

**MUSIC, YOUR CLASSROOM,
AND THE AUDITORY ENVIRONMENT**

Educational Guide
Enrique C. Feldman, M.S., M.M.
Founder, Global Learning Foundation

www.globallearning.foundation
Developing Potential to Reveal Purpose
formerly the F.A.M.E. Foundation
“Living Like a Child” on Facebook
@EnriqueHank on Twitter

USING MUSIC TO ELEVATE THE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

Inviting the Learner: How any learner begins their day - Music & Attitude

Engaging the Learner: Preparing our children’s brains with music and movement

Focusing the Mind: Breathing and Music for Alert Minds and Relaxed Bodies

Meal Times: Music for improved nutrient absorption and digestion

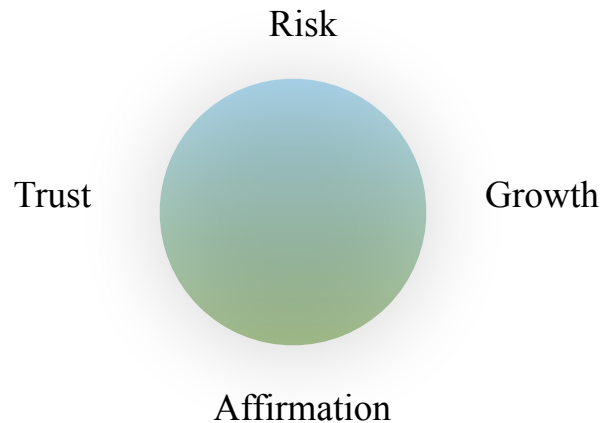
Nap Times: Music for Lowering our Body Rhythms and Waking Up

Artistic Storytelling: Music for engaging young readers

Our Adult Environment: Adult Breathing for Stress Reduction

INVITING THE LEARNER

As children enter their classroom, we want to invite them to learn. For authentic learning to take place, the child must be willing to risk. Before they risk as a learner with questions and actions, they must trust in their teachers and in themselves. Before they trust, they must be affirmed. Below is The Cycle of Growth®.



Any learners must essentially feel safe to speak up, try new ideas, and ask questions. A sense of safety is so important, and the auditory environment can help create this sense of safety in a very natural way. Body rhythms are usually still “waking up,” in the morning, while in some cases a child’s energy may be very high if that child has had any kind of sugar in their morning meal. In other cases, a child may be missing their parent or grandparent. In any of those cases, music that is relaxing, happy, soothing, and authentic can help enormously. By authentic, we mean real instruments which produce very different frequencies that electronically produced music. Below is a list of types of music which can be very helpful.

- Early Classical (Bach, Corelli, Handel, Mozart)
- Folk Fusion (Kim Robertson, Yanni, Carlos Nakai)
- Sounds of Nature (music highlighted by the sounds of nature)

ENGAGING THE LEARNER WITH MUSIC, MOVEMENT and BRAIN GAMES

Description:

Brain Games are simple and powerful games which help prepare young children as readers, along with integrating math and science skills in the form of patterning and sequencing. As a daily routine take your students through a series of brain games which should integrate the use of improvisation related to patterns and ideas which children comes up with. Improvisation fosters creativity and if you are able to ask your students abstract and linear questions related to what kinds of patterns they can use, you will also be assisting your students in the building of critical thinking skills.

Key Components:

- Crossing your Midline
- Starting with simplicity and building in complexity
- Full-bodied movement to engage kinesthetic learners
- Inviting all learning styles to the table (visual, auditory, kinesthetic)
- Embrace a love for learning

Artistic Connection: Music and Movement

Musical Elements: Rhythm and Frequency

Academic Connections: EARLY LEARNING STANDARDS

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT, HEALTH AND SAFETY

Strand 3: Fine Motor Development

b. Uses eye-hand coordination to perform simple tasks.

