



6. Tuneful Toolbox: Using Music as a Tool

Hi, Amy McConkey Robbins here. Using music experiences to help shape behavior is at the heart of the LSL approach. With young children, music can provide the motivation necessary to set up a successful experience. I want to highlight six ways Chris and I use music for this purpose.

First, we use music **for gaining or expanding a child's attention.**

One example of this is Name Songs. Children LOVE to hear their names used in songs and will sustain attention as they wait for THEIR name to be sung. Here's one Chris wrote: "I know a girl and her name is Mollie, M-O-L-L-I-E." Children become so rapt in their attention, listening for the letters of their name.

Second, we use music **for reinforcing routines.** You probably have found that children do best when they have a predictable "Hello" song and a "Goodbye" song they know will always be sung each day. The classic, "Clean up, clean up" song has ubiquitous presence because it really works to prompt children.

Third, we use music **for teaching early phrases.** I'm not a professional children's composer like Chris is, but I wrote a simple ditty that I use with all my young children, and their families use it at home: "Open the door, open the door, open the door, door, door, Door, DOOR."

Fourth, we use music to help **sequence directions.** Chris taught me a little rhythmic instruction that she uses with music groups. I use a variation of it in my LSL sessions to help the players of a board game remember how pieces of the game are distributed:

"You take three cards and you pass the rest (clap, clap)"

A lot of my therapy activities have a corresponding song that reviews the instructions: "Tell and Show, tell and show, we can't see, we can't see. We will talk about it, we will talk about it, then we'll see, then we'll see." You'll recognize that as a piggyback song. I've added my own words to the tune of "Frere Jacques."

Fifth, we use music **for shaping behavior and increasing a child's own self-regulation.**

Sixth, we use music **to enhance cognitive-linguistic development.** For example, to address critical elements, we have children in a small group with a set of instruments. They're given

instructions that require attention to critical elements: “Sally: Play the triangle 3 times by the snack table.” Or “Billy, “I want to hear eight beats on the bongo drums when they are on the purple carpet square.”

And finally, music aids in helping children remember the rote, academic factoids that are part of school: “Two and two are four; Four and four are eight.” Or, parts of speech...or state capitals. Kids will remember these facts when music has solidified the skills. We hope the film clips will highlight many of these ideas.

Meanwhile:

Do Music. REAL Music. Every Day!