



A Common Approach has always recognised the importance of music at every stage of life, with the [Lifelong Learning](#) section providing guidance on both [Music in Early Childhood](#) and working with [Adult Learners](#).

This Early Years curriculum has been developed to support teachers who are music specialists, but not early years specialists, to begin to facilitate music sessions with early years children. It is not designed for instrumental lessons, but rather for general music sessions that teachers may be asked to deliver in a nursery or school. It presents material for two stages – age 3-4 and age 4-5 – to cater for Nursery and Reception classes (in England and Wales) or Nursery and P1 classes (in Scotland and Northern Ireland).

About the Early Years Programme



The organisation of materials into age bands is to support teachers to plan appropriate content for the classes with which they work and to develop teachers' understanding of progression, but it is important to note that all children are unique and will progress and develop at their own rate (both in the early years and beyond).

We acknowledge that adult-led music sessions are just one part of the wider picture of musical development in early years, but have focused specifically on this context to reflect the reality of what our target audience is most likely to be asked to do by music services/hubs and schools.

Whilst these materials focus on 3-5 year-olds, we encourage teachers to develop their understanding of children's musical development in the earlier stages through wider reading and appropriate CPD. Nicola Burke's [Musical Development Matters](#) and [Characteristics of Effective Learning In Music](#) are excellent resources for learning about children's musical development from birth to five. In addition, teachers might find it useful to explore the relevant government early years curriculum guidance for their location ([below](#)).

Many of the teachers at whom this resource is aimed will be familiar with A Common Approach's vocal and instrumental Programmes of Study, and therefore the overall structure of six areas of musical learning has been retained in the Early Years Programme in order to make the content clear and accessible to this audience:

A: Listening and internalising

B: Making and controlling musical sounds

C: Creating and developing musical ideas

D: Singing/playing music

E: Singing/playing with others

F: Performing and communicating

Under each area of musical learning, **learning descriptors** are provided, linked to guidance for teachers around activities, environments, and resources that can support the learning.

This mirrors the structure of A Common Approach instrumental programmes, but while the instrumental programmes set out **learning objectives** that define what teachers want learners to be able to do in each Programme of Study, the **learning descriptors** in the Early Years Programme express what children may be doing naturally at that stage of development. Although adult-led sessions will need to be planned in advance, we encourage teachers to observe the musical behaviours that are being demonstrated by children during the session and respond to this by creating opportunities for this learning to develop.

A Common Approach's Early Years Programme may also be useful to others involved in early years education, including:

- those who are early years specialists but not trained specifically in early childhood music education;
- school leaders;
- leaders in music services/hubs/other music education organisations;
- those involved with training early years educators.

However, the resource has been created specifically for music teachers who are starting to work with early years children for the first time, and therefore its content and structure are tailored to the needs of that audience.

The following principles have been developed to help those who are more experienced working with older children to understand and embrace some of the differences they will encounter when working in early years.

1. Every child is a musician

Children in their early years are innately musical, they are not empty vessels; value their musical experiences and be ready to observe, listen and respond to their contributions.

2. Be aware of the fluid nature of an early years environment

It is an enabling space where children move freely between inside and outside areas; they will have limited experience of sitting as a group in a formal way. Recognise that it is usual practice for young children to move around the space, dipping in and out of activities, including your music sessions.

3. Be prepared, but be prepared to be flexible

Have a plan for your session, but always listen, observe and respond to what the children are doing, being ready to take the session in a different direction if that is more appropriate.

4. Establish clear routines

Use a common structure when planning so that sessions have a familiar feel (for example, using consistent 'Hello' and 'Goodbye' songs). This gives children confidence and supports inclusion.

5. Repetition with variation is key

Repetition enables children to become more familiar with activities and more confident to join in and explore. Find multiple creative ways to explore each song/activity that you use.

6. Work in partnership with the nursery/school staff

Music is not the preserve of the visiting teacher nor limited to their timetabled slot. Talk to the nursery/school staff about what you observe with the children, and invite them to do the same. Encourage them to take ideas from your sessions into their day-to-day practice and help them feel comfortable engaging in music activities, even if they do not consider themselves to be musicians. Everyone valuing and taking part in music will have a positive impact on children's musical development.

Early years curriculum guidance around the UK

England:

[Early Years Foundation Stage Statutory Framework](#)

This is the statutory framework setting learning and development requirements from birth to five in England. It focuses on three prime areas (Communication and Language, Physical Development, and Personal, Social and Emotional Development) and four specific areas (Literacy, Mathematics, Understanding the World, and Expressive Arts and Design).

[Development Matters](#)

This is the Department for Education's non-statutory curriculum guidance for the early years foundation stage, which includes examples of learning and activities in music.

Scotland:

[Curriculum for Excellence: Benchmarks for Expressive Arts](#)

Education Scotland's resource outlining the national standards expected within Expressive Arts from age 3 to 18.

[Curriculum for Excellence: Experiences and Outcomes for Expressive Arts](#)

Education Scotland's resource providing statements about children's learning and progression in Expressive Arts from age 3 to 18.

Northern Ireland:

The Northern Ireland Curriculum: Primary

The statutory curriculum for the primary age range in Northern Ireland. The Foundation Stage (ages 4 to 6) focuses on six areas of learning: Language and Literacy, Mathematics and Numeracy, The Arts, The World Around Us, Personal Development and Mutual Understanding, and Physical Development and Movement.

Wales:

Early Childhood Play, Learning and Care Plan in Wales

The Welsh Government's strategy for 0-5 year olds. It focuses on three main themes: quality of provision, access to provision, and developing the workforce.

A Curriculum for Funded Non-Maintained Nursery Settings

The Welsh Government's curriculum for non-maintained early years settings.

Each Age has its contents grouped under the following Areas:

- A** Listening and internalising
- B** Making and controlling musical sounds
- C** Creating and developing musical ideas
- D** Singing/playing music
- E** Singing/playing with others
- F** Performing and communicating

Age 3-4

A Listening and internalising

Age 3-4 - EY A1

Respond physically, emotionally, or orally to a wide range of music from different cultures and traditions, both live and recorded

Sing to and with children regularly, enabling children to build up a bank of familiar songs.



Children do not have to be still or quiet to be listening. They may sit or stand and listen, or move around listening and responding as part of their play, perhaps making their own sounds. They may want to approach the singer and try to join in vocally – if so, carry on singing. Don't try to 'teach' them the song as this can affect the flow of the song and/or frustrate the child. Instead, trust that the song will be 'caught' by the child if it is of interest to them and reinforced through repetition. Some children may prefer to watch and listen from a distance.



