

**Additional Handouts provided by  
Channing Dance**

**Age Characteristics of Children**

**Nursery Music Basics**

**Music and the Young Child**

**Four More Songs**

**How to Present a Song over and over and over in a Variety of Ways**

# AGE CHARACTERISTICS OF CHILDREN

Parents and teacher who are aware of common characteristics of different age-groups will be able to deal with children's behavior more appropriately and teach them more effectively.

## THE EIGHTEEN-MONTH-OLD

- Walks, climbs, crawls, and runs. Enjoys pushing and pulling things. Is able to take things apart more easily than she can put them together. Is uncoordinated. Tires easily. Is usually not toilet trained.
- Makes many sounds. Has developing language skills. Uses one-word phrases, particularly "mine" and "no." Gathers knowledge through sight, sound, touch, smell, and taste. Understands more than she can express.
- Cries easily, but emotions can change quickly.

### Suggestions for Parents and Teachers

- Vary activities to keep the child's interest. Use activities that involve walking, pushing, and pulling. Use finger plays and musical activities.
- Provide many opportunities for talking and participation. Teach how to be relevant during prayers. Use visuals with stories. Provide toys the child can move and experiment with, such as stacking toys, balls, simple puzzles, dolls, and figures of people and animals.
- Hold the child when she is upset or feels insecure.

## THE TWO-YEAR-OLD

- Is very active. Jumps, walks, and runs. Can clap hands. Gets irritable and restless when tired.
- Is able to put two or three words together in a sentence. Says "no" often, even when he does not mean it. Has simple, direct thoughts. Cannot reason. Can make simple choices. Enjoys repetition. Has a short attention span (two or three minutes). Is curious. Moves from one activity to another. Likes simple toys, art materials, books, short stories, and music activities.
- Likes to pray. Understands that Heavenly Father and Jesus love us, but has difficulty understanding much more than that.

### Suggestions for Parents and Teachers

- Use rest activities such as finger plays and those that use music. Provide activities such as beanbag tossing, marching, and jumping. Avoid activities that require skill and coordination, such as cutting and pasting.
- Keep discussions simple. Help the child participate. Use repetition. Do not leave him alone; children this age can easily get themselves into unsafe situations. Provide opportunities for him to make choices.
- Allow the child to pray. Focus spiritual concepts on the family and the love of Heavenly Father and Jesus.

## THE THREE-YEAR-OLD

- Has more language skills. Likes to talk and learn new words. Has a short attention span. Is curious and inquisitive. Often misunderstands and makes comments that seem off the subject. Enjoys pretending. Likes finger plays, stories, and musical activities. Is unable to distinguish fantasy from reality.
- Wants to please adults. Needs their approval, love, and praise. Strikes out emotionally when afraid or anxious. Cries easily. Is sensitive to others' feelings. Is developing some independence. Has intense, short-lived emotions.
- Is interested in simple gospel principles such as prayer and obedience. Is more aware of Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ, and has simple faith in Them.

### Suggestions for Parents and Teachers

- Use activities that include jumping, skipping, walking, and bending. Avoid activities that require refined skills and coordination. Be prepared for messes.
- Teach ideas in a simple, clear way. Use summaries and visual materials to reinforce ideas. Use a variety of teaching methods such as stories, songs, discussions, dramatizations, finger plays, and simple games. Alternate between quiet and lively activities.
- Teach the gospel in simple, concrete ways. Teach that Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ live and are kind and loving. Share simple expressions of testimony. Help her recognize the beauty of God's creations.

## THE FOUR-YEAR-OLD

- Enjoys talking and asks many questions. Has trouble separating fact from fantasy. Has a short attention span. Uses artwork to express feelings. Enjoys pretending and role playing.
- Often tests people's limits. May be agreeable one moment and quarrelsome the next. Has more self-confidence; may have fears and feelings of insecurity.
- Is becoming aware of right and wrong, and usually desires to do right. Has a natural love and respect for Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ. Likes to pray, and wants to be good. Is becoming more interested in gospel principles.

