

NEWSLETTER

Singing Development in Infancy

By Lyn Ransom, D.M.A



Calendar and News:

Winter registration is open, register soon to get your preferred spot!

Classes will start the week after Thanksgiving!

Preferential registration deadline (for current families) is Nov 13th.

Free trial classes coming up:

San Marcos: Nov. 16th 4PM

Dripping Springs: Nov. 17th 10AM

Driftwood: Nov 18th 4PM

Registration info on PAGE 3

What is vocal development for an infant? What does vocal development look like? We all know the sound babies make—they cry. But actually, there's a lot to notice about how your baby cries. Parents and caregivers can tell if the child wants attention, wants food, is hurt, is "play-acting," or is bored.

If you'd enjoy some at-home research, you might try noticing if your baby cries around a certain pitch or cries higher or lower at particular times. You might even go try to match the pitch (note) of his or her cry to an instrument—a keyboard, xylophone, or guitar—just to give the crying pitch a name.

You can also notice whether the other types of crying and squealing are similar to or different from the hunger cry. My grandson Jackson shocks me with his high-pitched squeals—way up in high soprano land—but his basic cry is the E above middle C.

Beyond the dramatic sounds of almost crying and really crying, there is a huge repertoire to observe.

- Crying when hungry
- Sound-making for pleasure: random and experimental at first, just like learning to grasp
- Sustained vowel sounds [aaah, eeee, or ooooo]
- Punctuations or staccato notes: short, accented sounds, not a sustained cry [ah!]
- Sustained diphthong: multiple vowels shifting from one to another [aaaauuuu—eeee!]
- Squeals and swoops, most often from high pitch to low
- Spit gurgles, usually when the baby is on his/her back
- Consonant-vowel combinations, a favorite personal "vocalable".

Pitched sounds:

- Coos: long note on one or two sounds
- Giggles and giggle-singing: a huge gamut of high to low notes
- Resting tone after or during a song sung by caregivers (watch for this at 2 months)
- Pitches related to the resting tone: 5th note above it, 3rd note above it (2–3 months)
- Nonstop babble, with occasional sustained singing (often 8 months or later)

Your baby may make some of these sounds and others unique to him or her as well. Jackson has a unique sound when he starts to get hungry. He whines on a pitch and if I whine with him, he's surprised and distracted and he likes the duet. I can buy myself a minute or two to get his bottle ready! If I don't hurry, though, it turns into full-fledged crying, very loud—on that "E" pitch!

The order in which your baby experiments with these things is not important. That your baby PLAYS and experiments vocally is important. How can you help? Babble, coo, and giggle-sing with your baby. Try it and, before long, you might find you're having as much fun as your infant.

The other way you can help is by providing a lot of music data for reception. You are the ones who can create an environment full of interesting sounds: singing, chanting, learning guitar, dancing to old favorites. You are the ones who provide the raw material for your child to hear, remember, categorize, and create with. You are the ones who let the child know that dancing, singing, reading, swimming, cooking, science, and nature are good and fun. Respond to your baby for any sound he makes—greet him with a similar sound, smile, look at his eyes, do something that you know your baby likes. (Jackson likes the bottoms of his feet rubbed.)

In Music Together class, you may have heard your teacher talk about reception and expression—two terms from the psychology of learning which can help us understand what's involved as your child becomes a confident, competent music maker. Reception means receiving information and organizing it, integrating it with other information your child already knows. If you sing a familiar song like "Tingalayo" to her in a slightly different way, she'll receive that information and add it to what she already knows about "Tingalayo." Watch her eyes, legs, arms, eyebrows, etc., for her response to the song. At some point she may express to you her version of "Tingalayo," which will let you peek into her musical memory as well as her sense of musical play.

