

Little Steps

Patricia Gingras, Ph.D.
Associate Professor and Program Coordinator for Music Education
Florida Gulf Coast University
pgingras@fgcu.edu or ticia74@hotmail.com

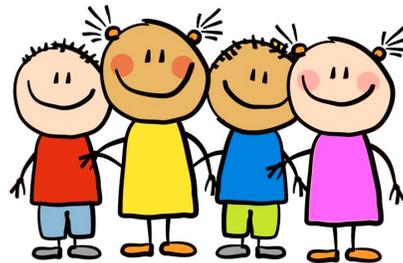
We believe that children learn music in the same way they learn a language.

- Listening
- Exploring/Babbling
- Imitation
- Composition/Improvisation
- Reading/Writing

The *Little Steps* curriculum provides a musically rich and immersive experience for young children, which prompts musical skill development and prepares them for future “formal” and music literacy instruction.

Little Steps Checklist

- Pitch Exploration
- Fragment/Echo/Call and Response Songs
- Simple Songs
- Arioso
- Songtales
- Movement Exploration
- Movement for Form and Expression
- Fingerplays (Chants)
- Action Songs
- Circle Games
- Movement to recorded music (Flow movement; Phrase Movement; Beat Choreography)
- Beat Motion Activities



Additional Activities and Considerations:

- Hello/Goodbye Songs
- Multiple Tonalities and Meters
- Solo Singing
- Songs Without Words
- Pattern Practice
- Instruments (shakers; jingles; tone blocks; shape drums; etc.)
- Iconic Notation
- Audiation

Pitch Exploration

Children should explore and use their voices various ways (Merrill, 2002).

Due to lifestyle changes, children of today do not have as many opportunities to use their voices in as many various ways as they did in the past (Coulter, 1995).

Here are some activities that encourage children to use a wide vocal range.

Use vocal changes/inflection when reciting a poem or chant:

| | |
|-----------------------|--------------------|
| normal speaking voice | high-pitched voice |
| whisper | low-pitched voice |
| shout | |



Make sounds in response to eating imaginary foods.

Hershey's kiss – lots of mmmmmm's
caramel – low sticky chomping sounds
lollipop – glissando "L's" as you lick the pop
Holiday foods at the appropriate time of year are a big hit!



Imitate anything that makes a sound:

| | |
|--------------|-------------|
| sirens | animals |
| elevators | spaceships |
| alarm clocks | cars/trucks |
| doorbells | airplanes |

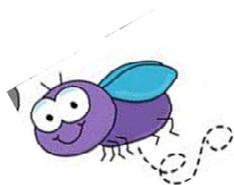


"Visit" an amusement park.

Roller coaster: Climb into a roller coaster car. Buckle safety belt and put on the harness (click). Chug to the top of the hills and ride down. Don't forget spiral and loop turns.

Bumper cars: Beep! Beep!

Merry-go-round: Up and down glissandos



Use voices to create sound effects for stories and books.

Tiny Little Fly by Michael Rosen and Kevin Waldron

Inside a House That Is Haunted by Alyssa Capucilli, ScholastiBooks

For more ideas see *The Book of Pitch Exploration—Can Your Voice Do This?* by John Feierabend, GIA Publications, Inc.

IMMERSION for Learning New Repertoire = LISTENING

When teaching songs and chants, use the immersion approach vs. phrase echo. This is a more natural way to learn repertoire (similar to language learning), presents the musical elements in context, and prompts students to internalize the musical content.

Teacher performs song/chant and motions; students watch and listen [1, 2]

Teacher performs song/chant and motions; students perform motions [3, 4, 5]

Teacher and students perform song/chant and motions [6, 7]

Students perform song/chant and motions; teacher watches and listens [8*, 9, 10]

*If students are having difficulty, return to [4] or [5] and begin the process again.

The exceptions to this sequence are

1. Echo/fragment songs - students can immediately echo the song fragments
2. Simple call and response songs and songs (with only ONE response) - teach students the response and have them sing immediately
3. Musical games - teacher sings while everyone plays the game (5x). Invite students to begin singing at [6] as they are able.

Combining Multiple Elements in One Activity

Chanting—Beat Movement—Pitch Exploration—Song Without Words—Flow/phrase Motion—Finding Resting tone

Chop, Chop, Chippity, Chop!

