZtuPyXRfw>.

Objectives

- Explore free movement and directional beat keeping.
- Utilize bilateral hand motions and naming conventions.
- Identify different colors and shapes, while engaging in symbolic play.

Arizona Early Learning Standards Addressed

1. **Language and Literacy:** Follows directions that involve a series of actions and makes relevant responses to questions or comments from others
2. **Mathematics:** Recognizes basic geometric shapes

Materials

- 2–4 colorful scarves per child
- Musical accompaniment (sung or prerecorded sound)

Activity 1

1. Children take two scarves, one in each hand. Begin a familiar children's song, using both hands to act out various story representations. Utilize hand motions together, separately, and alternating.
Wave hands left and right for "wipers on the bus go swish, swish, swish!"
Make arm circles for "the wheels on the bus go round and round!"
2. As the song progresses, encourage the children to contribute to the narrative. Together, children and teachers can invent and reinvent the actions that take place.
"What happens next on the bus?"
"How else could we move our scarves?"

Music and Context

United States | Children's Songs

By utilizing songs that children already know, educators create a safe and reassuring space for musical exploration in a developmentally appropriate way. Songs with storytelling components allow children to contribute their voices to the narrative while encouraging independence.

Musical Selections

1. "The Wheels on the Bus"
2. "Mulberry Bush"

Asia | Folk Songs

While folk music from this region is diverse, several Asian cultures utilize pentatonic (five-note) melodies and steady beat. Because tonal languages can be difficult for non-native pronunciations, it is also appropriate to sing melodies on "du" or with an English translation. Creating a time for symbolic play through music encourages creativity.

Musical Selections

1. "Arirang" from Korea
2. "Ai Hai Yo" from China



Engaging in symbolic play (naming their scarf and deciding what kind of animal it is) allows Prekindergarten students to use their imaginations.

MUSICAL PLAY THROUGH SCARVES

Math and Visual Arts

Activity 2

1. Lay one scarf in front of you and ask children to do the same. Encourage children to verbally identify the color(s) and shape of their scarves.
"What shape do we have? I have a square."
2. Continue to fold the scarf up into a rectangle, in half to a square again, and diagonally to a triangle. In between each fold, have the children identify the shapes.
3. Invent a scarf animal and ask the children what animal they have.
"My yellow triangle is a baby alligator. His name is Frank and Frank likes to eat fish and blueberries."
"What kind of animal do you have?"
"Does your animal have a name?"
"What does your animal like to eat?"
4. Place your scarf animal over different body parts while singing a slow folk song and rocking the animals to sleep (see musical selections below). Utilize both side-to-side and front-back midline crossing.

Assessment

1. Verbal identifications and language development.
Are they contributing to the narrative development?
Are they able to identify their colors and shapes?
Are they engaging in symbolic play?
2. Beat keeping and bilateral coordination
Are they moving their scarves to the beat?
Are they moving their arms together, separately and alternately?
Are they able to fold their scarves independently?



Prekindergarten students pick out their scarves to participate in a musical activity.



Prekindergarten students explore free movement using scarves.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Musical Selections

TOOL KIT II

Musical Selections, Suggested Videos or Citations, Lyrics (when available)

“The Wheels on the Bus” from the United States

The wheels on the bus go round and round, round and round, round and round. The wheels on the bus go round and round. All through the town.

The musical notation is written on two staves in 2/4 time with a key signature of one sharp (F#). The melody is simple and repetitive, with lyrics written below the notes.

“Here We Go Round the Mulberry Bush” from the United States

Here we go 'round the mul-ber-ry bush, the mul-ber-ry bush, the mul-ber-ry bush, Here we go 'round the mul-ber-ry bush, so ear-ly in the morn-ing.

The musical notation is written on two staves in 6/8 time with a key signature of one flat (Bb). The melody is simple and repetitive, with lyrics written below the notes.

Lyrics:

This is the way we bounce our scarves.

This is the way we wave our scarves.

This is the way we circle our scarves.

This is the way we scrunch our scarves.