Children may ask for favourite songs to be sung, or ask for a song they have enjoyed to be repeated.

Sing invented 'on-the spot' songs to celebrate a child's activity or outcome, e.g.

*Zara's built a castle (x3),
It's tall, as tall can be!*

Encourage children to listen to and copy these instant song 'creations' and then make up their own.

Make songs that are relevant to the context, e.g. using key words, reflecting the weather, the environment, or the space.



Interact with the sounds that children make, making sounds and patterns alongside them. As they follow you, they are listening and internalising.

Ask nursery/school staff to share favourite songs from different cultures and genres outside of your music sessions. This may be part of carpet time or sung alongside children as they play and explore.

Play recorded music from a variety of genres, cultures and traditions and observe children's responses. Using videos of musicians playing gives children a visual reference.



Children may choose to actively listen when music is played, i.e. they stop their current activity to focus on what they hear, or they may carry on with what they are doing.



Often young children will pause in between tracks waiting for the next one – will they know it? Will they want to move to it?



If a child offers a physical response, gently start to follow their lead, matching, then extending their movements, offering more ideas if appropriate (but don't be disappointed if they stick with their own ideas!).



Make percussion instruments or other sound makers available so that children can add their own sounds to the music they hear.



Choose videos carefully, ensuring that different ethnicities and genders are represented.

Invite children to move to the music in a variety of ways, e.g. skipping, galloping, striding.



Children may change their movement to mirror changes in the music.



Model moving to music yourself and ask other adults in the nursery/school to use spontaneous movement, thereby encouraging children to respond physically to the music they hear.

Provide props such as colourful scarves, ribbons or streamers for children to draw shapes in the air while listening to music. You might begin by modelling particular shapes (e.g. circle, square, spiral) and then encouraging children to invent their own to express what they hear. Imitate children's movements as well as offering your own ideas, thus creating a movement conversation.



This combines kinaesthetic exploration with expressive improvisation.

Read a simple story book aloud and assign a different rhythmic motif to each character. Encourage children to move like the character when each motif is played (e.g. quick/light steps for a rabbit, heavy stomps for a bear).



Ideally, use a picture book so children can see pictures of the characters in context.

Find out what music the children listen to at home and make a playlist for the nursery/school setting including these.



By finding out what kind of music children may have been exposed to at home, teachers can build on children's prior experiences as well as promote an inclusive culture. Value what might be familiar to them and broaden their aural experience. As a visiting music teacher you may not have contact with families, so this should be done in collaboration with the nursery/school staff.



Be ready with a response to unsuitable suggestions (eg. inappropriate lyrics) without either endorsing the music or making a big thing of your disapproval, e.g. 'That's a good song for dancing, but those words are not okay for children to be singing.'

Expose children to live music – both singing and instruments. Teachers who are instrumentalists can bring in their own instruments to play, and music services/hubs, community/school groups or local musicians may be able to facilitate other performances. Nursery/school staff could invite families to share their own music making with the group if appropriate.



Speak to nursery/school staff to get an understanding of any other music that the children might enjoy listening to.



Children may be intrigued by instruments, or anxious, or anything in between. Some will want to come and touch the instrument. Some will watch and listen from further back – in which case be cautious about approaching them – let them come to you if they wish to. It may take several sessions for some children to gain the confidence to approach an instrumentalist. Don't take children's hands to touch an instrument – encourage them with your eyes/actions and support them if they reach out. Conversely, be ready for children who want to snatch the instrument or attempt to tap it with their hands.



Expect young children to have a physical response – you might start in a seated circle, but some may want to get up and move. Depending on previous experience, some will want to move away or seek an adult they know for reassurance.



Ensure that due care is paid to protecting children's ears as necessary.

Age 3-4 - EY A2

Respond to the elements of pulse/beat, pitch, rhythm, tempo, dynamics, timbre and texture through movement, verbalisation, or musical participation

Use real life opportunities to use musical language, e.g. ‘This is great, marching together to the steady beat. Oh my goodness, the tempo is increasing, it’s getting faster!’



Do not shy away from using musical vocabulary with early years children. It is perfectly appropriate to talk about fast and slow, high and low, loud and quiet, and use words to describe timbre and texture. Children will respond to these terms and they will begin to use this vocabulary themselves, and if they don't at this stage, that doesn't mean that they aren't absorbing the vocabulary and learning.

Help nurture children's sense of pulse during music activities by encouraging them to tap the pulse/beat on different parts of the body (e.g. clapping, tapping knees) or use bigger movements (e.g. stamping feet). Model different ways of showing the pulse/beat and take ideas from the children.



Observe when children tap or move to the pulse/beat spontaneously in sessions and move with them.



Select musical examples that demonstrate a really clear strong pulse/beat.



Children can quite quickly learn to move to a pulse/beat, but transferring this to an instrument can be harder than we might expect. A young child may find it easier, and therefore have more success, playing the rhythm of the words or some of the repeated words than finding and playing the pulse/beat throughout.



With all of the activities here, adults should observe and interact as appropriate. Reinforce the child's response through copying, then depending on the child, extend their learning with your suggestions (but don't be surprised if they choose to continue to do their own thing!).

Use simple songs and action rhymes – either spoken or with a limited toneset (number of pitches) – to explore musical elements. For example, ‘Slowly, slowly, very slowly’ to support tempo:

Slowly, slowly, very slowly
Creeps the garden snail,
Slowly, slowly, very slowly
Up the wooden rail.

Quickly, quickly, very quickly,
Runs the little mouse,
Quickly, quickly, very quickly,
Right inside his house!



These rhymes are about storytelling, so remember to add drama. A pause before the quick mouse is very exciting!

Explore tempo by encouraging fast and slow movements, both when sitting and when moving around. Use different parts of the body and both fine and gross motor movements.

Explore tempo by playing your instrument and inviting children to move.



Observe the natural speed of their movements and offer this rather than imposing a tempo upon them; young children move a lot faster than adults when they walk, for example.

Encourage children to tap/clap the rhythm of the words in rhymes and songs.



You may wish to introduce the concept of rhythm by inviting the children to explore the rhythm of words as part of singing games and other playful activities, e.g. own names, favourite fruit or food, cartoon characters etc. Encourage the children to vocalise the words as they clap.



It takes a long time and much practical experience for children to securely understand the difference between pulse/beat and rhythm. In reality, the words themselves don't matter at this age. We must use and apply them correctly, but the children should do what they feel is right. If one chooses to pat the pulse/beat, say e.g. 'Lovely patting the beat, let's all try'. If another is tapping the rhythm with their spoon, say 'I love that you are playing the rhythm of the words with your spoon, can I join in with you?'