1. Students can choose soup ingredients. (Include pitch exploration while “picking” the ingredients.)
2. Students perform beat motions while reciting the chant.
3. Students stir the soup using flow motion.
4. Students taste the soup and find resting tone.

Soup Song Without Words (sing using “doo”)



Arioso (song creation) = Composition/Improvisation

1. Students learn the difference between singing and speaking
2. Sing animal sounds or use neutral syllables (“bum”)
3. Introduce lyrics by “singing” a familiar chant
4. Show a picture book to prompt singing a story
5. Show and tell
6. Conversations

Composition

Children are natural composers. Research indicates that if composition is encouraged, children will continue this normal musical behavior. Provide some type of composition activity for children in every class setting.

Finding a Singing Voice and Creating New Melodies

This is my talking voice ‘bah, bah, bah, bah’

This is my singing voice, “la, la, la, la, la”



Lou

Lou can dance or sleep in response to your voice. What will you make Lou do?

Model a speaking voice to make Lou dance.

Model a singing voice to make Lou sleep.

Provide an opportunity for the children to make Lou dance or sleep.

Singing a Familiar Chant (Chop, Chop Revisited)

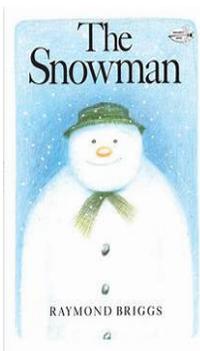
Invite students to sing an ingredient to put in the soup. All students echo.

Teacher sings fragments 1 and 3. Students sing fragments 2 and 4.

Teacher sings fragments 1 and 3. A selected student (solo) sings fragment 2 and/or fragment 4.

Tell students they are going to turn “Chop! Chop! Chippity Chop!” into a circle song. Teacher begins by singing, “Chop, chop, chippity chop!” the next student will sing “Cut off the bottom, cut off the top.” The next student will sing, “What we have left, we’ll put in the pot.” The next student sings “Chop, chop, chippity chop!”

Books Without Words



Books without words are wonderful prompts for melodic and lyric composition. After the teacher models how to “sing the story,” children can take turns singing what happens next.

The Snowman by Raymond Briggs

Wave by Suzy Lee

The Red Book by Barbara Lehman

The Lion and the Mouse by Jerry Pinkney

The Umbrella by Ingrid Schubert and Dieter Schubert

Extending Activities

Add Solo Singing Include Audiation Add Instruments Incorporate Iconic Representation

Frog in the Meadow

Students sing solos

Count four beats at the end of the song.

Students leap like frogs

Students play frog guiro

Students play a Bourdon on barred instruments



Iconic Notation - Audiation—Instruments

Planting Chant

I plant a little seed in the cold dark ground.

Out comes the yellow sun, big and round.

Down comes the cool rain, soft and slow.

Up comes the little plant, grow, grow, grow!

After students have internalized a short chant or song, introduce pictures that correspond with each fragment. Allow plenty of time for students to learn the sequence of the pictures. Turn a picture facedown, say/sing the chant/song, but audiate the segment represented by the facedown picture. When students successfully audiate the entire piece, select instruments to play for each segment.

Children say the chant and play instruments.

Children audiate and play instruments.

Children can rearrange the order of the pictures to create and play a new composition.



Listen, Listen

Every child has a steady beat. It just might not be YOUR steady beat. Allow each student to “find” their own steady beat.

Select a student to play a hand drum. The student sets the tempo. Teacher sings the melody to the student’s tempo. Pass the drum to another student.

Fid-lers play-ing, fidd-lers play-ing, Come and dance now.

Tam-bour-ines are gent-ly play-ing Come and dance now.

We will play the whole night through, sing-ing as we're dancing too.

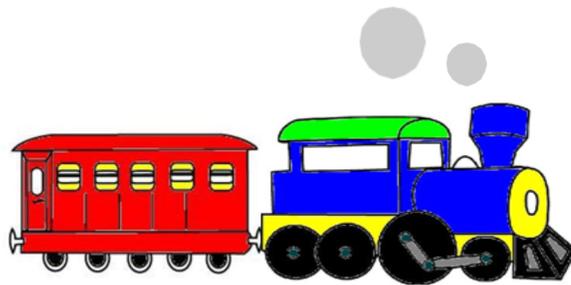
Come and dance now.