### Suggestions for Parents and Teachers

- Alternate between quiet and lively activities. Help the child learn to control and be responsible for his actions.
- Use discussions and activities that will encourage thinking, such as simple riddles and guessing games. Clarify misunderstandings. Use pictures, objects, and actual experiences. Introduce new words. Have him draw pictures that relate to lessons. Use role-playing activities.
- Help the child be responsible for his own behavior, and teach the importance of making good choices. Teach that Heavenly Father loves His children and that we can communicate with Him through prayer. Help the child discover how to be reverent at church. Teach basic gospel principles.

## Nursery Music Basics

Sharla Dance

### Consider the one year old:

- newly mobile and anxious to go and see new things, thus hard for them to sit in one place. Curious. Needs to move.
- loves using newfound physical skills of walking and climbing
- sees objects with hands, wants to touch, feel, and inspect things, not just gaze at them.
- a watcher before a doer, especially of group experiences
- very few words to express who they are, yet communicates.
- because of limited words, watches for visual cues from the adult to understand meaning
- fascinated by new sounds and learning to discriminate between them.
- will learn and do the movement of a song though not yet singing
- copies the inflections, not the necessarily the words, of singing better than speaking, but hears expressive speaking as singing...so copies those inflections, too!
- begins to exhibit separation syndrome from a parent.

### Consider the two year old:

- active, but can sit longer if interested. Curious. Needs to move.
- loves to jump, clap, march and use growing physical skills
- still wants to touch and feel things with hands, rather than just gaze at them, but gaining more self control to just look.
- still watches, but may more readily join in a group activity
- more words, but not fluent sentences, yet communicates.
- understands meaning with many words, but still watches for visual cues to understand:
- can discriminate between most sounds around him or her...beginning to learn about slows and fasts, highs and lows, starting and stopping
- will do the movement of a song and occasionally add a word or two
- copies inflection and begins to use words with the musical inflection and expression
- starts to accept other adults in addition to parents, but still attached.

## Consider music:

- is movement of sound, and thus encourages movement of the body
- one of the primary carriers of language and culture
- Forms of music...rocking, singing, song/verse play with its inherent touching, and motherese... are the primary communication with a toddler in the absence of a language system. Motherese (mothers pre-verbal communication with her child) has dynamic, pitch, and rhythm variations and is heavily laden with emotional communication, much the same as music. These forms of music communicate security, love, playfulness, and nurturing.
- the songs of young childhood are joyful, delightful, soothing, playful, and expressive.

## What does it mean for nursery?

1. Music is essential for this age child and nursery music can be a delightful, playful, interesting, expressive, bonding experience.
2. Expect children that will watch only. Expect the youngest children to wander away at times (although if your older children wander away, you are probably not doing developmentally appropriate songs and activities).
3. Expect to be the only one singing.
4. Many songs should use some kind of manipulative that the child can touch and feel as you sing.
5. Each song should use some kind of movement appropriate to the physical skill level of this age.
6. Expect to give visual cues: Does your face show delight and interest? Do your hands show what movements to do? Do your visuals and manipulatives invite the child into the song?
7. Use starting and stopping, highs and lows, and fasts and slows as a natural part of your music presentations.
8. Introduce new sounds: instruments they can touch and hear, recorded bird songs or recorded sounds from the environment along with the new songs.
9. Recognize what a bonding experience it is to share music with these little ones.

Music and the Young Child: A Gift for Life  
Sharia Dance 2002

Some Background info:

Dr. Benjamin Bloom from the University of Chicago stated that:  
80% of everything we know we learn by age 17 and 50% of that knowledge has been learned by age 4.  
He suggests that the age from 6 months to 4 years may be the most important time in a person's life.

Thus, when we talk about the nursery age and Sunbeam age child, we are talking about some of the most important learning years in a person's life. You, the teachers of these little children, are some of the most important teachers in the church and in the world because of the opportunity before you.

