

MUSIC MATTERS

A Newsletter for the families enrolled in the Music-in-the-Box's Music Masters Program
WINTER SESSION 1 - JANUARY 2005

"AS HE MASTERS EACH NEW SKILL HIS SELF-CONFIDENCE INCREASES..."

MARIA MONTESSORI

DON'T MISS the 2nd Annual Winter Children's Concert from Music-in-the-Box

**Starring Recording Artist:
JOEL FRANKEL**

**(featuring MITB favorite "I'd Be A Bee"
and other family fun songs)**

FEBRUARY 23, 2005

10:00am – 11:00am

Libertyville Civic Center – lower level
Corner of Church & Brainerd Streets
(across from Cook Mem. Library)

FREE ADMISSION!!

IN MY OPINION...

By Meredith Haynes

I trust you've all been enjoying this session—All About Me! Ginger and I created this theme with much tender loving care. We wanted to give you some meaningful activities for you to work with your children in the areas of emotions, self-awareness and body parts.

I'd like to reach out to you about an important way children learn that we incorporate in our Music Masters/Maestros program. We all agree that children learn better through multi-sensory learning. Let's take it a step further and consider the added benefits of *simultaneous* multi-sensory learning.

Multi-Sensory or Multi-System?

Multi-sensory is best understood as the function of the body to receive stimuli through the five faculties—sight, touch, taste, smell and hearing. Webster includes emotions in the definition of sense. But I want to include the sensation of movement in our discussion as it is crucial to children's ability to learn. So a better word is multi-system.

Music-in-the-Box is committed to providing your child not only a multi-system experience but a simultaneous multi-system experience.

- Sight
- Touch
- Hearing
- Emotions
- Movement

Why is Simultaneous Multi-System Learning Best?

We can learn from the experts:

"The point of all this activity is to help your baby engage his senses, motor skills and emotions in a single activity. If he is looking, listening, experiencing touch, and moving his muscles in an emotionally relevant way, he will truly be learning." Stanley Greenspan, M.D., Building Healthy Minds, pg. 36.

"Next, try to mobilize all of her senses to work together. Remember that our brains can absorb information from many sources at the same time and your baby can simultaneously look, listen, move and feel. In fact, it is the ability to exercise all of these systems at the same time that really strengthens and organizes your child's nervous system. If you continue to encourage this ability as your baby develops, you will be helping her improve her capacity for intellectual, social and emotional functioning enormously. Stanley Greenspan, M.D., Building Healthy Minds, pg. 64.

"You can try to stimulate your child's learning by using the type of learning that works best for your child [visual or auditory or kinesthetic]. In addition, you can try to strengthen the memory in other parts of your child's brain by reinforcing the lesson using all the learning styles...In this way, the experience and memory will be recorded in the maximum number of ways possible." Winifred Conkling, Smart-Wiring Your Baby's Brain, pg. 18.

The bottom line is, simultaneous multi-system learning benefits your child in the following ways:

- Children will truly be learning
- It organizes your child's nervous system. In other words, It calms children
- Makes her smarter intellectually, socially and emotionally
- Strengthens the memory

Music Masters and Simultaneous Multi-System Learning

Throughout your child's weekly Music Masters class you will observe the carefully-prepared opportunities for simultaneous multi-system learning.

Music Plus:	Sight	Touch	Hearing	Emotions	Movement
Books	X	X	X	X	X
Scarves	X	X	X	X	X
Puppets	X	X	X	X	X
Bubbles	X	X	X	X	X
Instruments	X	X	X	X	X
Marches	X	X	X	X	X
Dances	X	X	X	X	X
Lullabies	X	X	X	X	X

As you interact with your child during the next few weeks, try adding one more "sense" to the activity. I'd love to hear how it went.

Meredith.haynes@musicinthebox.com

FIVE WAYS TO DO MUSIC AT HOME

We hope you take the activities from class and do them at home! Here are five ways to experience our All About Me! session throughout the week:

1. Bring out your rhythm instruments and sing "I can shake a (egg shaker or bells) like this, like this..." and see if your child responds by choosing the right instrument. Remember all the senses—how does it feel? Do you hear with your nose?! What is it's shape and color?
2. Use a mirror to play with emotions and body parts. "Show me a happy face! Show me a sad face!"
3. Wait an extra moment and see if your child will do the work themselves—When doing "Rain, Rain Go Away," hesitate and see if he will pull the scarf off himself.
4. One family I know uses the "See the Little Bunnies" song to go up the stairs to bed—what fun! The sleeping songs are an excellent avenue of mastery—just think of it...your child is able to control his body by laying down and jumping up on an exact beat. Incredible!
5. Don't forget to march! Put on our Clap, Clap, Clap or any other rousing song and march around the house. Make it a parade with hats, instruments, and friends. Turn it into a chance for leadership by letting your child be the leader.

As time goes by increase the challenges of these activities. Help your child learn to persist in the face of challenges. Help him learn to overcome obstacles. Don't forget to use a lot of facial expressions, gestures, humor and praise. And give yourself a pat on the back for doing a great job!

