



Family Music for Toddlers – Semester 1, Week 3 to 6

Dear Teachers,

I hope you had some successes in your first two classes. It is time to move to Week 3 through week 6. You will notice many songs and activities repeated. Think of it as extra practice or getting it right the second or third time. The children will love repeating these pieces and perhaps the parents may start to join in and sing.

On to some lesson tips:

Week 3

If you are way past Week 3, I don't want you to have the V-8 experience (I should have taught it THIS way!). Just put these ideas down for the next time you teach it.

Hello Song – By now this should be the cue for parents to stop talking and for toddlers to stop roaming. You can use this time to greet children and to settle the class into a tight-knit circle. Remember to greet those late-comers even after the song is long over.

When I was a Baby – A repeating song and a chance to extend the story of when YOU were a baby. I like to ask the children if they think I am a baby. No? Am I a little child? No? Are you a little child? What can you do now that you are a little child? Can you walk? Talk? Wave? Sing? Laugh? Parents can help you with this and suggest other things toddlers can do that Babies cannot.

Bounce Along – A repeating song. Fun and active. Here is a great place to add some parent education. I will put on the board this following:

Why do we bounce in class?

- *Children love to bounce on your outstretched legs*
- *Gives a full-bodied sensation of steady beat*
- *Stimulates the vestibular function of the ear –regulates body position, movement awareness in space and sense of balance*

It takes all of five seconds to point out this information as the parents take a breather from bouncing.

Duple Rhythm Patterns – Not yet time for individual responses. Hold off a week. Instead, add these patterns as often as possible after as many songs you can in the class. Stick with the four basic patterns.

Tap the Jingles – Can be used with sticks and drums as well. With scarves, you will need to change the verb “tap” with “wave” and voila, a whole new way to use this active song.



Tonal Rhythm Patterns – Same as duple rhythm patterns. Stick to the four basic patterns and have the group respond. You can also add the patterns that occurred in the song you just finished.

Teddy Bear – get ready for the parents to suddenly blurt out this song. Why do parents insist on singing this song with a baby tone to their voice? Sigh! Anyway, sing with a lovely voice and do the motions slowly so the toddlers can keep up with you. You are always welcome to make up totally new motions, and this is lots of fun to do. My favorite is turning on the floor. Listen to the parents groan!

Glazunov: Walt and Rock-bye- Baby – Yes, Repeats! There is nothing wrong and everything right to do these activities the same way you did them last week. Keep an eye for talking parents and get them moving. Suggest they pick up the child and place them on their hips when they dance. You could also do the rocking standing especially if all the toddlers are on the adult's hip.

Greeting Each Day – Whenever you tell a story in a toddler class, KISS – Keep it Simple, Sweetheart! Make your eyes shine and tell the story like it is the most exciting event of the day because every part of a toddler's day can be exciting. Use language that is repetitive. For example, "When I wake up in the morning, I open my eyes just like this." "When I wake up in the morning, I stretch like this." "When I wake up in the morning, I JUMP out of bed like this." Etc. The children will watch you and remember every word.

Did you notice there are only two new songs to introduce and the rest are repeats? Familiar for the toddlers; they want to do these songs over and over. BORING for the parents. How can we keep the parents from picking up their phone and texting? Engage the parents. Ask them for ideas on different ways to bounce in *Bounce Along*. Invite the parents to hum along with *Rock-a-bye Baby*. Ask them what other parts of our body can we wash in class for *Hands-a-Washing*. Ask them for other ideas on how we can tap our sticks. Keeping them involved, keeping them moving, keeps your class more than that "edutainment" class that is offered down the street.

Week 4

See The Pony Galloping – Although this begins as a bouncing song make sure you slow the end of the song down and act out "All tired out". The parents will appreciate the break. This is a fun piece to move around the room. Toddlers have not yet figured out the art of galloping but they can be swept up into the adult's arms and galloped around the room. Not too many repetitions or you may hear a parent blurt out, "This is an aerobics class!" Later in other lessons, you can certainly add sticks to this game, putting the sticks "to sleep" by laying them tiredly on the floor... and starting all over.

