

# Music Helps Your Classroom World Go Round

by Stephen Fite

Music is the universal language that bonds us together as a people. Whether it's children in a classroom setting, or adults in a social setting, music is the one medium we all enjoy. Each of us are born with an instinctive sense of rhythm and melody. As children enter our unique learning environments, we can either decide to nurture or neglect those instincts. Research during the last two decades has proven that music is an integral key in the development and growth of children. Nowhere is the exposure to this medium more crucial than the classroom. In this article you will hopefully find new songs and activities that can be incorporated into your daily curriculum.

There is a wealth of music that awaits your use in teaching or reinforcing a myriad of skills. Some of it can be purchased and some of it you can create on your own. Self-created Piggyback songs are wonderful tools - not only because they are "F - R - E - E, that spells FREE, CreditReport.com baby", but also because most children already know the tunes - much like many of you who probably know that famous TV commercial jingle.

## Daily Weather Forecast

If you are already discussing the weather on a daily basis during your large group time, and don't use a song to lead up to the conversation, you can use this song or any other tune that will fit the needs of your room, and more importantly, the needs of your kids.

### What's The Weather Doing Now

*adapted by Stephen Fite*

*sung to My Darling Clementine*

What's the weather  
What's the weather  
What's the weather doing now  
Can you tell me  
Can you tell me  
What's the weather doing now

Is it sunny, is it cloudy  
Is it rainy, is it dry  
Is it windy, oh, please tell me  
What's the weather doing now

## Days of the Week

Reviewing the days of the week is a staple among Early Childhood classrooms. My Son Brandon came home from his school one day singing this version of a Days of the Week piggyback tune.

### There Are Seven Days

*sung to My Darling Clementine*

There are seven days  
There are seven days  
There are seven days in a week  
Sunday, Monday  
Tuesday, Wednesday  
Thursday, Friday, Saturday

Depending on the age and ability of your students, you can add a little action to any song about the days of the week. Tell the children to hold up a new finger to represent the days as you sing each one. Ex: Sunday (pointer finger), Monday (index finger), etc. Create a ring-bound book of the days to show the kids while they are singing the song. It will help the children make the auditory-visual connection. Have the kids clap once for each day or even once for each syllable of each day as they are sung.

### **Circle Time**

During your Circle Time activities, music can be the impetus and signal for your children to gather and sit. A simple, yet effective Circle Time transition song to call your kids to C.T. might go something like this.

**Circle Time Is Here**  
*adapted by Stephen Fite*  
*sung to The Farmer In The Dell*

Our Circle Time is here  
Our Circle Time is here  
Gather round and sit right down  
Our Circle Time is here

### **Welcoming Friends – New and Old**

You can use the following piggyback tune during your Circle Time to welcome and even introduce each of the children.

**There Is A Friend That We All Know**  
*adapted by Stephen Fite*  
*sung to Bingo*

*Teacher* - There is a friend that we all know  
And Cameron is his name-o  
*Teacher* - Cameron  
*Kids* - Is our friend  
*Teacher* - Cameron  
*Kids* - Is our friend  
*Teacher* - Cameron  
*Kids* - Is our friend  
*Everyone* - And Cameron is his name-o

You can substitute any phrase for the Kids line. Some examples would be: “**Is in school**” or “**Is not in school**” for days someone is absent. “**Is so fun.**” “**Likes to play.**” “**Makes me smile.**” “**Is so cool.**” You can also substitute “**He’s**” or “**She’s**” for “**Is**” to work on gender. Depending on the age of your kids, you may have to do more or even all of the singing yourself.

### **Transitions**

One of the reasons teacher’s who constantly sing their way through the day (with or without musical accompaniment) are experiencing success in their classroom is that children (and even adults) are drawn to the sing-song quality of a voice that is rising and falling melodically. Our ears are constantly listening to the surrounding environment for sounds that are out of the ordinary. Singing the children to Circle Time or any activity catches the attention of even the most non-attentive ears and those bodies to which they are attached. After several days of trying this, your children will begin to sing along and will actually miss it if you suddenly stop using this method of directing your day. Following is a multi-purpose song for most any Transition.

## **Hi-Ho, Hi-Ho**

*adapted by Stephen Fite*

*sung to Hi-Ho, Hi-Ho*

Hi-Ho, Hi-Ho

It's off to lunch we go

If you're wearing red please get in line

Hi-Ho, Hi-Ho, Hi-Ho

Hi-Ho, Hi-Ho

It's off to lunch we go

If you're wearing shorts please get in line

Hi-Ho, Hi-Ho

You can adapt the above tune to different Transition activities by placing the destination name in place of lunch. Examples: **Play** (Playground), **Wash** (Washing Hands), **Nap**, etc.

### **Cleaning Up the Room**

A fun activity you can try during your daily Clean-Up Time is a little gem I learned from an ex-teacher. It's a fun-filled activity called the Clean-Up Freeze game. The song appears on my CD titled Rock The Day Away, but you can use any piece of up-beat music and achieve the same result. When the music starts, the children begin to clean the room. All you have to do is pause the cd/tape. When the music stops, the children must immediately freeze and stay in their "freeze position" until the music begins again. To add a little more fun to the game, have a camera ready to take pictures of the kids in silly freeze poses.

### **Colors & Shapes Chant**

One of the greatest benefits children derive from learning and singing new songs is an increase in language skills. Among the first vocabulary words they acquire are those that identify colors and shapes. Here is a rhythmic chant file folder game that will challenge your children to identify both a color and a shape at the same time. Using several file folders cut a different shape (Triangle, Square, etc.) in the shorter flap of each one. Inside each folder insert several different colors of paper. As you chant the words below be prepared to pull out the paper in the front to reveal the next color at the appropriate time. Try hesitating before you show the next color to let the children guess which one will be next. Be sure to change the order so that the activity will not be so predictable.

#### **Square**

*chanted to Brown Bear, Brown Bear*

Red Square, Red Square

What do you see

I see a Blue Square following me

Blue Square, Blue Square

What do you see

I see a Yellow Square following me

Yellow Square...

I'm sure for many of you, music is already a big part of your classroom day. I hope you will be able to incorporate some of these new songs and ideas into your curriculum, and even be encouraged to write some piggyback tunes of your own.