Offer a range of instruments for children to explore and wait for them to invite you to join them in their play. Mirror what they do and, without talking, offer musical provocations by accompanying them (adding a pulse/beat or an ostinato), extending their creative responses by echoing back with alterations (extending the melodic range or altering a rhythm), changing tempo or adding silence, etc.



Most young children will explore freely, but depending on prior experience, some may wait to be told what to do. In this case, model having a go, e.g. look at the instrument, shake it, shake it more, tap it – explore and ask the child to help you.

Introduce children to different combinations of timbre and texture by accompanying yourself singing with instruments, e.g. using claves to play the pulse/beat or rhythm. Encourage children to make up their own combinations of sound.



Praise all efforts. This is about timbre and texture; playing an accurate pulse/beat or rhythm is secondary.

Ask nursery/school staff what songs they regularly sing in class and perform these on your instrument to expose children to different timbres or textures.



Allow the children to just join in when they want to in the first instance; they do not need to wait politely for you to finish. Once recognised, play the song again for them all to join in. Then play it again and ask them to listen to how your instrument sounds.

Offer a visual representation of high and low pitch by moving your body, hands, scarves, shakers etc. up and down appropriately. Model different voices to show contrasts in pitch (e.g. a squeaky mouse versus a big blue whale).



If possible, have tuned percussion available, so that children can explore pitch independently. Always provide two beaters – young children will naturally use both hands.



Explore high and low sounds in contrast and then sliding between higher and lower. A teacher with a swanee whistle (or playing glissandi on any instrument) can be great fun, with children reaching up and crouching down to demonstrate the changes in pitch.

Engage playfully with a range of songs, exploiting the musical possibilities they offer. For example, sing Old MacDonald slowly for large animals and quickly for running chickens!



Encourage nursery/school staff to use their voices during play activities (e.g. with playdough, sewing, driving cars, or building blocks) modelling the sounds of gesture. For example, an adult may accompany the action of rolling playdough with smooth, legato singing, or the action of stacking building blocks with pitch rising and falling.

Age 3-4 - EY A3

Begin to develop awareness of the structure of simple songs and rhymes, joining in with repeated lines/sections

Sing songs that include repetition, e.g. echo songs, songs with choruses.



Children may recognise when a song has finished.



Children may sing lines or sections of songs without support. Allowing them to sing without adult support (and encouraging school staff to allow this too) helps children find their singing voices and gain confidence singing.



Children may play untuned percussion/other sound makers to match a repeated pattern in the song.

Sing songs, omitting the last word of a paired rhyming line and asking children to supply it, e.g. 'Baa, baa black sheep have you any wool? Yes, sir, Yes, sir, three bags ...', in order to develop an understanding of how rhyme works in song.

Age 3-4 - EY A4

Begin to link sounds with symbols

Using a selection of cards with pictures to represent different songs, encourage children to choose which song they would like to hear/join in with by selecting a card (thus linking an image to a song). Objects could also be used to visually represent songs, e.g. rubber ducks or finger puppets.



This is a simple way of linking sound and symbol, by linking images to familiar songs. The use of a pictorial menu of song titles can be helpful for children with Special Educational Needs.



PECS (Picture Exchange Communication System) could be a useful tool if you have access to Widget or Communicate in Print. Liaise with nursery/school staff to see what they might be able to access.

Age 3-4

B Making and controlling musical sounds

Age 3-4 - EY B1

Choose vocal sounds to match objects or pictures or to enhance storytelling

Use children's chosen sounds to inspire a song, e.g. adapting 'The Wheels on the Bus' to 'The car on the road goes screech screech screech.'



Valuing children's suggestions can support early composition skills.

Invite children to make vocal sounds to enhance storytelling, e.g. using tongue clicks to represent the goats crossing the bridge in *The Three Billy-Goats Gruff*.



Encourage nursery/school staff to engage in vocal exploration in an informal way in continuous provision, e.g. as part of role play, or when reading a book.

Age 3-4 - EY B2

Explore and create gross motor body percussion, e.g. clapping, stamping, jumping

Sing action songs such as 'If You're Happy and You Know It'.



Expect different responses to action songs. Children may clap, stamp etc., but some may not, or may develop their own actions.

Explore a range of sounds to represent different types of weather, e.g. tapping fingers on palm or stamping/jumping in puddles (pretend or real!).



This type of activity should be as child-led as possible, with adults mirroring/responding to sounds/actions made by the child.

Begin to hold instruments and sound makers more securely and play them more purposefully

Provide appropriate musical instruments/sound makers, including beaters to tap drums/two beaters for glockenspiels etc.



New instruments will be exciting and children will need the opportunity to learn how to touch them with care. Talk to the nursery/school staff about how to prepare children for this.



Provide two beaters to encourage the development of skills with both hands.



Ensure that instruments and sound makers are safe for young children, e.g. beaters should have fixed or moulded heads so that the head does not come off if placed in their mouths.



Remember that young children may try to test instruments and resources to destruction, often by tapping them on different surfaces (maracas beware!) or shaking them vigorously. They may also try to take them apart, e.g. removing bars from tuned percussion. If an instrument or sound maker or indeed the child, is in danger, gently encourage a more gentle approach; model and explain.



Explain to children how important it is to care for instruments and treat them with respect.

Give children a mixture of structured time to explore the instrument (adult-led) and free time to engage in musical play (child-led).



Exploration should be encouraged without references to the 'right' or 'wrong' way to play. However, children must be taught that keeping themselves and instruments safe is important and that instruments and sound makers must be respected.



Ideally, children should be able to take instruments and sound makers to other areas to play (not just seated on the carpet or in a 'music corner'), but this does create challenges so you and the nursery/school staff need to create boundaries.

Encourage children to play musical instruments and sound makers in response to simple stories.



Remember, there is no right or wrong answer (though some clarification may be needed, e.g. 'This character is a snail, do you think snails move quickly or slowly?').

Provide children with access to instruments when singing or listening to music, encouraging them to join in if they would like to.



Young children will find it easier to play the rhythm of a known song on handheld instruments/sound makers rather than the pulse/beat, which can take time to understand and master.

Age 3-4

C Creating and developing musical ideas

Age 3-4 - EY C1

Improvise vocally in response to various stimuli, e.g. music they hear or stories that are read to them

Create simple sound effects/soundscapes to accompany short stories, pictures, or rhymes.