LOCAL EVENTS OF INTEREST

PRE-SCHOOLS ARE NOW TAKING ENROLLMENT FOR FALL. CHECK OUT OUR ARTICLE ON CHOOSING A PRE-SCHOOL THAT BEST FITS YOUR EXPECTATIONS OR YOUR CHILD.

WHAT'S NEW FOR MUSIC-IN-THE-BOX

Music-in-the-Box would like to announce our newest motivator, Cara Doherty, who will facilitate the new Music & Memories program at the Lake Zurich and Libertyville Park Districts (Kreative Kids). Cara lives in Libertyville with her husband and 3 children and was an elementary school teacher prior to becoming a mom.

Music-in-the-Box announces its newest course offering: **Music Masters 4: Piano Basics**. If you have ever wanted to get your child into Suzuki piano, this fun group setting is a great way to start. The perfect combination with Music Masters 3, or as a new challenge for the MM3 graduate! Call Ginger or Meredith for details!

Hawthorn Hills Community Church is extending the Music-in-the-Box program to its Winter/Spring moms bible study group.

We are excited to begin offering our newsletter online for anyone interested in an article past or present.

*Look for our newsletter at:
www.musicinthebox.com*

The Pre-School Dilemma – How Do You Choose?

By Ginger Acopiado

(This is an edited version of the Winter 1 Session article for 2004. We felt it was important to run again for moms new to our program who will begin their search in the next couple months!)

What an adventure finding a pre-school was for our family! I really didn't know there would be so much stress over what initially seemed such a natural and easy choice. In retrospect, I thought I would just pick the school my son's friends were going to attend or the schools attended by older siblings of those friends. In reality, something very different happened. I began to care if my son would learn more than social skills (though important) before he had to embark on the next 16 years of formal education.

At home, we used letter sounds and counted our crackers and all of the things the books stressed, but was that really going to be enough? I began to watch my toddler turn into a talkative, creative, and dramatic little boy with a sparkle in his eye and mischief in his genes. Which school would understand that child best? If I sent him to school with all of the friends in his playgroup, would he learn how to make new friends? Would he be so comfortable with his buddies that his behavior would not be conducive to learning?

So I opened the phone book, made a list and started to grill anyone who would talk to me about pre-schools in the area. In the beginning, I was lost. Weren't all pre-schools the same? Why were some so much more expensive than others? Someone suggested I visit some of the schools in the area to see what was offered. I am so glad I did.

Upon visiting the many centers in the area, I found vast differences in philosophy. It seems that in some schools parents are welcome visitors or aides, and others discourage parent involvement in the classroom. Some have you bring in your child. Some have you drop them off to a teacher in the drop off zone.

Some schools foster social development while exposing academics in group settings, while others foster individual development while exposing socialization in group activities. And still others focus on academia, with social skills as a background side benefit, just for being part of a group. And the list goes on...

I decided I needed a checklist of my son's strengths and weaknesses, as well as a "desires" list of my own. When I finished, I found the school I chose not only needed to meet both my son's thirst for academic stimulation (his questions were getting overwhelming!) and my need for his increased social development, but that it had to meet my wish for creative outlets. I wanted him to be able to engage in religious holiday celebrations and wanted a school that encouraged social responsibility. I also wanted individual academia instead of group instruction. And last, I want a teaching approach to discipline, rather than a punitive one. Pretty tall order, but I was determined.

After months of classroom visits, with and without my son, I finally found the school that was right for us. And though I did have to give on one or two of the items on my wish list, I found it to be the one that I could live with most or do more with at home. We were done. We had a school. And it was good.

THINGS TO LOOK FOR IN THE CLASSROOM:

CIRCLE TIME: Is it used for instruction or for group fun? Why is that important to you? Does your child get any current exposure to circle time in other activities? Does your child work well in group settings or require more individual instruction.

WORK TABLES: Are children placed at tables at the same time for instruction or free to explore other areas of the room when others are at the table? Is there enough space for everyone if it were required?

ARTS & CRAFT: Do the children spend a large part of their school time on activities that produce great visuals for parents, but little benefit to development?

SPECIAL ACTIVITIES: Are enrichments like gymnastics and music available to the children? Are they allowed to go outside, weather permitting, for a small portion of classtime? Is this important to you based on your own lifestyle?

CREATIVE EXPRESSION: Are the children controlled by the environment, or does it welcome creative input or activity? Can your child take off their shoes and wear slippers?

DISCIPLINES SPACES: How are children asked to resolve the issue surrounding the need for discipline? Socially? Consequentially? How is a disruptive child turned into a cooperative one?

LIFE SKILLS: Are the children active participants in maintaining the classroom, the items within the room and the world around the room? Are there live animals? Are there responsibilities each child is required to tend during a part of every day?