Research suggests that the brain cells stop their dramatic growth after about age 4. Brain cell growth is stimulated by vibration (Singing is intensified vibration.), exploration, and experience with the senses. In order to provide for the most possible growth of a child's brain cells, we must lay a rich foundation for learning before age 4. That *does not mean teaching skills*, but instead offering a rich environment and exposure.

When a child learns a song (especially folk songs) deep in his or her memory, they learn all of the elements that are present in a symphony: pitch, articulation, duration, form, timbre, etc.

If we want a child to be able to maintain a steady beat (which effects cutting with scissors, hammering, sawing, writing, drawing, skipping, galloping, reading, athletics, playing or singing with a group), research suggests that he has to obtain that skill through lots of exposure and experiences before age 9. From that point on, the skill of keeping a steady beat does not seem to improve. (see Dorothy T. McDonald, *Music In Our Lives: The Early Years*, p. 28 and Phyllis Weikart, *High/Scope Resource*, vol. 3, no. 2, 1984)

Young children need to learn through their bodies. Everything they do with their bodies to explore and make sense out of the world at this young age transfers directly to higher forms of thinking as they grow older. They can represent something internally if allowed to explore it with their body while very young. Young children need to move to learn. (see Thomas Armstrong, *In Their Own Way*, pp. 72-73.)

Young children play to learn. "It is the child's natural way of exploring, experimenting, and making inferences about the ..attributes of his world..." (Marvin Greenburg, *Your Children Need Music*, p. 25.) The five stages of play (which are all valid...please allow the children freedom to play at their own developmental level) are:

1. Onlooker (Watching)
2. Solitary Play (independent of anything else going on in the room)
3. Parallel Play (playing like another child, but not with him)
4. Associative Play (conscious of playing with someone else, but not really interactive, organized play)
5. Cooperative Play (organized, interactive, planned play with someone else)

A young child usually plays as an onlooker, in solitary play, or in parallel play. Associative play may show beginnings at this age. Cooperative play usually comes into bloom about age 5 or so.

Heavenly Father makes it clear that little children have a special status, with special protection. He intends for them to loved and guided and taught before the age of accountability. He wants us to fill their formative years with wonderful experiences. "These precious little ones are as angels among us." (see the talk by Elder Merlin R. Lybbert, *The Special Status of Children*, Ensign, pp. 31-32, May 1994.)

### **RAINBOW ROPE:**

- Wheels on the Bus
- Mexican Hat Dance
- In and In and In... and Out (round, jump, shake)
- Here comes the chu chu train
- Row, Row your boat
- Chu, chu the big train (get inside rope like a train and follow the leader w/ caboose at end)
- Row your boat
- Limbo

### **PARACHUTE:**

- Shake and shake and shake and STOP
- Popcorn, *popcorn put it in the pan*  
*Shake it up, shake it up, bam, bam, bam!*(w/ white kneehighs stuffed w/ cotton)
- Red and yellow, green and purple (three times)  
These are the colors over you.
- London Bridge is falling down
- Washing Machine (wash on tummy, back)
- Upx3 we go, down x3 we go, raise your colors to the sky, count to 3 and watch them fly!

### **BUBBLE SONGS:**

There are bubbles in the air,...reach up high and touch a bubble, put your finger on a bubble...

Pinch, pinch, pinch (stomp, etc.) those bubbles

Popping bubbles, we love popping bubbles

We want, we want bubbles (stomp x2 clap-repeat)...bubbles up high, down low, here we go!...

If you wanna pop some bubbles clap your hands...

### **CHANTS:**

Shake it to the east, shake it to the west, shake it to the one that you love best

ABC, Tumble down D, Cat's in the cupboard and you can't catch me!

1,2 Buckle my shoe

1 to go to London, 2 to go to town, 3 to go to the top of the hill and 4 to fall right down!