Children may vocalise sound effects during their imaginative play. Observe and if appropriate, interact, initially copying their sounds.



Vocal sounds come before speech, and some children who are otherwise non-verbal may sing or vocalise sound effects.

Use recordable sound buttons for children to explore and record their own vocalisations.

Explore different kinds of voices through chants such as 'Have you brought your speaking voice?' with children responding 'Yes I've brought my speaking voice'. Repeat with others, e.g. whispering or loud, and remember to add a simple melody for singing voice.

Age 3-4 - EY C2

Explore making a range of sounds on instruments and other sound makers

Allow time for children to explore different instruments and sound makers, and copy/build on their ideas. They may use instruments/sound makers in unexpected ways.



Act as a partner in their musical play, letting the child be in charge.



In order to develop both vocal and instrumental creativity, as well as developing skills relating to control, repetition is key. Week 1 with instruments/sound makers may be a riot of noise, but the more opportunities children have to explore, the more their ideas develop and their control improves.

Work with nursery/school staff to encourage free music-making, where an area is allocated to storing instruments/sound makers, but children are allowed to roam and take the sound makers to other areas. This can be both indoors and outdoors, and can involve combining sound makers with other equipment.



Before introducing instrumental free play, introduce instruments and set expectations in terms of keeping self and equipment safe, as well as returning everything to its 'home'.



Work with nursery/school staff to organise instruments into labelled containers. Using a picture of what belongs inside can be a great way to remind children of where things belong without relying on reading the label.

Encourage children to explore the sounds that everyday objects around them make, e.g. bottles, tins, kitchen utensils.

Encourage children to create simple body percussion patterns.

Encourage children to improvise sounds on instruments/sound makers to accompany a song or chant, or to 'fill a gap' in a song or chant.

With children, create simple soundscapes in response to a variety of stimuli (pictures, objects etc.).

Age 3-4

D Singing/playing music

Age 3-4 - EY D1

Join in with some final or repeated words/phrases from songs and rhymes

Model being playful and using a sing-song voice, or making up your own short song (micro songs or fragments).



Children of this age often choose fragments of songs to join in with rather than the whole song.



Some children may prefer to watch rather than join in, which is absolutely fine.



Songs and rhymes support language development, but sometimes using songs in other languages or songs that use vocal sounds rather than words can be a great leveller for children for whom the primary language used in the nursery/school is an additional language.

Sing a variety of songs that have repeated sounds or phrases that might be more accessible for children to join in with than the whole song. For example, in 'Hickory Dickory Dock', children can add in the 'tick tock' at the end. In 'If You're Happy and You Know It', children can join in with the actions. In 'Old MacDonald', children can join in with the animal sounds.



Nursery rhymes such as those suggested above generally cover a larger toneset (number of pitches) than early years children are able to sing, but the intention here is to encourage children to listen to a song/rhyme performed by an adult and join in at specific points with simple sounds, actions, or phrases with a limited range of notes.



It is perfectly fine for male teachers or those with lower voices to sing an octave lower than the children.

Sing songs with actions that children can join in with, e.g. 'Two Little Blackbirds'. Children can bounce their fists on their knees, raise their thumbs to represent birds, hide them behind their backs for 'flying away', then bring them back.

Begin to join in with rhymes and simple songs with a limited toneset (number of pitches) from different genres, cultures and traditions

Start with using *soh-mi* songs (the fifth and the third of a major scale) to develop pitch-matching skills. This can then be developed into songs using *la-soh-mi* (sixth, fifth and third) – e.g. ‘I’m the King of the Castle’ – then *mi-re-doh* (third, second, first), then *doh* to *soh* (first to fifth).



When choosing songs for early years children to sing, consider the toneset (the number of different pitches). Songs that have a limited toneset are best to develop accurate pitching. Songs that use the *soh-mi* pitches (the fifth and the third of a major scale) are a good starting point due to the common occurrence of this interval in our environment, e.g. ‘ding dong’, ‘nee naw’, etc.



While providing a secure basis for learning about musical elements and language, nursery rhymes generally cover a larger toneset (number of pitches) than early years children are able to sing. Adults can sing nursery rhymes to early years children, but if the intention is that children match the pitch, then the song should cover a more limited toneset.



Pitch range is also important. Because young children have very short vocal folds, they can comfortably sing a limited pitch range of D to B. Teachers should consider the pitch of the starting note to ensure the whole song can be sung within the children’s pitch range.

Sing simple songs and rhymes to and with children regularly, using a variety of songs from different genres, cultures and traditions. Encourage children to learn songs gradually by echoing lines, with lots of repetition.



Support nursery/school staff to pitch songs at an appropriate range for young voices when they are leading singing. They may be used to singing in their chest voice and may comment that they can’t ‘sing high’, but can be encouraged to find their high voices through exploring vocal sounds e.g. sirening. Suggest that they start a song a little higher than they usually would each time they sing it, and this will get easier over time.

Sing songs that use a variety of metres, including 3/4 and 6/8.



Nursery/school staff may not be familiar with the term ‘metre’ or the concepts behind it, but they will learn songs from you and repeat them with children outside of your sessions. Thus including a variety of metres in your songs will increase the prevalence of different metres in the day-to-day repertoire of the nursery/school.

Provide opportunities for children to sing both individually and in a group.



For many young children, singing 'solo' is not daunting or a progression from singing in a group, it is just something they like to do. Others may never sing in a more formal music session with or without others, but may be quite happy singing whilst playing elsewhere. If a child doesn't want to sing on their own, just ask if you can help with their turn.

Whenever possible, sing unaccompanied (rather than using backing tracks) to support accurate and independent singing.



It is perfectly okay to sing the opening phrase to yourself to check you have an appropriate starting pitch before singing an audible 'off we go' at that pitch to bring everyone in.

Encourage children to sing songs from home.



Be ready with a response to any suggestions children may make that may not be suitable for sharing in the nursery/school context (e.g. in terms of inappropriate lyrics), without either endorsing the music or making a big thing of your disapproval, e.g. 'That's a good song for dancing, but those words are not okay for children to be singing.'

Age 3-4 - EY D3

Respond to basic symbols to show when to start and stop

Introduce red and green flashcards to signal 'stop' and 'go' when singing or using instruments.

Play a 'conductor' game in small groups, where everyone has a turn at being the conductor, using their hands to control the sounds being made by the other children by showing dynamics and dynamic changes, tempo, stop/start etc.



This fosters expressive control and leadership through gesture.