I ran across a term in an old book, the New York Times Everyday Reader's Dictionary of Misunderstood, Misused, Mispronounced Words. The term was **ear-minded**: being more aware or responsive to sound than sight, smell, etc. How perfect for babies! I hope you enjoy singing and moving with your ear-minded infant as he or she develops other life skills. What joy to have made it through your own childhood, then experience it a new through the eyes of your baby.

WHIRLIGIG ANNOUNCEMENTS

On-line Winter Registration is now open!

Thank you all for helping make Music Together a success! Some classes are so popular, that I needed to think of an enrollment priority system to be fair to everyone!

Currently enrolled families may choose their class placement first IF enrolled by the pre-enrollment deadline: November 13th. A \$50 non-returnable deposit secures a spot until the first day of class.

Enrolled families will get to choose first if they want to remain in their current class, and second if they wish to move to a different class. New, or not currently enrolled families can reserve a spot and after the pre-enrollment deadline will be assigned spots in their preferred classes in order of reservation time.

Winter class times:

Dripping Springs (Family First Chiro):

Tue 10AM and Wed 4:30PM

Dripping Springs (Head to Toe Dance):

Wednesday 10AM

Driftwood Fire Station (FM 1826) Thu 4PM

San Marcos (Warrior's Edge): 4PM

Kyle/Plum Creek (Shock Dance): Thursday 10AM

Barton Creek: Friday 10AM



Let your friends know about the FREE trial classes:

San Marcos: Nov. 16th 4PM

Dripping Springs: Nov. 17th 10AM

Driftwood: Nov 18th 4PM

RSVP required!

REMEMBER: pre-enroll as soon as you can with a \$50 non-refundable deposit (or full tuition) to get the class placement you want! Pre-enrollment deadline is Nov. 13th.

The rest of your tuition is due on the first day of class - or ask about a payment plan if needed!



Gift idea: you can give a Whirligig Music gift certificate (or ask for one for the holidays)!
Gift certificates available for any desired amount:

<http://www.whirligigmusic.com/give-the-gift-of-music>



About the importance of parent modeling in class

We all know that Music Together is a music education program, but you may not have realized that it's a language immersion program, too!

Music is also a language - a critical form of human communication deeply rooted in all of us.

In his theory of multiple intelligences, Dr. Howard Gardener cites "musical intelligence" as one of the eight intelligences by which we know the world around us. According to him, musical intelligence runs in an almost structural parallel to linguistic intelligence.

Our goal in class is to help our little ones begin the development of their musical intelligence in a meaningful way. Since little children learn from watching and imitating their important grown-ups, while you are in class, it is the most profound kind of music learning for your child if *you* stay musical for the whole 45 minutes! Please, put your talking voices on

hold and use your singing voices, so that the children can have an immersion experience. Speaking directly to children during the types of activities we do can interrupt important musical processing in their brains. Between songs, please don't talk to your child or another adult. Instead, use non-verbal communication - smiles, gestures, etc. The quiet spaces are very important, and singing the 5-1 (bum! bum!) when we put instruments away is the whole group's job - not just the teacher's! In classes where the adults really practice these important parts of our program, the musical progress made by children is stunning!

Remember we are modeling - the children really are paying attention to what we do. When we model focus, we teach our children focus. During these quiet moments we often hear the children humming or singing softly - we can miss that chance if we're not listening for it. If you must say something to your child in class - try singing it - it's fun- your child will like it, too!



"A child who plays an instrument before he sings may remain unmusical for a lifetime. That is why we encounter so many skillful pianists who have no idea of the essence of music." (Zoltan Kodály, composer, music educator and education reformer)

"Music is much more than a beautiful luxury: It is a fundamental way of expressing our humanity - and it is often our best medicine." (Oliver Sacks, MD.)

"If you can talk you can sing, if you can walk you can dance." (Old proverb from Zimbabwe)

"Let us take our children seriously! Everything else follows from this... only the best is good enough for a child." (Zoltan Kodaly)

"Music expresses that which cannot be put into words and that which cannot remain silent." (Victor Hugo)