Wee willie winkie

Up Like a Rocket *Down like the rain Side to side like a chu chu train Some like it up,ome like it down And some like it around and around*

I hear thunder

A child needs to hear a song over and over and over (and over and over and over!) again in a variety of fun ways. *How do we do it?* Here are a few ideas. (Many of these songs were found in the old 1994 Nursery manual.)

#### **Here We Are Together/Did You Ever See a Lassie?**

1. Sing each one of the children's names as you sing. ("Oh here we are together...There's Kathy and Peter and Mommy and Baby, Oh here...in our nursery/family")
2. Sing "Oh here we go a walking..." sitting down with your fingers doing the "large" motor actions (see # 2.), teaching the children to stop when the music stops.
3. Sing it with the large motor actions. (walk, run, jump, skip, hop, crawl, slither, etc.) with the words "Oh, Here we go a skipping, a skipping. . . and then we sit down."
4. Use animal visuals and say animal name in place of Lassie. Do actions of that animal on "Go this way and that way and ...". ex. birds (flying), frogs (jumping), snakes (slithering), lions (stalking).
5. Say the child's name and show their picture as you sing "Did you ever see a Karen, a Karen, a Karen... (or Ryan or Julie, etc.) go this way and that?"
6. Show visuals of different vehicles and sing "Did you ever see an airplane, an airplane go this way and that?" Sing & pretend to move like the vehicle. (dump truck, sailboat, etc.)

#### **Mary Wore Her Red Dress**

1. Wooden cut-out dolls with clothes attached by velcro.
2. Leader dress up in layers of different colored clothes. Takes one off while singing what it is.
3. Singing Book
4. Sing each child's name and color or Who is wearing \_\_\_\_\_?
5. Felt Christmas tree, star, ornaments, gifts, lights. ("My house has a green tree, green tree...." "Green tree wears a yellow star, yellow star....")
6. Felt Mary and clothes.
  7. Different colored shoes for a teddy bear.

#### **A Surprise on Mary**

1. Laminated poster paper apples (one for each) falling on large poster (or wooden) Mary.
2. Hands making a round apple shape "fall" on different body parts as you sing.
3. Christmas apple ornaments (one for each) "fall" on different body parts. Remind them not to eat them! \*Here are some ideas for rhymes: (it doesn't have to rhyme!)  
One little apple, there it goes  
Fell kerplunk on Mary's nose!  
One little apple, red and thin  
Fell kerplunk on Mary's chin!  
One little apple from the tree  
Fell kerplunk on Mary's knee!  
One little apple, juicy sweet  
Fell kerplunk on Mary's feet!

#### **Ten Little Frogs**

1. Velcro hand mitt and pom pom frogs.
2. Colored, laminated paper frogs jump into poster board pool from log.
3. Green dots as costumes for 5 older children that jump into a masking tape pool.
4. Stuffed frogs or bean bag frogs.
5. Singing book.
6. Bugs. Frog bags for the children to feed!

#### **Round and Round the Village**

1. Sing using small Duplo person going around cardboard houses. Hide the person under the house while the children hide their eyes. They love this one. Sing it again and again as you hide the person.
2. Village box with windows.
3. Laminated village scenes or large boxes decorated as buildings in a village. The children walk round and round the pictures/ boxes as you sing.
4. Cars on a village mat that go round and round as you sing.
5. Daddy or nursery leader makes a big window with arms. The child goes in and out the window.
6. Make a window frame out of wood. Add a fabric curtain on a dowel. The children go in and out the window as you sing.

### **Here We Go 'Round the Mulberry Bush (This is the way we....)**

1. Sing using large motor actions.
2. Teddy bear with clothes, toothbrush, comb, etc. Sing as you dress him and get him ready for Sunday.
3. Teacher brings and uses implements in the actions of the song. (toothbrush, comb, glass, etc.)
4. Different rhythm instruments...this is the way we play the maracas, etc..