Age 3-4

E Singing/playing with others

Age 3-4 - EY E1

Respond to cues from others when making music

Sing a variety of action songs, encouraging children to initiate actions and also match actions to those of a leader, e.g. 'Can you do what George does?' song.



Create an enabling environment for children to join in with singing activities in their own way. Lycra sheets and large scrunchies can be useful, as can digital resources.



The role of the teacher should involve both modelling and mirroring, valuing and listening to children's musical play.

Encourage children to initiate musical patterns and sounds and copy those of others in shared music-making.



Encourage nursery/school staff to make instruments and sound makers freely available for shared spontaneous improvisation.

Sing songs and use vocalisations that include spaces for children to fill with an appropriate word/sound/action.

Engage children in simple 'start and stop' games. This may be a movement game or game with instruments/sound makers, where children play on 'go' and stop playing on 'stop'.

Make a range of different movements with a scarf, piece of rope or pool noodle (a long, cylindrical piece of flexible foam used as a flotation aid in swimming) and ask children to respond through dancing/vocalising.

Age 3-4 - EY E2

Make choices when making music with others

Invite children to choose which song to sing, or whether to sing a particular song again.



Use symbols to support these choices if necessary – Widget or Communicate in Print are good options to create symbols matching words.

Give children options to select from when singing songs or playing instruments, e.g. ‘Shall we sing this song loudly or quietly?’, ‘Shall we play the shaker quickly or slowly?’.

Encourage children to offer ideas for particular instruments or sound makers for a song or story accompaniment.

Age 3-4

F Performing and communicating

Age 3-4 - EY F1

Enjoy sharing songs and musical activities with others

Encourage children to do ad hoc ‘performances’ anytime and anywhere. Create a culture where it is natural to initiate the sharing of singing, movement, and playing instruments/sound makers.



‘Performance’ does not have to mean an organised performance with an audience. It is simply about sharing music with others. Children will often naturally perform to/alongside each other during the course of their play.



Having ‘microphones’ and instruments around the nursery/school setting ready to be used when the children choose to do so can support this. Think about where the instruments are generally stored – are they easily accessible to the children for ad hoc performances?



These ‘performances’ will often happen when the visiting music teacher is not present, but nursery/school staff can capture these to share with the music teacher via the use of video or audio recording (e.g. sound buttons, iPads).

Where space allows, talk to the nursery/school staff about providing a ‘stage’ area either inside or outside, with props (changed regularly) and dressing up clothes to encourage spontaneous performance and role play.

Encourage the sharing of individual children’s invented-on-the spot songs with others.

Age 4-5

A Listening and internalising

Age 4-5 - EY A1

Respond freely to a wide range of music from different cultures and traditions, both live and recorded

Introduce children to a variety of songs and rhymes to listen to and join in with, performed live whenever possible. Create a balanced 'bank' of songs that demonstrate contrasting moods, e.g, different tempi, dynamics and metre (including 3/4 and 6/8 time).



Children do not have to be still or quiet to be listening. They may sit or stand and listen, or move around listening and responding as part of their play, perhaps making their own sounds. They may want to approach the singer and try to join in vocally (if so, engage them with your eyes and carry on with your singing). If the song is repetitive you may try and teach them a phrase or two, but be aware that some children enjoy the poetry of singing and stopping to teach them can affect their enjoyment. Some children may prefer to watch and listen from a distance, or may appear to be taking no notice whilst in fact absorbing the song and perhaps singing it themselves at home.

Ask school staff to share favourite songs from different cultures and genres outside of your music sessions. This may be part of carpet time or sung alongside children as they play and explore.

Expose children to recorded music from a variety of different genres, cultures and traditions. Using videos of musicians playing gives children a visual reference. Conduct research and include genres of music heard in the children's own homes.



By finding out what kind of music children may have been exposed to at home, teachers can build on children's prior experiences as well as promoting an inclusive culture. Value what might be familiar to them and broaden their aural experience. As a visiting music teacher you may not have contact with families, so this should be done in collaboration with the school staff.



Be ready with a response to any suggestions children may bring that may not be suitable for sharing in the school context (e.g. in terms of inappropriate lyrics), without either endorsing the music or making a big thing of your disapproval, e.g. 'That's a good song for dancing, but those words are not okay for children to be singing.'



Choose videos carefully, ensuring that different ethnicities and genders are represented.

Expose children to live music – both singing and instruments. Teachers who are instrumentalists can bring in their own instruments to play and music services/hubs, community/school groups or local musicians may be able to facilitate other performances. School staff could invite families to share their own music making with the group if appropriate.



If a child offers a physical response, gently start to follow their lead, matching, then extending their movements, offering more ideas if appropriate (but don't be disappointed if they stick with their own ideas!).



Make percussion instruments available so that children can make choices about sounds they might play to accompany the music they hear.



Ensure that due care is paid to protecting children's ears as necessary.

Provide opportunities for children to respond physically to the music they hear with movement and/or body percussion. Adults can observe and interact as appropriate, perhaps copying the child's response (e.g. lying still alongside them), or modelling a response (e.g. marching, galloping or creeping).



Children may tap/clap to the pulse/beat, 'conduct' (moving hands), dance/move, or imitate playing instruments (e.g. guitar/drums).



Ensure that these opportunities are not always led by the teacher; e.g. rather than asking children to respond with a certain type of movement or a certain body percussion sound, give them the freedom to choose for themselves.

Encourage children to explore ribbons/streamers/scarves when listening to music.



Ensure a variety of opportunities for gross and fine motor skill exploration is given.

Read a simple story book aloud and assign a different rhythmic motif to each character. Encourage children to move like the character when each motif is played (e.g. quick/light steps for a rabbit, heavy stomps for a bear).



Ideally, use a picture book so children can see pictures of the characters in context.

Encourage children to talk about the music that they hear.



Children may be able to articulate how a piece of music makes them feel. This can be supported by emojis or other symbols/images. They may be able to articulate simple opinions about music, e.g. describing it as loud, quiet, or bouncy.

Age 4-5 - EY A2

Respond with understanding to a range of elements through movement, verbalisation, or musical participation

Continue to use real life opportunities to use musical language, e.g. 'This is great, marching together to the steady beat. Oh my goodness, the tempo is increasing, it's getting faster!'



Do not shy away from using musical vocabulary with early years children. It is perfectly appropriate to talk about fast and slow, high and low, loud and quiet, and use words to describe timbre and texture. Children will respond to these terms and they will begin to use this vocabulary themselves, and if they don't at this stage, that doesn't mean that they aren't absorbing the vocabulary and learning.

