



MUSIC MATTERS

A Newsletter for Families in the Music Masters Program

Fall 2004

“Masterful action is the crucible in which preschool optimism is forged. Feelings of self-esteem in particular, and happiness in general, develop as side effects of mastering challenges...”

Martin E.P. Seligman, Ph.D., The Optimistic Child

IN MY OPINION...

Letter from MITB President, Meredith Haynes

Where would we be without music? A melody can stir long-forgotten memories like nothing else. A tune moves us to instant melancholy. Songs stir our hearts toward love, patriotism and reverence. Through thoughtful and purposeful parenting, let's be sure we're giving our children the gift of music.

Music-in-the-Box is here to help. If your child takes our classes for two years, he or she will learn nearly every song and poem listed in the well-respected book, What Your Kindergartner Needs to Know, by E.D. Hirsch, Jr. & John Holdren.

On another note, the American Film Institute in July of 2004 named the top 100 songs of the last 100 years. We are delighted to incorporate the number one song, *Over the Rainbow*, in our Baby Music Masters curriculum. If you have a chance to look at their web site, www.afi.com, please take a moment to look over the top 100 songs. Veterans of our program will recognize many songs we have used in class.

CURRICULUM

Fall Session 1's theme was Transportation - a curriculum with a boatload of good old-fashioned music guaranteed to become cherished memories for your child.

It is important to us that your child not only enjoy the class, but also enjoy the music and books at home. Below please find a list of music and books unique to this session so you can find them in the library or favorite bookstore.

BOOKS:

Victor Vito - Laurie Berkner sing-along book - a huge seller in our parent/tot classrooms and a favorite of the children's. Educational benefit - tempo change within the song.

I Went Walking - Williams/Avis - a sing-along book to the tune of *twinkle twinkle little star*. Educational benefit - each page previews the animal to come, anticipation with a familiar melody.

That's Not My Train - Usbourne - a tactile book with a simple poem. Children delight as all the senses are connected during story time.

CD's:

Buzz Buzz - Laurie Berkner - featuring Erie Canal, a favorite march where children duck under a scarf during the "low bridge" refrain.

Under A Shady Tree - Laurie Berkner - featuring Drive My Car, a favorite movement song with memory stanzas. Each section builds on the next and invokes recall and concentration.

(It may look like we gravitate to Laurie Berkner, and though we do enjoy her tremendously, she must also be recognized for the thought she puts into her music. Important elements such as tempo change, recall, music dynamics and use of folk lore are evident on many of her CD's.)

Each session's curriculum is jam-packed with opportunities for your child to master music "all by himself!"

Editor's Note: Singing with your child is a way to bond at home and in the classroom. Parents are the true inspiration for making music memories. Come to class if you can and be ready to sing and dance and watch your child flourish!

FIVE WAYS TO DO MUSIC AT HOME

1. Choose a *book* from class to enjoy at home. (Purchase it or find it at the library.) Experiment with ways to make book-time enjoyable for your child. Just talk about the pictures—don't stay on one page too long. Don't worry about finishing the book.

Try reading at mealtime or bath time.

2. Choose a *song* from class to enjoy at home. (Again, purchase the CD or find it at the library.) During a moment in the day when your child needs distracting, burst into song! Laurie Berkner's I'm Gonna Drive My Car is a guaranteed kid-favorite - sure to distract the fussiest child.
3. Choose a *tactile* object from class to try at home. Try peek-a-boos (even with a kitchen towel) while you're fixing dinner. Or play hide-and-seek with a wound-up music box in the kitchen. Remember—your child's brain learns best when you combine sensorial experiences.
4. Find a way to incorporate *rhythm* in your day. Point out the gentle beat of the car's turn signal, the steady drip, drip of a faucet or the rhythmic march up the stairs.
5. *Sing* throughout the day--while pushing your child on the swing, while fixing breakfast or driving to the store. It's just not possible to feel sad or irritable when singing children's songs—so go ahead and sing and make a special memory!

We all wish Ms. Christina a speedy recovery and know the children will be happy to see her return. Thank you for your kind thoughts and well wishes on her behalf.