### **Eency Weency Spider**

1. Glove puppet (that is a little scared and shy or it will scare some of the children).
2. Individual pom pom spiders on yarn.
3. Stick puppets to act out the story as you sing (sun, rain, spider on tongue depressors). Especially nice if you have a small "stage" (cardboard with hole cut out)
4. Books to sing
5. Small motor actions.

### **Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star**

1. Wooden stars that dance on the floor, our heads, etc. as we sing.
2. Individual flashlights to catch the teacher's glittering star.
3. Hands become stars and move around the room as we sing. "Can you take your hand to a corner?"
4. Glow in the dark star in a darkened box. Sing as the children peek in to see the star.

### **Looby-Loo**

1. Sing using large motor actions.
2. Each child holds a wash cloth for their pretend bath as they sing.
3. Doll gets a bath as you sing. "Would you like to wash my doll's foot (hand, etc.)?" and sing as the child pretends to wash it.
4. Hand (or foot) on a stick for each child. Sing as they manipulate it.

### **Lady, Lady buy a broom for my baby**

1. Bring dolls or teddy bears for each child and have them rock the doll or bear as you sing the lullabye.

### **If You're Happy**

1. Sing using large motor actions.
2. Put happy face stickers on their hands and have the hands do actions as you sing.
3. Little mirrors for each child. Have them show their happy face (sad face, excited face, etc.) in the mirror.
4. Sing and do the large motor actions (walk, jump, etc.).

### **Snowfall**

1. Plastic Christmas water bulbs with snow and a figure inside. Shake it up and let the snow fall down as you sing.
2. Scarves to throw up and let fall as you sing "Scarves are falling in the nursery....".

### **The Bus Song (always a favorite!)**

1. Large motor actions (and a bike horn!).
2. Singing Book
3. Laminated or felt visual of bus, wheels, people, driver, etc.
4. Play bus to turn the wheels as you sing.
5. Bus puzzle to put together as you sing.

### **The Farmer in the Dell**

1. Paper laminated figures and clothes pins
2. Singing book and guitar
3. All the stuffed figures in a mesh bag. Sing "*The \_\_\_\_\_ takes a \_\_\_\_\_*" as the children pull them out of the bag in any order.



Note: This song is a good “transition” song for giving directions. (ex. “Let’s put the toys away, Let’s put the toys away. Hi Ho the dairy-o, Let’s..., or It’s time for us to go, It’s time for us to go, ...)

### **London Bridge**

1. Sing the book, turning pages often.
2. Stack foam rubber covered music symbol blocks as you sing. On the phrase “My Fair Lady”, knock them down!

### **Head, Shoulders, Knees, and Toes**

1. Sing using large motor actions.
2. Each child holds laminated, colored picture of animal and points out their head, shoulders, etc. as you sing.

### **Happy Birthday**

1. Make a cake out of felt or on a poster board and laminate it. Make removable candles. Have the children put the candles on the cake as you sing.
2. Sing the book.
3. Have a birthday party for a teddy bear. Sing to him then blow out the pretend candles. A cardboard cut out cake isn’t very messy!
4. Have a cupcake for each child to decorate. Sing the song as they decorate.

### **Row, Row, Row Your Boat**

1. Get a large box or laundry basket. Have the child sit in it. Sing the song as you push them around the room, taking turns for each child.
2. Make a poster with a removable row boat on a stream. Connect the row boat to a piece of ribbon. Pull the boat as you sing.
3. Get a long strip of blue fabric and small boats for each child. Have them push the boats up and down the “stream” of blue fabric as you sing.
4. Bring the guitar (tuned to one chord). Have the children take turns strumming while you sing.
5. Put one child on your lap and see saw back and forth (leaning forward, leaning backward) as you sing. Ask if another child would like a turn. Sing and “play” again.

### **Frère Jacques/Are You Sleeping?!**

#### **Where is Thumbkin**

1. Buy little bells (not jingle bells, but the type where you can see the clacker). Bring a picture of someone sleeping. Sing the song and have the children ring the bells to wake him up!
2. Have the children hide their fingers behind their backs. As you sing “Here I am!...” bring them out from behind your back and have the fingers “talk” to each other.
3. Bring the guitar (tuned to one chord). Have the children play as you sing.