Encourage children to join in with a pulse/beat when listening to music, using body percussion or untuned percussion/other sound makers.



Select musical examples that demonstrate a really clear strong pulse/beat and model playing along (or clapping, tapping, marching etc.).



Give them a variety of time signatures – the more types of metre they encounter, the more developed their aural memory becomes. Young children find compound time appealing and good to move to. It is not something 'difficult' to do when they are older.

Encourage children to clap some very simple rhythms from songs whilst saying the accompanying words out loud.



Chants, particularly echo chants, provide useful rhythmic examples for children to copy both verbally and with clapping/tapping actions, e.g. 'Chop, Chop, Choppity Chop'.



Children may be able to clap or tap the rhythm of their names or other familiar words, e.g. fish and chips.



This rhythm work can support early aural discrimination work of pre-phonics.

Encourage children to join in with well known songs on untuned percussion instruments or sound makers. Children may be able to tap the rhythm of the words of a well known song whilst singing, or join in with the pulse/beat.



Children may be able to play the rhythm of a favourite song or rhyme on a percussion instrument or sound maker whilst keeping the words in their 'thinking voice'.



Choose songs and chants with repeated lines or words, e.g. 'A Sailor Went to Sea, Sea, Sea' or 'London Bridge', so that syllabic rhythm patterns are more easily embedded.

Explore tempo by playing your instrument and inviting children to move.



Observe the natural speed of their movements and offer this rather than imposing a tempo upon them; young children move a lot faster than adults when they walk, for example.

Explore tempo through games such as 'Listen, Listen, Here I Come'. Children sit in a circle and perform the rhyme:

*Listen, listen, here I come,
Someone special gets the drum.*

Encourage children to identify different sounds made by instruments/sound makers when the instrument/sound maker is out of sight. Can they identify whether they heard a bell or a drum, or find a duplicate of the instrument from a selection you have laid out? Can they explore the effect of combining different instruments together?

Ask school staff what songs they regularly sing in class and perform these on your instrument to expose children to different timbres or textures.

If possible, have tuned percussion instruments available, so that children can explore pitch independently. Model playing glissandi, encouraging children to move their hands up and down as the pitch changes.



Always offer two beaters for playing tuned percussion and model playing with a beater in each hand. This will encourage children to adopt good playing practice.

Use simple songs and action rhymes – either spoken or with a limited toneset (number of pitches) – to explore musical elements. For example, ‘Slowly, slowly, very slowly’ to support tempo:

Slowly, slowly, very slowly
Creeps the garden snail,
Slowly, slowly, very slowly,
Up the wooden rail.

Quickly, quickly, very quickly,
Runs the little mouse,
Quickly, quickly, very quickly,
Right inside his house!



These rhymes are about storytelling, so remember to add drama. A pause before the quick mouse is very exciting!

Provide ample opportunities and adequate space for listening to music and responding to the musical elements through movement. Ensure that the music listened to reflects a wide range of styles and cultures. For example, Tchaikovsky’s ‘Waltz of the Flowers’ could be used for exploring dynamics. ‘Seven Jumps’ (a Danish dance) could be used for exploring pitch and duration.



Children may show an increasing awareness of elements such as dynamics and tempo through their movement. For example, they may march to the beat, or move their hands high and low to match contrasting pitches. They may tiptoe or curl up when the dynamic is quieter, and stretch and stomp when louder music is played.



Where possible, provide large, open spaces for children to respond physically to music.

Age 4-5 - EY A3

Develop their awareness of the structure of songs and rhymes, joining in with longer sections

Continue to sing songs that include repetition, e.g. echo songs, songs with choruses.



Children may pitch melodies with greater accuracy.



Children may sing songs without support. Allowing children to sing without adult support (and encouraging school staff to allow this too) helps children find their singing voices and gain confidence singing.



Children may play untuned percussion/sound makers more rhythmically, joining in on recognised sections.

When songs are familiar to children, pause at appropriate points to encourage anticipation and allow children to provide the next part of the song. For example, singing ‘Autumn Leaves’ to a descending scale:

*Autumn leaves are falling,
Orange, red and brown.
See them twirling in the wind
And falling to the ground.*

Sing the song with/to the children using scarves or ribbons to mirror the pitch direction. Once children are familiar with the song, add a big playful pause on the penultimate word before allowing the children to complete the song, naturally feeling the need to resolve onto the tonic.

Allow children the opportunity to develop their own songs based on known ones (changing a word or phrase from a song – e.g. Humpty Dumpty sat on the [children’s idea]).

Listen and respond to instrumental music with a simple structure, e.g. folk dances such as ‘Chimes of Dunkirk’ (French/Belgian), which uses a binary form structure. Children may like to join in with body percussion, dance sequences or percussion, creating different responses for each section.

Age 4-5 - EY A4

Link sounds with symbols

Provide opportunities for children to explore mark making when listening to music or exploring instruments/sound makers. For example, cover a table with paper and provide finger paints or colouring pencils, etc. alongside some sound makers. Draw together to represent the sounds, creating simple graphic scores or music maps. Explore longer and shorter sounds and symbols, as well as other elements.



Children might use different shapes, patterns or colours to express what they feel when listening to music.



You could take children on a sound walk around the school, encouraging them to create a sound map of what they encounter.

When exploring different sounds, show children how you can create symbols that represent each one, e.g. a wiggly line for the maracas, a circle for the drum. Encourage the children to think of symbols which could represent musical events, e.g. starting and stopping.



The children may be able to associate one symbol with one sound. Some children may be able to order a sequence of symbols and play those sounds.

Age 4-5

B Making and controlling musical sounds

Age 4-5 - EY B1

Understand that vocal sounds can be controlled and create different moods, scenes, characters

Use finger puppets that fly/crawl/hop/slide to guide children's voices through glissandos, staccato and other vocal effects.

Sing invented 'on-the spot' sound songs, e.g. 'Billy the bee goes bzz, bzz, bzz; the little red train goes choo, choo, choo; the baby in the pram goes wa, wa, wa' etc. Encourage children to listen to and copy these instant song 'creations' and make up their own.



Praise all efforts and contributions, even if they don't quite scan.

Use vocal sounds to enhance story/picture books, asking children to create sounds for different parts of the story.

Age 4-5 - EY B2

Explore an increased range of body percussion including additional fine motor movements, e.g. tapping the palm, flicking the fingers

Play a follow-my-leader echo game, with 4 beats played with each body percussion sound, e.g. claps, clicks, stamps, cheek pops, tongue clicks etc. Incorporate 'silent' actions, too, e.g. nodding, blinking, jazz hands.



