The Music and Early Literacy Connection

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Language Acquisition to Early Literacy

Role of Music

Babies develop their sense of hearing while still in the womb.



Babies naturally hear and respond to music, which is their first language.

Babies are drawn to oral language through rhythm, repetition, and rhyme.



Songs have rhythm, repetition, and rhyme built in.

Babies and young children retain language based on repetition.



Songs and finger plays consist of repetition. Vocabulary is better retained in songs where children are invited to join in.

Young children begin to learn that words are made up of smaller sounds.



Melodies divide words into smaller parts, and present language in patterns that make sense to the brain. Example: Singing the alphabet. The alphabet structure typically doesn't make sense to a child until presented in a song where the letters are learned and retained in a pattern.

Young children notice print and understand how it links to words they hear.



Children already know melodies through nursery rhymes and can participate in reading.

Example: Children are more likely to sing "Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star," than say the words if simply read from a book.

Children learn sounds of letters and phonemes in preparation for learning to read.



Songs naturally divide words into syllables and sounds so they are internalized. The built in repetition and rhyme increases understanding and retention.

Get more information at www.ReachOutandRead.org





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Babies and young children retain language based on repetition.	Songs and finger plays consist of repetition. Vocabulary is better retained in songs where children are invited to join in.
Young children begin to learn that words are made up of smaller sounds.	Melodies divide words into smaller parts, and present language in patterns that make sense to the brain. Example: Singing the alphabet. The alphabet structure typically doesn't make sense to a child until presented in a song where the letters are learned and retained in a pattern.
Young children notice print and understand how it links to words they hear.	Children already know melodies through nursery rhymes and can participate in reading. Example: Children are more likely to sing "Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star," than say the words if simply read from a book.
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