### **Once There Was a Snowman**

1. Flannel snowman that you build as you sing.
2. Large motor actions as you sing (getting tall, melting to get small).
3. Stuffed with foam & velcroed together snowman that you build as you sing.

### **The Big Train**

1. Slide the palms of your hands together in a steady beat. Sing the song. On the part where it says “Stop! Look! and Listen!”, do the appropriate actions. Return to the sliding motion for the rest of the song.
2. Make sand blocks out of small blocks of wood and sandpaper. Give them to the child to play as you sing (the sliding motion in #1 prepares them to play the blocks).
3. Buy a train whistle. Blow it then sing with the children, doing the sliding hand motions. Have them pretend to pull the string on their own train whistles and make the sound.
4. Invite the children to join your train. Have the train take them somewhere in the room as you sing.
5. Felt train. Make the train as you sing.
6. Bring in laundry baskets and give a few children a ride (pushing the laundry basket with the child sitting in it) each time you sing it.

### **Old MacDonald Had a Farm**

1. Bring in a Fisher-Price farm set and sing about each animal as you set it out.
2. Use the Velcro hand mitt and pom pom animals.
3. Sing the book.
4. Bring stuffed farm animals and sing for each one.
5. Sing Old MacDonald had a band and bring in different rhythm instruments to sing about.

### **A Hunting We Will Go**

1. Play the table play game
2. Get a stuffed or puppet fox and 3 large boxes. Tell the children to hide their eyes and put the fox in one of the boxes. Sing the song as you dance around the boxes. As you sing "We'll catch a little fox...", peek into the boxes and see if you can find the fox.
3. Sing the book.

### **Cobbler, Cobbler**

1. Beat to the rhythm on the bottom of your foot as you sing.
2. Beat the rhythm with your fist in your palm

### **Five Little Monkeys**

1. Stick puppet monkeys that you stick in a block of reusable clay. Pull one monkey stick out of the clay each time a monkey "bumps his head."
2. Finger Puppet Monkeys
3. Book
4. Velcro Mitt and monkeys.
5. Hand actions as you chant.

### **Teddy Bear, Teddy Bear**

1. Sing the book.
2. Stuffed teddy bears for each child to manipulate as you sing.
3. Large motor actions to the song as you sing.
4. Cracker teddy bears on a table-play mat as you sing (then eat them!)

### **Here is the Beehive**

1. Make pipe cleaner and dowel bees. Give one to each child and have them hide the bee in their hands (the "hive"). Sing and bring the bee out on 1,2,3,4,5. Buzz the bee around and land on different body parts (nose, tummy, leg, arm, etc.). Then hide the bee again and sing.
2. Hide the bees under a "hive." Sing and lift the hive on 1,2,3.... Buzz the bees to each child for them to hold and buzz.

### **In the Leafy Treetops**

1. Bring a recording of a bird sound or a bird whistle. Use a bird puppet with the sound, then sing the song as the puppet gently flies around.
2. Make little bird stick puppets for each of the children. Sing and fly your puppets around.

### **Smiles**

1. Bring laminated smiley faces and have the children turn them to smiles and frowns as you sing.
2. Bring little mirrors for each child. Frown and smile into the mirrors as you sing.

### **Popcorn Popping**

1. Do animated actions as you sing.
2. Make a "popcorn branch" (popcorn glued on to a branch) for each child.

### **Rain is Falling All Around (Sun is shining, Wind is blowing...)**

1. Make felt raindrops on yarn. Have the raindrops dance as you sing.
2. Make sun stick puppets. Have the suns dance as you sing the adjusted words.
3. Make ribbon rings (short ribbons tied onto an embroidery ring sized for little hands) and "whoosh" them back and forth to show the wind blowing as you sing the wind words.