

The Cycle of Seasons

Sun Catchers

Lorna Heyge
Audrey Sillick



Parent Guidebook

**MUSIK
GARTEN®**

Music for Singing, Dancing and Listening

The Cycle of Seasons Parent Book

Sun Catchers

Lorna Heyge
Audrey Sillick



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Dear Parents,

We welcome this opportunity to share some ideas with you for making music every day. Your home is your child's most important learning environment during the crucial early years, and you can nurture a love of learning there which will sustain him/her through a lifetime. We hope that these materials will aid you in bringing the joy of music and movement into your daily lives.

Through *The Cycle of Seasons* we hope to draw your whole family into a music-making and environmental experience. Your participation with your child will be especially meaningful for you both, for it affirms the value of your shared activities. What delight it is for a child to have you as his/her adult companion in fun! How wholesome and memorable for children to be playful and energetic in the open air, on a patch of green grass or a snowbank! At this stage **feeling** is more important than **knowing**.

Sun Catchers offers you a collection of songs, sounds, poetry and stories, with many additional ideas to explore with your child. We encourage you to find and plan time for exploring together and hope that our suggestions will help you make music in the course of your many daily adventures.

Make Music Every Day

Move, Listen, Sing and Play - these are the musical activities of *The Cycle of Seasons*. Each of our Musikgarten classes involves the children in these activities, and you can multiply the experience by playing musically at home. Class time is an opportunity for the music teacher to plant a seed, to share an idea with you and your child. Your active participation with your child at home will nurture the seed, help it to grow and lead to the next step.

Move - this is your child's favorite way of being and his/her best way of learning. You will find many kinds of movement games in this collection, from a finger game such as *Six Little Ducks* to all the movements you can add to the jazzy arrangement of *All Around the Garden*. The recorded movement stories bring you and your child a special challenge, learning to listen to the musical realization of a story such as *The Dandelion* and responding to it through movement.

Listen - this is perhaps the most important skill you can help your child refine. The **listening games** with the animal cards will draw your child's attention immediately. Use them as a springboard for starting to listen very carefully outdoors to the animal voices in the environment. The recorded movement stories mentioned above give the opportunity for considerable growth, as they require the combination of listening and moving.

Echo Patterns are another very important part of every Musikgarten class. Patterns are understandable musical building blocks for children, first musical *words* which they can remember and later use to create their own music. The echo patterns we do now become the basis for reading music and formal instrument lessons in just a few short years.

Children love echoing patterns! Extend the game beyond the recording. Make up further patterns for your child. Let your child give you patterns to echo. Soon your child will be ready to add language to the patterns, and be well started on his/her pathway to musical literacy.

Sing - you have chosen a music program for your child at the most important point in his/her life, during the early childhood years. Sing often for your child, and s/he will join you in singing. Just as your child started talking by first repeating syllables, then speaking single words and gradually putting a few words together in sentences, so likewise will s/he come to singing. There are many songs such as *Good Day* and *Oh, John the Rabbit* which give your child the opportunity to sing a few words to be an active part of the song. Most of all your child needs your singing companionship to become a singer.

Sing often with your child! The songs on the recording provide an excellent model; nothing, however, is more important for your child's musical development than **YOUR** active participation in music-making.

Play - this wonderful word of childhood has a double meaning for us: musical play in general and playing instruments specifically. Homemade instruments such as plastic jar shakers, cooking pot drums and wooden spoon rhythm sticks are wonderful musical implements for children. Consider also purchasing a drum for your child. Play the drum with your hands, not a mallet. This way the child is developing wonderful fine motor skills, which are an excellent preparation for instrumental lessons. Talk with your music teacher about buying the Musikgarten wooden drum with the natural skin head.

Most importantly, **make music every day**. Add a song to what you are already doing.

Explore Nature Together - Go Outdoors Whenever You Can

Winter is a season of rest, the time of year when many animals hibernate and plant life is dormant. It is a wonderful time of year to explore the outdoors with your child, to discover the shapes and sounds, the touches and smells of another season. Try some of the following activities together with your child.

- Go for a winter walk. Look at tree shapes as you walk.
- Gather pine cones for the fireplace or to dip in melted fat for woodpeckers.
- Find a quiet place to sit and listen to the wind song or other sounds.
- Visit playgrounds, parks and woods; they feel different in winter.

Think about birds in winter. Large flocks of birds migrate to more southerly locations of our North American continent in search of food supplies.

Other birds stay year round in their home place.

