

## 'Tell a tale the musical way'

The magic of music to develop communication and language

*'Music should be seen as a core component of children's learning and should be shared with young children to ensure they have broad, balanced and rounded experiences in early childhood and beyond.'*

Musical Development Matters in the Early Years

[Musical-Development-Matters-ONLINE.pdf \(early-education.org.uk\)](#)

### Aspects of musical learning and development

Hearing and Listening

Vocalising and Singing

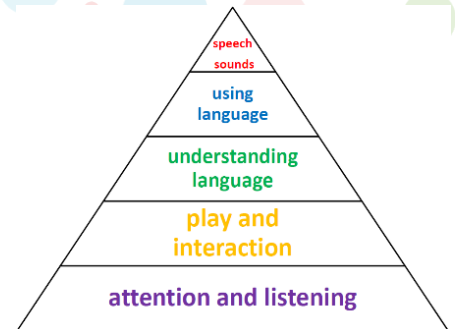
Moving and Dancing

Exploring and Playing

### Attention and Listening

Attention and listening skills (which form the base of the communication pyramid) are crucial foundation skills for later language development, but young children are not able to listen and filter out background noise in the same way that adults can. Children need to learn to listen, and many will need extra support with this.

Music can be used in a range of different ways to develop children's attention and listening skills. Why not give some of the following ideas a try in your early years setting? [SC Listening.pdf \(soundcommunities.org.uk\)](#)



**Listening to sounds.** Collect a range of sound-makers, perhaps in a box or bag. Play each one, listen, and discuss the sound. Play two similar sounds and discuss the difference. Hide the instruments under a cover and children can guess which instrument you are playing by listening to the sound.

**Listening in space.** Each adult stands in a different part of the room with an instrument behind their back. Adults take turns to play a sound with their instruments, children work out where the sound is coming from and run to the sound.

**Listening in time.** Play an instrument that creates a long, ringing sound – chimes or singing bowls work particularly well for this. Children can listen out for when the sound eventually fades away.

**Listening games with songs.** Sing songs such as "If you're happy and you know it" with different instructions such as "rub your tummy", "pat your head", "stomp your feet". Change the instructions within the song so that children need to listen to know what action to do next!



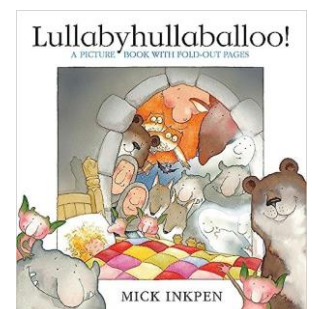
### Storytelling

Sharing books with young children in the early years is a great way to help them develop skills such as attention, listening, language and communication.

### Top tips for storytelling

Choose an age-appropriate story that is exciting and will appeal to your audience.

- Prepare by reading your story through (Practice reading aloud)
- Think about raising expectations before the story starts
- Think about possible questions to ask



- Encourage children to join in with repeated phrases
- Talk about the characters together
- Look at the vocabulary and ensure that you are teaching and discussing new words (See STAR approach)
- Encourage children to make predictions
- Give children chance to hear the same story over and over again.

### Singing

Listening to music and singing help to improve vocabulary, enunciation, comprehension and an appreciation of language structure.

### Top tips for singing

- Everyone can sing (unless their vocal mechanism is damaged)
- Use songs and sing everywhere
- Sing with enthusiasm and energy
- Don't sing too high or too low
- Sing about subjects relevant to, and fun for, the child
- Teach songs standing up and moving in time to the song
- Finish the activity while the children still want more
- Give them the opportunity to continue or experiment during continuous provision
- Leave the puppet or chime bars in the areas after they have been used with a group
- Keep to your usual ratios
- Play group games with small groups of children who have chosen to join you
- Allow children to leave the activity if their concentration has gone
- Keep formal sessions short. No more than ten minutes maximum
- Make up your own songs
- Make simple songs up using three notes E G and A (you could use chime bars)
- Encourage children to make their own songs up
- Where possible personalise songs to include the child's name
- Sing to repeated routines
- Children enjoy rhythmic chants

### Song Books

Bobby Shaftoe Clap Your Hands; Sue Nicholls; A&C Black

The Three Singing Pigs; Kaye Umansky; A&C Black

Tom Thumb's Musical Maths; Helen MacGregor; A&C Black

Agogo Bells to Xylophone-guide to classroom percussion instruments; A&C Black

Singing Games and Rhymes for Early Years; National Youth Choir of Scotland; [www.nycos.co.uk](http://www.nycos.co.uk)

Singing Games and Rhymes for Tiny Tots; National Youth Choir of Scotland; [www.nycos.co.uk](http://www.nycos.co.uk)

Sleepy Time Play songs; Sheena Roberts; A&C Black and Play songs Publications

Lively Time Play songs; Sheena Roberts; A&C Black and Play songs Publications

