

EARLY YEARS MUSIC RESOURCE

Ruth Spencer

Musical interaction with household items



You don't have to buy expensive instruments in order to be able to interact with your child and use music at home. Here are a few ideas of items you could use and songs you could sing with them. The important thing is to have fun and go with the flow. Special thanks go to Wendy Prevezer in Nottingham – a work colleague from over 20 years ago. A lot of ideas came from her, and she encouraged me in this way of working.

PIECES OF MATERIAL

- Scarves
- Chiffon
- Lycra

You could put on a piece of music and have a scarf each and see if you can mirror each other, or take turns to copy each others' moves.

Peek-a-boo is a favourite with any material. Here is a simple peek-a-boo song. Your child can hide their face under a scarf (or any piece of material). Make sure you time your singing to fit with what is happening - so wait for them to pull the scarf off before singing "boo", or leave a gap and see if they fill in a sound or the word "boo". If they don't like having it over their face, you could hide yourself instead or both hide together.

Peek-a-boo! peek-a-boo!

Who's that hiding there?

Peek-a-boo! peek-a-boo!

It's [your child's name] hiding there.

<https://soundcloud.com/user-259229046/peek-a-boo>



The next song is good for encouraging eye contact, and you can sing about the different colours if you have more than one scarf. Again, your child can hide their face under the chiffon scarf. The tune is to a song called Little boxes

<https://soundcloud.com/user-259229046/i-can-see-you>

I can see you through the [colour] scarf

I can see you through the [colour] scarf

I can see you through the [colour] scarf

I can see you [child's name]

You can then change the words to sing about whatever they are doing.

Eg Can you throw your scarf in the air...

Can you catch your scarf again...

Can you blow your scarf...

With a big sheet of chiffon (or a net curtain) you can sing about the sheet going up and down - again make sure your words are timed to when the sheet is going up and down. With children who can't talk they can push the sheet up and down, or make a sound to let you know they want the sheet to move. This one is also quite nice in a group, with children sitting, lying, standing under it and the adults round the edge.

<https://soundcloud.com/user-259229046/up-and-down>

Up and down, up and down,

Up and down, up and down,

Up and down, up and down,

Here we go again.

(Last time sing Now we're going to stop)

Another good group activity involves using a sheet of Lycra. You can bounce a cuddly toy on it and then at the end make the toy bounce to a child and they get to throw it back on.

<https://soundcloud.com/user-259229046/bouncy-bouncy-bounce>

Bouncy bouncy bounce

Bouncy bouncy bounce

Bouncy bounce, bouncy bounce

Bouncy bouncy bounce

You can hide cuddly toys under and sing the peek-a-boo song, or the children can hide underneath.

They can all sit on the lycra and the adults pull the sides up and sing a boat song eg Row the boat



PRINGLES CONTAINERS AND PING PONG BALLS

This is a great activity for encouraging exploration and you can sing about whatever your child does. It can also be a group activity for encouraging children to follow the adult leader, who models what to do while singing. Start off with the ball in the container and the lid on.

<https://soundcloud.com/user-259229046/shake-shake-shake>

The tune is from In and out the dusty bluebells/ Pitter pitter patter

Adapt the words to whatever the child/adult leader is doing

Shake shake shake, shake your tube

Shake shake shake, shake your tube

Shake shake shake, shake your tube

Shake shake shake your tube

Take the lid off and put it on again

Take the lid off and put it on again

Take the lid off and put it on again

Off and on the tube

Can you find a ball inside the tube....

Roll roll roll, roll the ball/tube....



DRUMS

You can make a drum out of a lot of household items. If you want lots of drums for a group of toddlers, plastic chocolate/sweets tubs - eg Roses, Celebrations, Haribos ones - are great.

If you want beaters wooden dolly pegs are quite good.

You can adapt the song Big bass drum:

We can play on our plastic drums and this is the way we do it

Bang bang bang on your plastic drum and that's the way we do it.

You can say a rhyme/sing, changing the speed of what you say to match the speed of the drumming:

<https://soundcloud.com/user-259229046/slowly-slowly-1>

Slowly, slowly, ever so slowly

A little bit faster faster faster faster faster faster

and.....STOP!

For older children you can tap their names - one tap for each syllable.

Eg Ruth would be one tap, Emma would be two, Fernando would be three. To introduce the activity sing this song to the tune of Hot Cross Buns:

<https://soundcloud.com/user-259229046/tap-your-name>

Tap your name

Tap your name

Tap your name on the drum

Tap your name

You can also use your drums with the Magic gloves described below.



MAGIC GLOVES for conducting

Children love this because they get to be in control - sometimes it is surprising in a group to find that some shy children love doing this, and some who seem confident don't want all eyes focused on them. As with a lot of musical activities, this does not exclude those who can't talk. Adults can give as little or as much help as is needed.

The rules are simple. The person wearing the gloves is in charge. When they raise their hands up high play loudly; down low quietly; and one hand held up means STOP. You can use this when a variety of instruments is being played, or when everyone is playing the same thing, or for body sounds or vocalising. Some young conductors will become very creative and do all sorts of movements to control the playing.

HATS AND SCARVES

Children enjoy anticipation from a young age. This is why peek-a-boo type activities are so popular.

The following song involves anticipation as the children wait for the end of a sneeze and make their hat fly off:



<https://soundcloud.com/user-259229046/youve-got-to-wear-a-hat-like-this>

You've got to wear a hat like this

You've got to wear a hat like this

You've got to wear a hat like this

If you don't want to catch a cold

Aa.....aa.....aaaa.....choo!

As you sing "choo" sneeze your hat off.

