



Parent Tips

ready at five

Building Listening Skills

Music involves listening. Becoming a good listener is the important first step in learning to read. If your child starts school with strong listening skills, he or she will be able to understand more words, follow directions better, talk, and learn to read more easily. Use music to build your child's listening skills. Try these suggestions:

INFANT:

- Sing to your baby during bath time, while diapering and dressing him.
- Play a game: "Show me your eyes...your nose..." etc. while you help your baby point to the body part.
- Imitate your infant's baby talk. Let your baby "hear back" the things he or she has said to you.

TODDLER:

- Sing Back & Forth. Sing songs that prompt call & response, such as "Who Stole the Cookies from the Cookie Jar".
- Listen to different types of music. Try: classical, country, R&B, pop, or jazz, etc. Ask your child: "What do you hear? How does the music make you feel? How would you move to this piece of music?"
- Sing to your child to signal when an activity begins or ends. For example, sing the "Clean Up Song" when it's time to clean up the toys, a lullaby when its time for bed, or a special song that prompts your child to get dressed, brush teeth, or leave for school. Try using known songs to remind your child how long to do an activity, such as singing the ABC song when washing hands.

PRESCHOOLERS:

- Help your child find the steady beat (pulse) in songs: clap, tap, walk, dance, or jump to the beat of the music.
- When listening to music on the radio or after singing a song with your child, ask questions: What do you hear? What does it sound like? Can you help me find the beat or steady pulse of the music? Is the music fast or slow? Is the music loud or quiet? Is the music high or low? Is there one sound or many sounds? What instruments do you hear?

Book Suggestion

Steam Train, Dream Train by Sherri Duskey Rinker & Tom Lichtenheld
Play, Mozart, Play! by Peter Sis