

## Just for Toddlers

Many parents of toddlers enroll in music classes with their children. It is a fun way to spend time together, and since children are innately musical, it's an activity that they are naturally drawn to. But are you aware of all the benefits music has to afford your child? Following is an excerpt from an article recently presented in *Early Childhood Connections*, a journal for early-childhood educators.

- Music is a language, and children are oriented toward learning language.
- Music evokes movement, and children delight in and require movement for their development and growth.
- Music engages the brain while stimulating neural pathways associated with such higher forms of intelligence as abstract thinking, empathy, and mathematics.
- Music's melodic and rhythmic patterns provide exercise for the brain and help develop memory. Who among us learned the ABC's without the ABC song?
- Music is an aural art and young children are aural learners. Since ears are fully mature before birth, infants begin learning from the sounds of their environment before birth.
- Music is perfectly designed for training children's listening skills. Good listening skills and school achievement go hand in hand.
- Developmentally appropriate music activities involve the whole child—the child's desire for language, the body's urge to move, the brain's attention to patterns, the ear's lead in initiating communication, the voice's response to sounds, as well as the eye-hand coordination associated with playing musical instruments.
- Music is a creative experience which involves expression of feelings. Children often do not have the words to express themselves and need positive ways to release their emotions.
- Music transmits culture and is an avenue by which beloved songs, rhymes, and dances can be passed down from one generation to another.
- Music is a social activity which involves family and community participation. Children love to sing and dance at home, school, and at church.

Best of all, unlike cribs, strollers, and clothes, children never outgrow music, and all its benefits. Music has something special for each child—no matter his or her age. As you think about your toddler's activities keep this in mind, and plan to make room in your schedule for music.