CLASSROOM TOOLS: Are the “tools” in the classroom build on learning or development or are they play items? Social play and relationship learning tools include: doll houses, blocks, and other common toys found in the home. Education works require use of the body or mind in a way that creates curiosity, then has the child trying something that will eventually be a precursor to other skills in the future. (Tong use aids in the muscle development required for writing. Eye droppers also do this. Tactile sandpaper alphabet letters allow students who are kinesthetic learners to connect with a sound earlier than verbal instruction.)

QUIET SPACE: Is there a space where the child is allowed to go to separate themselves from group activities when they are overwhelmed or need space? Is it surrounded with comforting items such as pillows and books? Does your child need this or do you want this for your child?

RELIGION: Is it an integral part of the curriculum? Do children learn about and acknowledge all religious holidays or just religions specific to one denomination? Are they affiliated with a religious organization? And if so, is it the same as yours or similarly modeled?

AGE / TOILET TRAINING: Is there a minimum age requirement or a minimum toilet-learned requirement?

TIMES/LOCATION: Is the school in a location convenient to you for the times you need to be available to other children in your family or your work schedule? Are you allowed to pick your days or are they decided by age/ability?

CLASSROOM OBSERVATION: While observing the classroom with your child, did he/she immediately want to explore the room? Did you like what you saw? Did your child? Did you get a warm fuzzy feeling or a sense of “rightness” that fit your expectations? Did something just seem “not quite right” to you?

No one can tell you which school will be right for you, but many will try. Nod politely, take your time, make your checklist, visit the schools that are within your budget (any maybe one just a little outside it to see why) and trust yourself. You are the only one that can decide what best suits the needs of your family and your child.

Let us know if you found this article helpful or if you have a preschool search tip or success story you would like to share. Email us at info@musicinthebox.com. Please be advised that emails received may be used for publication in future newsletters.

A NEW SECTION JUST FOR MOMS!

Music Matters is pleased to introduce articles just for moms. The first article in our new series was written by a strong, talented woman from Gurnee, Laura Bryant. Her new book titled “*Trust Yourself to Transform Your Body: A Woman’s Guide to Health and Weight Loss Without Diets*” asks us to deal with the issue of weight from a very different perspective. An easy read, it challenges you from the beginning to take charge of your body and make a plan! And don’t forget to check her website frequently for tips and free local seminars for women at www.trustyourselftotransform.com.

Music, Your Children, and Their Life-Long Health

By Laura K. Bryant

We each have only twenty-four hours in a day. One of the best ways to have enough time to spend on the things you value most is to use what I call “creative combining,” or the ability to combine several activities into one.

The importance music plays in a child’s cognitive development is already well documented. Why not use music to enhance your child’s physical development and create a habit of life-long physical activity while also fitting in your workout?

Get creative and think of all the ways you can combine your children, music, and physical activity. Play games to the beat of the music, dance with your children, jump, clap your hands, stomp your feet. Not only are you able to spend time with your children, you’ll stay fit and have more energy; your children see you as a healthy role model; and grow up seeing physical activity as a part of their daily lives, as something they enjoy and want to participate in for the rest of *their* lives.

I challenge you to get started now. Turn on the music, get moving with your children, and have fun!

Laura K. Bryant has a master’s degree in clinical psychology and is a certified fitness trainer. She is the author of, *Trust Yourself to Transform Your Body: A Woman’s Guide to Health and Weight Loss Without Diets*, available at www.TrustYourselftoTransform.com

BUY IT FROM A MOM

A way to encourage and applaud all stay-at-home moms in our Lake County Area!

Do you have a small business? I'd like to include your product or service in my newsletter. There is no fee. Let us know what you do so we can "BUY IT FROM A MOM"! (Call Meredith at 847-573-1901 to include your business or send us an email at info@musicinthebox.com)

<p style="text-align: center;">Music-in-the-Box <i>Presents</i> <i>Music Masters For Birthdays & Music & Memories For Birthdays!</i> <i>At the Libertyville Sports And Rec Center.</i> Saturday and Sunday afternoons.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Call to reserve your time! 847-362-5865</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><i>Michelle Rothmeyer</i> DRAGONFLY PUBLISHING 866-853-1685 mrrmsad@dragonflypress.net</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>book publication - newsletters - layout graphics – proofreading – design writing – editing - re-touching photographs</i></p>
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<p style="text-align: center;">SALLY A. NORTHRUP, MA, NCC, LCPC Licensed Clinical Professional Counselor & COLBY, CGC Licensed Pet Psychotherapy Dog</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Working together to facilitate spiritual and emotional healing in children, adolescents, families and women.</i></p> <p>11316 Wadsworth Road, Suite 102 * Beach Park, IL 60099 Phone: 847-731-7355 – by appointment only</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">HOUSECLEANING BY CAROLINE Excellent house cleaning at reasonable prices!</p> <p style="text-align: center;">847-599-9138</p> <p><i>I've enjoyed Caroline's help in my home for almost a year. I appreciate her ability to communicate in English. I'm glad to support a single mom. Call me for references! –Meredith Haynes at 847-573-1901</i></p>
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