This can work with the teacher as the model (child copies the teacher) and with the child as the model (teacher copies the child).



In a 4-beat activity, if the child presents more or less than 4 beats, respond with a positive but constructive comment, e.g. 'That's a lot of claps - can we do it again and all count out loud to 4?'

Play 'copy me' activities where children copy a single body percussion sound in a rhythmic pattern. Extend this by encouraging children to copy two sounds in a rhythmic pattern.

Play body percussion relay: Invite children to stand in a circle, invent a body percussion pattern (e.g. clap-stamp-snap), and pass it around, with other children adding new elements to create a long sequence.



This fosters rhythmic memory, sequencing and cooperation.

Use body percussion to enhance story/picture books, asking children to create sounds for different parts of the story.

Age 4-5 - EY B3

Become more confident in exploring different ways to make sounds with sound makers and instruments

Model playing instruments so that children can learn to hold and play them, demonstrating increasing control over time.



Some children may be able to find and mark the pulse/beat on an instrument or sound maker when singing a song or listening to music. If they are struggling to feel and play the pulse/beat, try demonstrating playing the rhythm instead.

Encourage children to experiment with different ways of making sounds (e.g. tapping, scraping, shaking, or using beaters and sticks made of different materials such as wood, metal or plastic) and controlling those sounds (e.g. louder, faster). Challenge children to explore their own ideas, e.g. 'How many ways can you make a sound with the claves?'



Children may start to control playing quietly/loudly or quickly/slowly etc. and show that they understand this vocabulary in the context of musical activity.



Explain where and how instruments should be stored, but work with the school staff to ensure that playing instruments is not restricted to one area. Instruments should be allowed to be taken to other areas to play (on the understanding that they are returned ready for others to use/group music sessions).

Provide a variety of resources for children to make their own sound makers using recycled materials such as cartons, bottle-tops, plastic bottles, and textured papers.



Have recycled materials available all the time, not just as a one-off activity, and change what is available regularly. This encourages children to refine their design to achieve the sound they want. (For example, they may initially fill containers to the top when making shakers and be disappointed by the lack of sound, but by having time to experiment they can discover what amount of filling works best.) It also provides plenty of opportunity to explore playing technique, e.g. shaking loudly/quietly/quickly/slowly to achieve different effects.

Work with school staff to provide the opportunity for children to move around the classroom and take sound makers/other instruments to different areas of play, e.g. 'What does a guiro sound like when scraped by a plastic cow?!'



This can present challenges, e.g. do we want a djembe in the sand pit? Teachers will need to establish the importance of keeping selves and equipment safe, and of tidying up at the end.



There could also be a potential for an outdoor music area with more hardy instruments available outside at all times.

Encourage children to explore rhythm patterns when playing instruments by copying their patterns, so that the child is the leader and the adult is following their lead.

Play simple rhythmic patterns for children to echo on instruments/sound makers.



Sometimes use word patterns, and sometimes just play.



Indicate 'my turn, your turn' with your eyes or hand gestures.



As well as echo games, you could play 'question and answer' games where the answer is a different rhythm from the question.

Play simple rhythmic accompaniments to songs, based on word/syllabic patterns, and invite children to join in.

Age 4-5

C Creating and developing musical ideas

Age 4-5 - EY C1

Improvise vocally, exploring different sounds and adapting known songs

Model playful use of known songs, changing words or mixing up phrases/fragments. Encourage children to suggest their own changes and try them out together.

Encourage children to make up their own songs and praise all attempts (no matter how unconventional they are!).

Encourage children to explore how different environments and materials can change the sounds that they make.



Resources can include boxes, cardboard tubes, tents/teepees or scarves to make an area enclosed. Areas with hard surfaces that can be explored include corridors, kitchens, and tunnels in outdoor play areas. Natural materials can be used too (e.g. crunching in autumnal leaves).

Provide access to microphones and other music technology to encourage vocal exploration.



Recordable buttons can be used to capture vocal play.

Use rhymes that require changes in vocal timbre, dynamics, and pitch – e.g. whispering, a giant's voice, a witch's voice, tired, excited, grumpy etc. Encourage children to experiment with moving through their natural pitch range, using high, middle and low voices.

Age 4-5 - EY C2

Select sounds and create patterns

Continue to encourage free exploration of instruments and sound makers, interacting with the child to

develop their skills when appropriate.



Children may briefly decide upon and repeat patterns of sounds.



Teachers may copy the child's idea and this may lead to a 'musical conversation'. Teachers may add to the child's idea and vice versa.

Record children's improvisations and play them back to see children's reactions.

Encourage children to choose sounds and make up patterns to represent different characters or events in a story or song.



Use traditional nursery rhymes, books from the classroom, and other familiar stories.

Invite children to create musical ideas based on given themes, e.g. minibeasts, the seaside.



Speak to the adults who work at the school to see if this can be linked into the topic work that children are doing in their classrooms.

Encourage children to use symbols to represent their own compositions, e.g. picture cards/objects to represent different sounds or patterns.

Encourage children to use toys or picture cards to create rhythm compositions using word rhythms. For example, order a group of objects (e.g. orange, pear, apple, bear – linked to the book of the same name by Emily Gravett) then clap and say them together.



This rhythm work can link up with early phonics.

Invite children to choose instruments to represent different ingredients (e.g. shaker for sugar, drum for flour). Encourage children to 'mix' their chosen sounds in an order of their choosing to create a musical recipe.

Encourage children to record voices or environmental sounds on a tablet and manipulate them by changing

speed or pitch and layering to build an electronic soundscape.

Age 4-5

D Singing/playing music

Age 4-5 - EY D1

Join in with echo or call and response songs, either spoken or within a limited range of notes

Sing in a cuckoo style with two notes (*soh* and *mi*) supporting children to create their own responses. e.g. 'Hello how are you?' (Child) 'I am happy.'



Because young children have very short vocal folds, they can comfortably sing a limited pitch range of D to B. Teachers should consider the pitch of the starting note to ensure the whole song can be sung within the children's pitch range.



It is perfectly fine for male teachers or those with lower voices to sing an octave lower than the children.

Age 4-5 - EY D2

Join in with a range of rhymes and songs from different genres, cultures and traditions, pitch-matching with greater accuracy within the toneset *doh* to *soh*, developing an awareness of posture, breath control and diction over time

Sing songs and rhymes with children regularly, using a variety of songs from different genres, cultures and traditions.



Teachers can collect a range of different songs known to the children from their homes and cultures.