Then each child can put on a scarf as well, and dress up as a scarecrow for the Dingle dangle scarecrow song, or if it's a weather themed music time the dingle dangle snowman. And then they can sing I'm a little snowman as well: <https://soundcloud.com/user-259229046/im-a-little-snowman>

I'm a little snowman short and fat

Here's my scarf and here's my hat

When the snow is falling I stand like that

(stand with arms stretched out to the side)

But when the sun shines I fall down.....flat!

(Fall to the floor as the snowman melts)



WATER SONGS

- Water sprayers
- Feather dusters
- Pom poms
- Umbrellas
- Lycra

Multi-sensory experiences are great for children of all abilities, and water sprayers seem to be very popular with children!

A simple coming to get you song where the children either all get squirted or all have a turn doing the squirting works well. I often give a choice of water or tickle duster for those who don't want to get wet. It's also a good way of encouraging choice making. Again those who can't talk are not excluded as they can point or use eye contact to show a preference.

<https://soundcloud.com/user-259229046/im-coming-to-get-you>

I'm coming to get you get you get you

I'm coming to get you for a..... squirt/tickle

If singing with just one child you can then sing about where to squirt/tickle eg

Tickle, tickle [child's name]'s [body part eg hand]

Tickle, tickle [child's name]'s [body part eg foot]

Tickle, tickle [child's name]'s [body part eg hair]

With a tickle, tickle, tickle.

Add an umbrella and take turns to do the squirting or hide under the umbrella. NB You can get umbrellas without catches which are safer for toddlers. <https://soundcloud.com/user-259229046/please-put-up-your-umbrella>

Please put up your umbrella

Please put up your umbrella

Please put up your umbrella

To shield me from the rain

The rain has nearly stopped

The rain has nearly stopped

The rain has..... stopped

So you can pull it down again.

You can sing the umbrella song with a parachute or Lycra as well, and let all the children hide underneath.

Another parachute/Lycra song with water is an adaptation of A sailor went to sea sea sea. Children are under the parachute with adults round the edge holding it, and water is squirted at every mention of the sea/spray.

WATER SONGS

<https://soundcloud.com/user-259229046/we-all-went-to-sea-one-day>

We all went to sea one day
To see if we could feel the spray
But all that we could feel and see
Was the bottom of the deep blue sea sea sea

A storm blew up at sea that day
And we all still could feel the spray
We liked what we could feel and see
At the bottom of the deep blue sea sea sea

Children also enjoy a car wash song using water sprayers and pom poms. It's another good one in a group - get them all sitting together. Use water squirters for verse one and pom poms for verse two. It is sung to the tune of Walking through the jungle:

<https://soundcloud.com/user-259229046/driving-through-the-car-wash>

Driving through the car wash, driving through the car wash
What can you see, what can you see
Can you feel the water, can you feel the water
Wash the car clean, wash the car clean

Driving through the car wash, driving through the car wash
What's coming by, what's coming by
Can you feel the brushes, can you feel the brushes
Brush the car dry, brush the car dry



MIRROR

Very young children of all abilities like mirrors. The shiny surface is good for those who have visual impairments, and can often draw in children who may need a more sensory experience. Try to get eye contact with your child in the mirror as you sing.

<https://soundcloud.com/user-259229046/pass-the-mirror>

Pass the mirror and wait for a turn

Look I can see you

[Child's name] [Child's name]

I can see you

[Child's name] [Child's name]

I can see you

If you are singing this in a group it's another good song for turn-taking as each child gets a verse. It's always good to have songs that sing the children's names too.

The next song is good for expressing different emotions facially. It is sung to the tune The Camptown Races:

<https://soundcloud.com/user-259229046/can-you-make-a-face>

Can you make a [happy] face MP3

In the mirror

Can you make a [happy] face

In the mirror

Happy, sad and cross are the three simplest emotions to choose.

If doing this in a group you can have lots of mirrors being passed round so each child gets a turn quite quickly.

BALL

This is a good one for a group as it encourages turn-taking and saying children's names, but equally you can sing it at home with just one child. It doesn't have to be a ball - if your child loves vehicles use one of those, or it could be a rainmaker, or anything that rolls. The tune is similar to Hush little baby:

<https://soundcloud.com/user-259229046/roll-the-ball>

[Name] Roll the ball to [name]

Make sure you pause in your singing to give time for children to choose/name the person they are rolling to. Again those who can't talk can indicate their choice by rolling the ball or using eye contact. If the whole group are in wheel chairs, you can stretch a piece of Lycra between and roll the ball on that.



BUBBLES

Bubbles to music is another great multi-sensory experience which is accessible to all, regardless of age or ability. It can be a free for all, a one to one experience, or a turn-taking activity depending on how you want to use it. Here are 2 songs that you can sing.

<https://soundcloud.com/user-259229046/bubbles-bubbles>

Bubbles, bubbles, shining bubbles

All the bubbles that I can blow

Like the colours in the rainbow

When they pop! where do they go?



This last one is to the tune 1 banana, 2 banana from the banana splits:

<https://soundcloud.com/user-259229046/1-bubble-2-bubble>

1 bubble, 2 bubble, 3 bubble, 4

5 bubble, 6 bubble, 7 bubble more

1 bubble, 2 bubble, 3 bubble, 4

5 bubble, 6 bubble, 7 bubble more

Pop pop pop, pop pop pop pop

Pop pop pop pop pop pop pop pop

Pop pop pop, pop pop pop pop

Pop pop pop pop pop pop pop pop!

Try to time the singing of "pop" to the popping of the bubbles, or leave a space in your singing and let the child/children fill in the word "pop".