Frog guiro—Frog in the Meadow

Tambourine—Fiddlers Playing

Drum—My Pony Bill
(a great song for creating rhythm patterns)

Tone Block—Little Horses



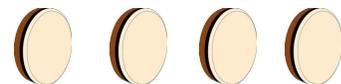
Engine Engine

Engine, engine number nine,
Going down Chicago line.
See it sparkle, see it shine,
Engine, engine number nine.

After students learn the chant, introduce a 4-beat introduction played on a hand drum. Continue playing the drum on the beat while students recite the chant. Allow one student to play the drum while the other students chant. Show four “drums” that represent the 4-beat introduction. Make the connection for students. Add additional drums for each drumbeat heard during the chant. Allow students to play the “drums.” Turn some of the drums face down so that students can audiate silent beats.

Introduce pictures of tambourines. Allow students to swap out a tambourine picture for a drum picture. Distribute tambourines to some of the students. Practice playing drums, tambourines and saying the chant. Allow students to work in pairs or small groups to create and play their own drum/tambourine compositions.

Introduction:



Phrase Movement

Trois Gymnopédie No. 1 (Satie)

From Move It – John Feierabend and Peggy Lyman

Performed by Amanda Szuch at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YyPLf4SCWoc>



Waltz in Ab (Johannes Brahms)

From Move It! - John Feierabend and Peggy Lyman

Performed by Amanda Hooper at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ljoV-yCVPr8>

Beat Movement

Johnny Had One Friend

Tap the appropriate number of fingers for each friend.

Roll the die to determine how many friends Johnny has.

Prompt solo singing by letting a selected student roll the die.

Beat Choreographies

Create a storyline with beat motions for your favorite piece of music!

Create Patterns

Ask Me...

About "My Mother, Your Mother"

*My mother, your mother lived across the way
Every night they have a chat and this is what they say*

(speak four different four-beat patterns on "buh" and have someone echo you.)

Repeat lyrics:

*My mother, your mother lived across the way
Every night they have a chat and this is what they say*

Directions: Speak the chant and create your own patterns to share with a family member. See if they can echo you!



Solo Singing

Magic microphone

Puppets

Individual singing games

Arioso Land

Note: Children must be very comfortable performing an activity as a group before they are asked to do it as a solo. Make sure you lay the proper groundwork before asking for soloists.



My Mother, Your Mother (Rhythm Patterns in Duple Meter)*

My Pony Bill (Rhythm Patterns in Triple/Compound Duple Meter)*

Mr. President (Tonal Patterns in Harmonic Minor; *Pennsylvania Dreamin'*)*

*Embed pattern echo activities in the recitation of chants and singing of songs. Initially, the teacher is the pattern "caller." Turn the "calling" of patterns over to individual students.

I can . . . AUDIATE!!! Let me show you.

I plant a little seed

Out comes the yellow sun,

Down comes the cool rain,

Up comes the little plant,
grow, grow, grow!



Three Little Pigs

Three little pigs lived all alone
When each decided to build a home
The first used straw
The second used sticks
The third little piggie built his house with bricks

Along came a wolf with a knife and fork
Who said "I'd like some tasty pork."
He smacked his lips at what he saw
As he walked on over to the house of straw.

"Little pig, little pig let me in!"
"Not by the hair of my chinny chin chin."
"Then I'll huff and I'll puff
and I'll blow your house in!"

So he huffed (huff, huff) and he puffed (puff, puff)
And he blew the house in.
But . . . The little piggie ran away.

The big bad wolf was in a fix
As he walked on over to the house of sticks
"Little pig, little pig let me in!"
"Not by the hair of my chinny chin chin."
"Then I'll huff and I'll puff
And I'll blow your house in.

So he huffed (huff, huff) and he puffed (puff, puff)
And he blew the house in.
But . . . The little piggie ran away.

The hungry wolf, still had some tricks
So he walked on over to the house of bricks
"Little pig, little pig let me in!"
"Not by the hair of my chinny chin chin."
"Then I'll huff and I'll puff
and I'll blow your house in!"

So he huffed (huff, huff) and he puffed (puff, puff)
And he huffed (huff, huff) and he puffed (puff, puff)
But he could not blow the house in.

"Please little pig," he begged on bended knee,
"If you don't let me in I'll use the chim-i-ney."

Three little pigs put a pot on the fire
The water boiled as the flames grew higher.
The wolf climbed in the chimney and slid through the flue
Into the pot KERPLASH to make wolf stew.

