

## ***The Magical Effects of Music on Infants*** ~ Reyna Lindert, PhD

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Many of us discover the power of music on children when we find the 'just-right' tune that lulls our baby to sleep. Or we witness it when a certain song repeatedly evokes squeals of toddler laughter. Whether calming or energizing, music is a wonderful tool for teaching and motivating your children.

### **Soothing Sounds**

Music helps children gain more control over their emotional responses when they interact with others. You might try incorporating tunes into the routine during transition times, like from playtime to lunchtime and at bedtime. Combining physical touch, like gentle massage or stroking, with relaxing tones is extra calming for your little one.

### **Getting Energized**

Dancing and playing to music is a natural way to encourage the development of your child's gross motor skills. As you chant 'Jack Be Nimble,' have your tot jump over a soft toy on the floor. Or sing 'Teddy Bear, Teddy Bear, Turn Around' and help your child mimic the motion.

Adding finger plays to music can help your baby strengthen his fine motor skills, such as dexterity and coordination. It also helps him to connect experiences with different words, objects, and ideas. Make up songs to match his actions or movements, using familiar tunes as the backdrop (for example, 'Little Andrew Brushes His Hair' to the tune of 'Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star'). The familiar song with new lyrics provides novelty that reinforces the learning in these actions and movements.

Incorporating song and dance into playtime also helps your child to develop familiarity with words, cadences, rhythms, and patterns. This is a foundation for language, comprehension, and reasoning skills.