SOCIAL EMOTIONAL

Strand 3: Responsibility for Self and Others; Concept 1: Self-Control

b. Understands and follows rules in the learning environment.

LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

Strand 2: Pre-Reading Process; Unlisted

Crossing of the Midline intentionally in a scaffolded manner

MATHEMATICS

Strand 3: Patterns; Concept 1: Patterns

a. Copies simple patterns b. Extends simple patterns c. Creates simple patterns

FINE ART

Strand 2: Music and Creative Movement; Concept 1: Creating Music and Movement

c. Sings/moves to familiar rhymes, songs, and/or chants.

FOCUSING THE MIND

The ideal state for learning is having an alert mind while simultaneously having a relaxed body. Breathing is the key and music helps us find a rhythm to breath with that slows down our pulse and calms the body, while still allowing the mind to be alert. With young children, finding play-based ways to do this is key, as play is a wonderful bridge to not only learning, but to creating a desire to learn. There are many ways to engage a young child with breathing. Below are some of the games we have used since 2001 with great success, both with feedback from teachers and parents and with research.

- The Tree and the Wind
- Kleenex Peek-a-Boo
- Kleenex Parachutes
- Spiderman Literacy
- Spiderman Echo and Pattern
- The Cycle of Life
- The Seed in the Ground

MEAL TIMES

When we eat and our bodies are relaxed with a slower heart rate, our bodies do a much better job of absorbing nutrients and our digestive system works much better. Below are some simple guidelines to help meal times become a more healthy and enjoyable experience for everyone!

- Approximately 15 minutes before any meal begin to play early classical music at approximately 60 beats per minute. **Make sure the music can easily be heard.**
- Model breathing with the music with whatever way the children prefer
- As the tables are being set (hopefully with the children setting the table), model moving in a relaxed manner “with the flow of the music.”
- As you all begin to eat, model chewing your food a lot before swallowing.
- Throughout the meal, model relaxed breathing.

NAP TIMES

Early Classical Music that is very slow with slow moving melodies help our bodies slow down our pulse and can help us enter a restful time, including the taking of naps for children. Below are some simple guidelines to help nap times become part of your children's routine.

- Approximately 15 minutes before any nap begin to play early classical music at approximately 60 beats per minute or even slower preferable.
- Make sure the music can be easily heard.
- Model breathing with the music with whatever way the children prefer. For example, some children love the visualization game of "getting on their cloud," and making the sound of the wind as it gently blows.
- Throughout the meal, model relaxed breathing, with the music.

ARTISTIC STORYTELLING

Using music while reading changes the auditory environment. It creates a movie-like atmosphere and is more exciting. The response over the years is that children want to be read to more, which leads to them wanting to read. Below is a simple guide to reading with music.

- Choose a piece of music to read to that is exciting. Starting with Early Classical Music that is at approximately 120 beats per minute is an easier place to start than later romantic and more dramatic classical music.
- Begin reading and focus on changing the volume of your voice to match the volume of the music as it changes.
- Continue reading and begin to change the pace of your voice based on the changing speed of the music.
- Continue reading and begin to change the inflection of your voice based on both characters in the book and the inflection of the music

Variations

As an extension of this technique, you can begin to use classical music written in more recent times. The music of the Romantic era is wonderful to use, and keeps you on your toes, as it changes tempo and emotion in an unpredictable manner. This is the main difference between classical music of the Romantic era and early classical or music of the Baroque era, which is much easier to predict. I've used the music of many composers who are known for music that changes mood quickly and often, including the music of Tchaikovsky, Copland, Rachmaninoff, Mahler, and Beethoven. Below is an example of Romantic classical music that I have used and that is very effective. I've matched them to some books to give you a starting point.

<u>Book</u>	<u>Suggested Music</u>	<u>Composer</u>
Giraffes Can't Dance	Summon the Heroes	John Williams
Jazzy in the Jungle	Piano Concerto No. 1	Tchaikovsky
Please, Baby, Please	Birks Werks	Dizzy Gillespie
The Kiss That Missed	Gandalf	Johan De Meij

As you continue to find your own matches of music and books, keep a running list. Ideally, you should keep not only a growing collection of books to read to children, but also a list of music to accompany the books.