This is the way we throw our scarves.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Musical Selections

“Arirang” from Korea



A - ri rang a - ri rang a - ra__ re__ yo. A - ri rang Go__ kye__ lo__

Naw - maw kan - da. Na - lul bu - ri - go ga - shi-nun nim__

un__ Shim - ni do__ mok__ ga__ saw__ bal byung nan - da

“Ai Hai Yo” from China



Ai hai yo, ai hai yo, ai hai yo hai yo.

Long hur tai yang dur tu di. Sheen nian yi jin dao lai

Jia jia sheen fu nong tian__ hao__ shou chung.

English translation:

Ai hai yo, ai hai yo, ai hai yo hai yo.

Little dragons in the sun. A new year has begun.

In our homes and fields, we will have a good year.



Shukla, Patty. “The Wheels on the Bus—Kids’ Song (with Patty Shukla)”. YouTube video, 2:50. Posted [April 2013]. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SgXZX3mo6cE>.

Objectives

- Explore free movement and improve small-muscle coordination.
- Identify spatial relationships.
- Demonstrate opposites in both body and vocal expression as well as bilateral hand and finger coordination.

Arizona Early Learning Standards Addressed

1. **Language and Literacy:** Demonstrates an understanding and participates in finger plays, songs, and chants
2. **Social Studies:** Recognizes that people live in many different places, have different cultures and languages—begins to ask questions about and describe differences
3. **Fine Arts:** Sings and moves to familiar songs chants

Materials

- Musical and spoken accompaniment (sung or prerecorded sound)

Activity 1

1. Start a song or chant and model actions (see Musical Selections below).
2. Encourage the children to join you once they feel comfortable.
3. Repeat at least three times, changing speed (tempos) and volume (dynamics).
4. Ask the children to give suggestions for fast, slow, loud, and soft.

*“How will the spider crawl? Slowly?
Quickly? Quietly?”*

Music and Context

United States | Songs and Chants

Finger plays, chanted rhymes, and body games encourage self-awareness through independent movements and steady beat keeping. Participating in rhymes and full-body beat keeping reinforces language skills, increases vocabulary, and develops small- and large-muscle coordination. Short songs allow room for repetition and child-centered feedback and suggestions.

Musical Selections

1. “Ten Wiggly Fingers”
2. “Tony Chestnut”

Latin America | Folk Songs in Spanish

Familiar songs in a foreign language create an immediate association with another culture. Children’s songs with small variations in words, melody, or rhythm are found in many Latin American countries. “Itsy Bitsy Spider” variations diverge slightly in language and story line.

Musical Selections

1. “Itsy Bitsy Spider” / “La Araña Pequeñita”
2. “La Araña Chiquitita” from Spain



Prekindergarten students demonstrate bilateral hand and finger coordination through finger games.

MUSICAL PLAY THROUGH FINGER GAMES

English Language Arts

Activity 2

1. Sing a folk song in English and encourage the children to participate in the finger play (see Musical Selections below).
2. Sing the same folk song in Spanish, starting with a very small (pequeñita) spider. Emphasize how small each person's spider is represented through their fingers.
3. Sing the same folk song in Spanish, but change pequeñita (small) to grandotota (enormous). Emphasize how big each person's spider is represented through their fingers.
4. Introduce a different version of the same folk song from Spain (see Musical Selections below). Ask the children to describe the narrative of the song.
"How is this story different? How is it the same?"
5. Repeat at least three times, changing speed (tempos) and volume (dynamics).
6. Ask the children to give suggestions for fast, slow, loud, and soft.
"How will the spider crawl? Slowly? Quickly? Quietly?"

Assessment

1. Fine motor skills and small-muscle coordination in hands and fingers.
Are they able to move hands independently, together, and in opposite directions?
2. Verbal identification and language development.
Can they detail the elements of a story?
Can they identify fast, slow, loud, and soft as musical elements?
3. Full-body beat keeping and body-part identification.
Can they tap the appropriate body parts throughout the song?
Are they anticipating musical rests and changes?



ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Musical Selections

TOOL KIT III

Musical Selections, Suggested Videos or Citations, Lyrics (when available)

“Ten Wiggly Fingers” from the United States

Lyrics:

*Ten wiggly fingers wiggle from side to side.
Ten wiggly fingers going for a ride.
Ten wiggly fingers wiggle up and down.
Ten wiggly fingers riding down to town.*

*Ten wiggly fingers wiggle round and round.
Ten wiggly fingers don't make a single sound.
Ten wiggly fingers playing hide and seek.
Now they're gone. Don't peek.*

“Tony Chestnut” from the United States

Musical notation for the song "Tony Chestnut" in 2/4 time. The melody is written on a single staff with a treble clef and a key signature of one flat (Bb). The lyrics are: "To - ny Chest-nut knows I love you, To - ny Chest-nut knows I love you, To - ny Chest - nut knows I love you, That's what To - ny knows."

“Itsy Bitsy Spider” / “La Araña Pequeñita” from the United States

Musical notation for the song "Itsy Bitsy Spider" / "La Araña Pequeñita" in 6/8 time. The melody is written on a single staff with a treble clef and a key signature of one flat (Bb). The lyrics are: "La ar - añ - a pequ - eñ - i - ta sub - ió, sub - ió, sub - ió, The it - sy bit - sy spi - der went up the wa - ter spout, Vi - no came la llu - via y se la lle - vó. Down came the rain and washed the spi - der out. Sal - ió el sol y to - do lo se - có Y la ar - Out came the sun and dried up all the rain. And the añ - a pequ - eñ - i - ta sub - ió, sub - ió, sub - ió. it - sy bit - sy spi - der went up the spout a - gain!"

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Musical Selections

Lyrics (in English):

*The itsy bitsy spider went up the water spout,
Down came the rain and washed the spider out,
Out came the sun and dried up all the rain,
And the itsy bitsy spider went up the spout again!*

Lyrics (in Spanish):

*La araña pequeñita subió, subió, subió
Vino la lluvia y se la llevó.
Salió el sol y todo lo secó
Y la araña pequeñita subió, subió, subió.*

“La Araña Chiquitita” from Spain



La ar - aña chiqu - i - tit - a tre - pó por la par - ed, (La
ar - aña chiqu - i - tit - a tre - pó por la par - ed.)
Vi - no la llu - via y al sue - lo la ti - ró ¡pum!
(Vi - no la llu - via y al sue - lo la ti - ró ¡pum!) El
sol sal - ió, la llu - via se se - có La
ar - aña chiqu - i - tit - a de nue - vo tre - pó.

Lyrics (in Spanish):

*La araña chiquitita trepó por la pared, (La araña chiquitita trepó por la pared)
Vino la lluvia y al suelo la tiró ¡pum! (Vino la lluvia y al suelo la tiró ¡pum!)
El sol salió, la lluvia se secó
La araña chiquitita de nuevo trepó*

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Musical Selections



TheLearningStation. "Tony Chestnut (Toe Knee Chestnut) Children's Song by The Learning Station". YouTube video, 4:36. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gtD68-MC5ZI>.



Hoffman, Luke. "La Arana Pequeñita (The Itsy Bitsy Spider)." YouTube video, 2:12. Posted [September 2015]. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EYkj69X7O6o>.



Canal de Miryta85. "La Araña Chiquitita." YouTube video, 0:43. Posted [March 2009]. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ldT5LgYDh8E>.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Essential Readings: Musical Play

- Campbell, Patricia Shehan. 2010. *Songs in Their Heads: Music and Its Meaning in Children's Lives*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press.
- Campbell, Patricia Shehan, and Carol Scott-Kassner. 1995. *Music in Childhood: From Preschool through the Elementary Grades*. New York, NY: Schirmer Books.
- Heyge, Lorna, and Audrey Sillick. (1994) 2007. *Music and Movement: The Cycle of Seasons: A Musical Celebration of the Year for Young Children*. Greensboro, NC: Musikgarten / Music Masters.
- . (1996) 2003. *Musikgarten Music and Movement Series Family Music, Vol. 1: Sing with Me*. Greensboro, NC: Musikgarten / Music Masters.
- Kirk, Jo. 2012. *Lullabies to Circle Games: An Early Childhood Music and Movement Curriculum*, 2nd ed. Gove City, OH: WeJoySing.
- National Coalition for Core Arts Standards. 2012. "Child Development and Arts Education: A Review of Current Research and Best Practices." New York, NY: The College Board.
<https://www.nationalartsstandards.org/sites/default/files/College%20Board%20Research%20-%20Child%20Development%20Report.pdf>.