



Transcript for the video:

The Importance of Music in Early Childhood

Preschooler: *[singing]* Everyone knows that the bird's the word. Ba, ba, bird's the word. And the ba, ba, bird, bird's the word. Don't you know about the bird? Everyone knows that the bird's the word.

The Importance of Music in Early Childhood (0:04)

Terry Surprenant, Early Childhood Music Educator: Expressing one's self musically is a basic human skill. I think it's very crucial that we make sure that young children have adequate experiences that enable them to develop those capacities that they're born with. Just as we want them to develop their language, and we want them to develop their problem-solving abilities, this is another area that is part of the human capacity.

Julia DeLapp, Director, Center for Early Childhood Education: Research indicates that humans are hard-wired for music. There is archaeological evidence that suggests that humans were making music tens of thousands of years ago. We know that infants even from a very young age have the capacity to discern musical differences that are even very, very small, and they seem to have been born with the ability to engage with music from any culture, of any tonality. So this all suggests that music must be important, that it is a fundamental part of being human.

Terry and toddler: *[Singing to the tune of Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star]* La, la, la, la, la, la. La, la, la, la, la, la.

Terry Surprenant: I believe in music, for music's sake. I think that it's enjoyable; it's a way of expressing ourselves; it's potentially an outlet for people to release emotions or ideas.

Sydney Rodriguez, Preschool Teacher: I think music in the classroom is just so important. Preschoolers can express themselves through music in a way that they might not be able to using their words. And I think just allowing them to have that experience is important.

Yotisse Williams, Preschool Teacher: A lot's going when you do music. I mean, you're listening, you're making and recognizing patterns, you're comparing instruments.

Ashlee Parks, Early Interventionist: So music is another great way to just to support language development. Obviously, because during finger plays or songs, you're using words, and you use

them in repetition, so that child's getting repeated exposure to those same words and those same sounds over and over again.

Teachers: *[singing]* When the mother duck said:

Toddler: "Quack, quack, quack, quack."

Teachers: *[singing]* Only three little ducks came back.

Matthew Vizzo, Professional Musician and Preschool Teacher: Music enhances brain activity, in general—that's been proven in neurological studies. Because whether you realize it or not, you're trying to process rhythm; you're trying to process melody. If you're listening to lyrics, you're processing language and meaning, emotion. So, it hits on many different levels. Now that's just listening to music. When you talk about playing music, practically every area of the brain is lit up, especially the visual, auditory, and motor cortices.

Yotisse and preschoolers: *[singing]* I can do it; I can do it; I can do it; I can do it; I can do it by myself.

Yotisse Williams: I use music a lot to support the social emotional piece. "When you're sad, you can sing about it." We make up songs about everything. So when we're encouraging the self-help skills, we're singing songs like, "I can do it; it's up to me." You know, "I can be who I want to be."

Yotisse: *[singing]* All by my...

Preschoolers: Self!

Yotisse and preschoolers: *[singing]* I don't need no one's...

Preschoolers: Help!

Yotisse Williams: And so we have this song, *[singing]* "If you're angry and you know, bang a drum," you know? And the kids can bang the drum. It also is good for self-control, because when you're in that environment, you can't play really loud, and so we explain that to them. So it's a good way to practice self-control.

Nereida Diaz, Preschool Teacher: After they do some exercise, they get so active that we want to calm them. So we use some handkerchiefs of different colors, and we do a circle, and we start singing.

Preschoolers: *[singing with recorded music]* The world is like a rainbow.

Nereida Diaz: And they just love it, and that calms them down a little.

Children: *[singing]* When we live in harmony. La la, la la. La la, la la.

Musical Development (3:52)

Terry Surprenant: I think that there is a common belief that people are either musical or they're not—you know, that just some people are very musical, and that's a talent they were born with. The reality is that it's part of being human to be able to sing, to be able to understand music, to recognize notes and replicate them or produce them.

Toddler: *[singing]* Old MacDonald had a farm. E-I-E-I-O.

Julia DeLapp: A lot of people say that they're "tone deaf," that they have no musical ability at all, but that's actually really rare. So congenital amusia is a disorder where we have a problem perceiving or making sense of music, and that only affects about 1.5% of the population. So researchers say that absent a disability, ALL of us have the capacity to learn basic music competence, which is the ability to sing in tune and keep accurate rhythm. But if we don't exercise those abilities of our innate musicality, we lose them. So if we want young children to grow up to be able to sing in tune and have a sense of rhythm, we have to nurture that when they're young.

Teacher: *[singing]* Fishy, fishy in the sea. All of the fishes swim by me.

Terry Surprenant: Well as with developing any skill, children need to actually experience music. They need to have opportunities to engage in musical activities. They need to have adults that model what singing is all about.

Yotisse and children: *[singing]* I'm fine; I'm fine, and I hope that you are, too.

Terry Surprenant: Without the ability to practice and use their voice, they won't necessarily develop to those potentials that they're born with. So early experiences are very crucial to be able to develop these skills. And then as they get older, they'll feel more comfortable singing when they have an opportunity to do so, and for those children who really want to pursue music and develop their capacities at a higher level, they'll have that foundation that will enable them to really move it forward.

Adults and toddler: *[singing]* The itsy-bitsy spider went up the water spout. Down came the rain and washed the spider out. Out came the sun and dried up all the rain, and the itsy bitsy spider went up the spout again.

Adults: Yay!

Music over credits:

Teacher and children: *[singing]* La, la, la. La, la, la. La la la la la. La, la, la. La, la, la. La la la la la. Two little hands go clap, clap, clap. Two little fingers go snap, snap, snap. One little finger, it twirls around. Everybody, everybody listen now. Two little hands go clap,

clap, clap. Two little fingers go snap, snap, snap. One little finger, it twirls around.
Everybody, everybody listen now.