- Set up a feeder near the house so you can observe bird visitors from inside. Sunflower seeds, roasted (unsalted) peanuts in the shell and suet hung in a used onion bag on a tree trunk attract hungry birds.
- Give your child the opportunity to take responsibility for winter friends by filling the feeders and keeping a shallow pan of water ready.

If you live in a region where there is snow:

- Dig in the snow to see what treasures are buried underneath.
- Examine snow with a magnifying glass.
- Pile up snow in different shapes for an “art” show.
- Track the footprints in the snow to detect who has passed by.
- Try one of the wonderful snow sports such as cross-country skiing, sledding, tobogganning, snow-shoeing, or simply build a “snow ma’am.”

Spring is the season of reawakening and new birth, of lengthening days and gentle rains. Each day trees and plants burst forth, leafing out almost overnight. Consider some of the following ideas:

- Take a walk to listen to the birds and to watch their activities. Birds in spring are always on the move, busy about the business of finding a mate, building a nest and raising a family. Wonder with your child about birds and how they build a nest without hands.

- Walk like a bird, bobbing your head as you go. Why do birds move their heads so much when they walk?
- Take a walk in the gentle rain. Splash in puddles!
- Look for signs of plants pushing through the earth and revisit them daily to watch them growing. Growing things hold endless fascination for your child who feels this is somehow “like me!”
- Involve your child in the winter cleanup before spring planting by providing a rake and other garden tools of manageable size.
- Plan a small area or bed for planting. Your child wants to touch and move everything! A window box or a barrel make good containers.
- Plant herbs such as mint, both for fragrance and to use in cooking. Sunflowers and tomatoes are rewarding plants for little children.
- Avoid fertilizers and chemicals.
- Show your child how to handle plants and animals with care and respect; you are the model, companion and first teacher.
- Check out ponds of snow melt water or rainpools in your neighborhood to watch nature at work. Move quietly and slowly, learning to watch and freeze. You will be rewarded with unpredictable surprises.
- Watch for the supreme aerialist of the insect world, the dragonfly.

You and Your Child - Companions in Musical Play

Our spring cycle brings you many songs to take outdoors, to go *Walking in the Green Grass*, dancing *Underneath the Willow Tree* and looking for and listening to young animals. Ideas for outdoor exploration will help you feel the intensity of new birth in the plant and animal world. We can become part of the excitement of the yearly renewal as we observe Mother Nature’s stirring and quickening rhythms to meet the challenges of the season. So, please join us with your child in the events of spring. Join your child and have fun together playing with music. Through musical play your child lays the groundwork to participate in music-making in its many forms - a gift to last.

Above all, take time to be with your child. Trust your instincts to explore together, using the songs, movements, stories, poems and dances from this booklet to celebrate the seasons and make the path more pleasurable. You and your child will find endless fascination.

I Hear the Mill Wheel

SC 1, No. 1

I hear the mill wheel, ti - ka ti - ka ta - ka.

I hear the mill wheel turn - ing. Tik, ti - ka ta - ka

tik tik tak, ti - ka ta - ka, ti - ka ta - ka.

2 I hear the cart wheel, tika tika taka. Etc.

J'entends le Moulin is the French Canadian title of this rhythmic folksong. Listen to the recording and tap the beat on your knees, or on your child's back as s/he taps the beat on his/her own knees.

Take out rhythm sticks and tap them in different ways. The recording features the spoons tapping the mill wheel sound. Try to imitate the sound with spoons or other noisemakers you find around the house.

Recording: Children's Choir, Spoons, Piano

SC 1 = Sun Catchers CD 1; SC 2 = Sun Catchers CD 2

Hop, Old Squirrel

SC 1, No. 2

Hop, old squirrel, ei - dle - dum ei - dle - dum, Hop, old squirrel,
ei - dle - dum dee. Hop, old squirrel, ei - dle - dum, ei - dle - dum,
Hop, old squirrel, ei - dle - dum dee.

- 2 Dig, old squirrel
- 3 Hide, old squirrel
- 4 Swish your tail,
- 5 Run, old squirrel

This delightful American folksong allows your child to make suggestions for variations. Talk about the squirrels you have observed; what have you seen them doing? Sing and move to the song, making up a verse for each one of your family's ideas. Ask your child to move like a squirrel: encourage him/her to use the whole body,

Accompany the song on drums. Experiment making sounds for each of the motions in the song, hopping, digging, hiding, swishing, running - plus all the other ideas you have added.

When you go out to watch squirrels, be sure to leave them a treat. Peanuts are a favorite!

Recording: Children's Choir, Oboe, Bassoon, Piano, Vibraphone, Timpani, Belltree, Xylophone

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