Peek-a-Boo - I keep my scarves in a box and often I will ask the child what color they would like? I don't expect a verbal answer so I will respond and say the color they chose. Then I ask what color they would like to give to their adult. Same non-verbal response and me responding with words describing the color they chose. Often I start a scarf activity with movement and will use "Bounce Along" as we bounce the scarf and then fly it in the sky. Eventually, though a child will "hide" under a scarf or a parent will initiate



a peek-a-boo game and I will move into the song. I make sure I play the game with every child in the room. At the end of the activity, I model folding a scarf and putting it away and make this a ritual every time scarves are put away. This extends throughout all my classes. I wash my scarves in a bag every month or so and replace them yearly.

Rum Tum Tum – I always model how I wish my drum to be played. I am always first. Taking turns is a skill that most toddlers are just beginning to grapple with at this age. You may have a toddler that believes EVERY turn is his/her turn. You also have the issue of learning to wait for their turn. If you set up a ritual that puts you in charge of the drum, this activity will soon be a favorite. I make sure the child is sitting on the adult's lap before I let them have a turn. I do not let other children play the drum when it is another child's turn. I respect all responses to my drum and thank them even if they are hiding behind their mom. It is OK to offer second turns if the class is small or if you are in a good mood.

Bajuski Baju – I sing this slowly and quietly which is quite different from the recorded version so I rarely use the recording in class. However, it can be fun in later weeks to expand the lullaby. After singing you can hand out with bells and shuck along with the recording. I put on the recording after I place the bells on the floor and when the music picks up we all move into shacking along with the recording. Then I may repeat *See the Pony Galloping* and put the bells to sleep at the end of the song.

Week 5

Walk Together, Children – This valuable piece comes back throughout all my classes because it can be used effectively to teach impulse control. Instead of singing, "Let's walk together to the mountaintop." I sing, "Let's walk together and then we stop." I think you can imagine what happens next. I can pause that stop 5 seconds, 10 seconds, 15 seconds and giggles erupting. For many children, the word "Stop" becomes their favorite word and they will shout it out when we reach that point in the song. Magical!

The Three Little Kittens – this story works well if you tell the story slowly and with expression. I like to start this activity by quietly say, "Once there were three little kittens, and they loved their mother very much. One day they were playing in their yard when Mother called them in for a snack. They ran to the door and took off their coats. But, (sing the first verse)." I will continue to tell the story and sing the different verses to carry on with the story.

The Old Grey Cat – This song can be sung straight or again, a story can be created around the song. The presentation of the activity depends upon the age of the children. If I have older children I will have more success with a story. If the children are barely two-years-old, I restrict the activity to the song and movement.

Ring Around the Rosey - You may find yourself singing and playing *Ring Around the Rosey* every week for the rest of your life. I once made this my end of class ritual for every class no matter what unit we were in. One lesson I decided to skip this activity and got three phone calls that afternoon from parents of children that were very upset that we missed our *Ring Around the Rosey*. I do dream of taking a year



off from singing it, lol, although the children may want to remind me. Be aware that there is always one child that waits for this one song to make his/her day or some other favorite. Don't disappoint! Add a card to your book that says "favorite song" and ask for their favorites each week. It is a wonderful spontaneous change for your weekly toddler class.

Week 6

Not much new here, but that doesn't mean you shouldn't go faster through the pieces. Rather, slow down and enjoy the repeats and perhaps by now the parents are singing along with you.

There's a Cobbler is one of those activities you can use every time you take out sticks. It should be chanted very rhythmically. This chant is so much fun and the parents enjoy chanting along with you. You can follow this chant with See the Pony a horse theme going. There is every good reason to bring back songs from earlier in the lesson and here is a great opportunity. Another song to add here would be *Walk Together, Children*, but instead, you can sing *Tap Together, Children*.

Happy teaching,
Ellen Johansen