



3. Vocal-ease: Developing Prosody

Hello, it's Amy McConkey Robbins and in this Lesson 3, Chris and I will be focusing on developing prosody in young children with hearing loss. What is prosody and why is it important? One definition says prosody is "The intonational and rhythmic nature of language." It's what tells us when someone is angry, tired, asking a question or making a statement. Prosody keeps us from sounding like robots. Intonation, pitch, and rhythm, as I mentioned in a previous session, are elements of both speech and music. These elements are required for speech to take on a natural quality and for music to be music and not speech.

I tell my little students that we have two voices, a speaking voice and a singing voice. Both are equally important. Our singing voice can go much higher and lower than our speaking voice. For children with hearing loss, that intonation is harder to capture than the rhythmic aspects of speech. So, we practice in exaggerated ways how to access the singing voice. Here's how we do it:

- **To emphasize Up and Down/High and Low Pitch:**

Using a slide whistle or puppet, a parachute or stretchy band, we move our bodies and voices uuuuuuuuup and dooooooowown.

We sing songs and tell stories in different vocal pitches, like a very high pitch for a kitty or a low voice for a bear.

We draw lines that go up and down and we trace them with our fingers as we sing and change pitch.

- **To work on Duration:**

We use clackers with faces painted on them and manipulate their mouths while we sing vowels

We draw short and long lines and trace them with our fingers while we sing vowels and consonants

- **To emphasize Humming vs. Singing:**

Once students are used to accessing their singing voice, we practice humming by using a visual aid like a wooden spoon with a face with an open mouth and one with a closed mouth.

We use our people clackers with their mouths closed to hum and open to sing.

Until next time, remember:

Do Music. REAL Music. Every day!