

全天在歌唱

孩子在出世前已經開始聽到聲音並做出反應。事實上，就算在出世後的最初幾日，他們已經能夠聽得出來自己媽媽的聲音。畢竟，他們一直在聽媽媽講話已經有幾個月了。

他們的大腦裏面已經有這種交流，而這將會幫助他們聽得明並且講話，但是在接下來的幾年裏，他們需要更多的機會聆聽同練習講話。歌曲能夠以每個人都喜歡的一種方法來為孩子提供這種機會。

“兒語”

全世界的成年人好像都有一個特殊的辦法同嬰兒講話。當嬰兒還小時，我們講話時聲音大一點，用簡單的單詞和句子，講話稍稍慢點，在句子之間停一下，並且一遍一遍地重複同樣的片語，而且經常用唱歌的語調。

因為這種“兒語”符合嬰兒聽高音好過聽低音的本能，所以可以引起他們的注意。當成年人使用簡單的單詞並且經常重複時，嬰兒更容易明白他們在講什麼。簡單的單詞、重複、輕快的音調——這可以是許多孩童歌曲的特點。實際上，從遊戲時間到睡覺時間，歌曲在與寶寶的溝通上有特殊的作用，並且隨著孩子的成長而繼續有重要的作用。

動起來

就算在小童能夠講話之前，歌曲伴隨著姿勢同動作能讓孩子們自動參與。許多這些歌曲指出身體每個部位的名稱。首先，你把著你的寶寶的手來指著他或她的身體的不同部位。之後，你的寶寶將會自己參與，模仿你的手勢和身體動作。之後慢慢地，他或她將能夠講越來越多的單詞，直到最後你們一起歌唱。

節奏、韻律和重複

音樂同歌曲培養溝通中重要的一個技巧——聆聽。在歌曲裏邊，節奏同韻律可以強調重要的單詞，以便更加容易聽得出該單詞。另外，因為許多歌曲有好多次重複的句子，小童便有機會練習，跟著記住這個單詞和整個句子。

強調節奏

節奏最先吸引你的孩子來聽音樂同歌曲。也許這使他們想起媽媽的心跳——可能是他們聽到的其中一個最早的聲音。你可以通過將寶寶放在膝蓋上蹦跳或者通過同稍稍年長的小童拍手或者搖擺的方法來突出節奏感！

歌曲要簡單易學

對於新歌，在開始時你可以唱得慢點，以便孩子容易學。歌曲可能是歡快的，但是要等到孩子較好地熟悉歌曲之後先自加快節奏。一旦孩子熟悉了歌曲，你可以停頓，讓他們唱出下一個單詞。例如說，節奏經常會幫他們記得一句歌詞的最後一個字。

跟著CD學歌曲

如果你不知道任何小童歌曲，從而需要一些幫助來開始，那麼你可以從圖書館借一些CD。但是不要只是聽歌。要花點時間和孩子一起學著唱歌。即使你的嗓音不完美，但只有你才能將歌曲改編來適應你自己的孩子的年齡和興趣。

編新歌

引起小童注意的一個方法是在歌曲中使用他們的名字。你也可以在熟悉的歌曲中編新歌詞來表達日常事務或者活動。例如，當要離開朋友家時，試著按照你的孩子喜歡的歌曲的韻律唱“告別時間到，說再見”。有些孩子非常不願意從一個活動轉到另一個活動。像這樣編一個歌曲可以改變孩子的心情以及預示下一個活動將是什麼，從而可以有所幫助。

有時歌曲比命令效果更好。在宣佈吃飯時間時，試著用熟悉的韻律唱“如果你餓了並且你知道，過來吃飯”。

適合所有場合的歌曲

對於所有場合都有適合的歌曲：描述熟悉的活動、使日常活動更順利地進行、調整壞心情以及在小睡前放鬆。分享音樂可以建立親情，並使每個人增添好心情。

Betsy Mann編寫

Singing through the Day

Children start hearing and responding to sounds before they are born. In fact, even in the first few days of life, they recognize their own mother's voice. After all, they've been listening to her talk for months.

Connections have already been made in their brain that will help them understand and speak, but in the next few years, they need lots more opportunities to hear and practice language. Songs give children those opportunities in a way that's fun for everyone.

"Baby talk"

Adults all over the world seem to have a special way of talking to babies. When they are little, we make our voice higher, use simple words and sentences, speak more slowly, pause between sentences, and repeat the same phrases over and over, often in a sing song tone of voice.

This kind of "baby talk" gets infants' attention because it fits with their ability to hear higher pitched sounds better than lower pitched sounds. Babies understand more easily what people are talking about when adults use simple words and repeat them often. Simple words, repetition, lilting tone... that could be a description of many children's songs. Indeed, songs have a special place in communication with babies, from playtime to bedtime, and they continue to be important as children grow.

Get active

Songs that include gestures and movement allow children to join in, even before they can say the words. Take the song "Head and shoulders, knees and toes". At first, you will move your baby's hands to point to the different parts of his or her body. Later, your little one will participate by imitating your hand and body movements. Then gradually, he or she will be able to add more and more words until finally you're singing along together.

Rhythm, rhyme and repetition

Music and songs develop listening skills, an essential part of communication. In songs, rhythm and rhyme make the important words stand out so that they are easier to hear. Also, because many songs have a chorus that is repeated several times, children get a chance to practise and therefore remember words and whole sentences.

Emphasize the rhythm

Rhythm is what first attracts young children to music and songs. Maybe it reminds them of the beat of their mother's heart, probably one of the first sounds they heard. You can emphasize the rhythm by bouncing a baby on your knee or by clapping and swaying with older children. If you feel like it, why not dance together!

Make songs easy to learn

You can make it easier for children to learn a new song by singing it very slowly at first. It may be a lively song, but wait till they know it better before speeding up the pace. Once children become familiar with a song, you can pause to let them fill in the next word. Often, the rhyme will help them remember the last word in a line, for instance.

Learning songs from tapes

If you don't know any children's songs and need some help getting started, you can borrow tapes from the library. But don't just listen to the songs. Take a bit of time and learn to sing them with the children. Even if your voice isn't perfect, no tape can adapt the songs to the age and interests of your particular children the way you can.

Making up new songs

One way to get children's attention is by using their names in a song. You can also make up new words for familiar songs to accompany your routines and activities. For example, when it's time to leave a friend's house, try singing "Time to leave, say good-bye" to the tune of "Frère Jacques". Some children find moving from one activity to another very stressful. A made-up song like this can help by changing the mood and by giving the signal for what will happen next.

A song sometimes gets better results than an order. Try announcing mealtime with "If you're hungry and you know it, come and eat", sung to the tune of "If you're happy and you know it".

Songs for all occasions

There are songs for all occasions: for describing familiar activities, for making routines go more smoothly, for changing a bad mood and for relaxing before nap time. Sharing music can build bonds and add good times to everyone's day.

by Betsy Mann