OUR ADULT ENVIRONMENT

BREATHING FOR STRESS REDUCTION

Entering the Performance Zone

Key

Learning Environment: Movement and Music

Domain: Cognitive Development

Specific Academic Area: Ability to focus

Educational Bonus: physical development - improved circulation, and social emotional

Suggested Music: Slow Classical Music (60 beat)

Materials Needed: none

Remember that your goal is to have a relaxed physical body and an alert mind to be in the optimal state of mind and body for performance in most any situation in life, including making decisions, dealing with stress, studying, athletics, music and leadership scenarios. I recommend doing the following exercises at least three times a day, morning, afternoon and evening. As with any kind of exercise do consult with your doctor before using these exercises, especially if you are on any kind of medication.

Step 1: Deep breathing and movement

This first step will elevate your heart rate and your energy level. The use of slow 60 beat per minute classical music is recommended with steps 1 and 2.

1. Begin by breathing in through you nose and our through your mouth.
2. Breathe slowly, smoothly and deeply (do not pause at the top of the breath).
3. Imagine a balloon inside your stomach and chest area and let it expand evenly on all sides as you inhale and exhale.
4. Focus your thoughts on something that is relaxing, calming and/or empowering.
5. Repeat long enough to feel an improved sense of relaxation (at least a minute).
6. Add stretching as you continue to breathe.
7. Inhale as you go into the stretch and hold your breath (without tensing up) and the stretch for approximately 10 seconds.
8. Exhale as you let go of the stretch.
9. Over a period of time, increase the time you hold the stretch up to approximately 20 seconds.

Hint

Holding your breath while stretching (without tensing up) will help energize you.

Usually stretches recommended by your doctor and/or personal trainer are appropriate. The best source that I have found for informed decisions on stretching are physical therapists. From that source I have learned that when you stretch you want to hold the stretch for approximately 30 seconds, done several times. Also, you do not want to “bounce the stretch” as you sometimes see volunteer coaches of youth sports use. This “bounce” is a small trauma for those muscles and is something to avoid. Also, stretching is not the first step before any type of outdoor activity. Walking, jogging, running or some type of movement that warms your muscle up is first, then the stretch. Stretching is not a warm up! I use stretches that focus on areas of my body that are sore, stiff, etc. The key is to make this a part of your daily routine.

After you have gotten into a smooth and relaxed routine of deep breathing and stretching, measure your heart rate and write it down. If you count your pulse for 10 seconds, then multiply by 6 to obtain your beats per minute. Your heart rate should be slightly or moderately elevated, depending on your physical condition. Also, if you are either new to these kind of techniques or if you are experiencing a great deal of stress, give yourself time to become accustomed to these exercises. Some bodies and minds need more practice than others, but all of these techniques are learnable.

Step 2: Measured/rhythmic breathing

This second step will lower your heart rate, keep your energy level up and increase mental focus.

- Breathe in through your nose for 2 seconds and out through your mouth for 4 seconds.
- Repeat this at least 8 times.
- Continue by breathing in for 3 counts and out for 6 counts.
- Repeat this 4 - 6 times.
- Continue by breathing in for 4 counts and out for 8 counts.
- Repeat this 1 – 2 times and more after you’ve begin comfortable this slow a breath.
- Continue by breathing in for 3 counts and out for 6 counts.
- Repeat this 2 - 4 times.
- Continue by breathing in for 2 counts and out for 4 counts and slow your pace gradually to just below 60 beats per minute.
- Repeat this at least 8 times.

After each step, measure your heart rate and write it down. In an ideal situation, you would want to be at approximately 60 beats per minute at the end of step 2. Many variables can affect your heart rate such as medication, stress, and fitness level.