When choosing songs for early years children to sing, consider the toneset (the number of different pitches). Songs that have a limited toneset are best to develop accurate pitching.



While providing a secure basis for learning about musical elements and language, nursery rhymes generally cover a larger toneset (number of pitches) than early years children are able to sing. Adults can sing nursery rhymes to early years children, but if the intention is that children match the pitch, then the song should cover a more limited toneset.



Pitch range is also important. Because young children have very short vocal folds, they can comfortably sing a limited pitch range of D to B. Teachers should consider the pitch of the starting note to ensure the whole song can be sung within the children's pitch range.

Sing songs that use a variety of metres, including 3/4 and 6/8.



School staff may not be familiar with the term 'metre' or the concepts behind it, but they will learn songs from you and repeat them with children outside of your sessions. Thus including a variety of metres in your songs will increase the prevalence of different metres in the day-to-day repertoire of the school.

Where appropriate, introduce activities that help children to develop their understanding of how posture affects singing, e.g. being a puppet and flopping down then slowly uncurling; moving to recorded music in different ways (for example, moving to 'The Queen of Sheba' in a dignified way but not stiff like a soldier).

Similarly, activities that focus on breathing can be introduced, e.g. breathing deeply and imagining that you are blowing up a tyre around your middle, keeping shoulders relaxed.



This is not to say that you must always focus on posture and breathing in an early years context; children may be singing while playing, drawing, moving, lying down etc. and that freedom to sing spontaneously should be encouraged. The activities to support posture and breathing suggested here are simply about developing children's awareness that the way you stand/sit and breathe can affect the way you sound.

Encourage children to explore diction through rhythmic chanting using different voices, e.g. asking 'Have you brought your speaking voice?' with children responding 'Yes I've brought my speaking voice'. Repeat with others e.g. whispering, robot, witch's etc. and remember to add a simple melody for singing voice.

Continue to provide opportunities for children to sing both individually and in a group.

Whenever possible, sing unaccompanied (rather than using backing tracks) to support accurate and independent singing.

Encourage children to sing songs from home.



Be ready with a response to any suggestions children may make that may not be suitable for sharing in the school context (e.g. in terms of inappropriate lyrics), without either endorsing the music or making a big thing of your disapproval, e.g. 'That's a good song for dancing, but those words are not okay for children to be singing.'

Age 4-5 - EY D3

Respond to symbols that represent different sounds and instruments

Explore a variety of symbols and images to represent the sounds that children create with voices, instruments and sound makers. For example, children may use their own drawings of instruments to be a simple 'score' or a record of an invented piece.

Use different symbols to represent different sounds and involve children in agreeing how to respond to each symbol – e.g. play the drum when you see the circle and play the maracas when you see the wiggly line.

Create a weather music calendar, where each day's weather is associated with a child-composed sound (e.g. tapping drums quietly for rain). Revisit the calendar to compare patterns.



This can be with vocal sounds, body percussion, tuned or untuned percussion or other sound makers.

As well as using images/drawn symbols, toys/small objects can be used to represent a sequence of sound. For example, block – fir cone – block – fir cone might be clap – stamp – clap – stamp.

Explore ways to notate pitch when using tuned percussion. For example, children may be able to follow simple line scores for rising/falling pitch using glissandi, or they may be able to follow colours on rainbow coloured instruments such as xylophones, bells and Boomwhackers.

Age 4-5

E Singing/playing with others

Age 4-5 - EY E1

Follow others more purposefully when singing/playing together and act as a leader themselves

Introduce activities with instruments that involve children copying a leader. This could be copying a pulse/beat or rhythmic pattern, or matching the dynamics or tempo of the leader. Invite children to be the leader.

Provide opportunities for children to 'conduct' others in instrumental playing, using agreed signals to show start/stop, pitch, dynamics, tempo etc.

Provide opportunities for children to create their own verse of a song and encourage others to copy (e.g. in the scarf song 'Going Up, Going Down', ask 'How else can we move?' 'Great idea Jess, let's do that!').

Provide opportunities for children to develop their skills of working together, modelling skills of collaboration, turn-taking etc.

Providing these opportunities is vital, but note that young children take time to move from being egocentric to being aware and concerned about others. It can take until age 6/7 for children to be able to work collaboratively together.



It is always interesting to observe who the leaders are (and provide others with the opportunity to lead as appropriate). In a partner activity, it is common for young children to work alongside each other rather than as actual partners. Be ready for two 'leaders' to clash if they want different things to happen. Equally be ready for two with less maturity to just sit back, watch and wait for encouragement.

Create opportunities for children to interact with a partner through music and movement, e.g. one child plays a rhythmic pattern on a drum or tambourine while the other moves, then they swap, creating a short dance-drum conversation.



This promotes turn-taking, listening and collaborative creativity.

Make musical suggestions that shape a song or activity

Encourage children to make suggestions for the most appropriate instruments/sound makers/vocal sounds/body percussion to create soundscapes as a group.



Ask children to try out their ideas and support their experimentation through questioning, valuing all ideas. If they suggest a big drum for a mouse, ask them to show you what they mean. You might question them further if they create a huge booming sound, but understand their thinking if they use their nails to scratch the skin of the drum as the mouse scurries.

Continue to give children options to select from when singing songs or playing instruments, e.g. 'Shall we sing this song loudly or quietly?', 'Shall we play the shaker quickly or slowly?'

Showcase individual children's invented songs and invite everyone to join in.

Age 4-5

F Performing and communicating

Age 4-5 - EY F1

Enjoy sharing songs and musical activities with an 'audience'

Continue to encourage children to do ad hoc 'performances' anytime and anywhere. Create a culture where it is natural to initiate the sharing of singing, movement, and playing instruments/sound makers.



'Performance' does not have to mean an organised performance with an audience. It is simply about sharing music with others. Children will often naturally perform to/alongside each other during the course of their play. However, the school staff may want to organise opportunities for sharing songs and musical activities with families.



These 'performances' will often happen when the visiting music teacher is not present, but recording these performances via sound buttons, iPads or digital microphones can enable them to be shared with the music teacher as a way of allowing all children to have their voices heard.

Where space allows, talk to the school staff about providing a 'stage' area either inside or outside, with props (changed regularly) and dressing up clothes to encourage spontaneous performance and role play.

With the support of school staff, encourage parents/carers to act as an 'audience' to children's spontaneous performances at home, giving them full attention and celebrating their achievements.

Where appropriate, school staff can organise opportunities for children to perform to parents/carers.



Performances should be kept short, with a focus on enjoyment and celebration.



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