

Parents Make the Difference!



Do you know all of the ways music can enhance learning?



Music is a pleasure for almost everyone. But there's much more to music than enjoyment. It is linked in many ways to improving learning.

Here are some reasons why music should be in your child's life, through song, instruments and movement:

- Music can strengthen the learning style of almost every child. Listening to music builds auditory skills. Creating simple rhythms also builds visual and spatial skills. Playing an instrument develops fine motor skills and moving to music develops gross ones.
- Enjoying music together is a way to develop social skills. Music encourages children to interact with each other in positive ways.
- Music has a beat and a rhythm. Phonics, the sounds of letters and words, has its own beat and rhythm. A child who is attuned to listening for beat and rhythm may have an easier time learning to read.
- Certain music, especially classical music, playing softly in the background, has been shown to help children focus. It also has a calming effect.
- Music is a series of patterns. Math is also a series of patterns. A link between music skills and math skills is supported by research.
- Music helps children predict. When they hear a refrain (a part of music that is repeated), they know it is going to come up again and they anticipate it. Learning to predict is an important reading skill.

Effective praise must be specific and genuine

Compliments are an important part of discipline because they teach children what they're doing right. But not all compliments are equal. The best compliments, experts say, are:

- **Genuine.** Only give a compliment when you really mean it. And then be specific. "You practiced buttoning your shirt so many times. And now you can do it all by yourself! I'm so proud!" That's more specific than, "Great job!"
- **Focused on effort.** Compliment your child's hard work, even if she doesn't reach an ultimate goal. Perseverance and improvement are accomplishments!
- **Chosen carefully.** When parents praise constantly and insincerely, kids may tune out or feel too much pressure to perform. Instead, look for opportunities to praise special, new and important behaviors. Make your compliments really count.

It's not too early to talk to your young child about body image

Research shows that even in preschool, girls prefer being thin. In one study, young girls were asked to comment on three characters of different sizes. Even at age three, girls had negative things to say about an overweight character. But they praised the thin character. Some young girls even said they "hated" the overweight character.

Hating a body type is not a healthy attitude for any child to have. To promote a healthy body image:

- **Stress fitness.** It's about health. It is not about whether someone is overweight or thin. Tell your child, "Running is so good for my heart!" Do not say, "I have to lose weight so I'd better go running."
- **Serve healthy foods,** including plenty of fruits and vegetables. Remember, frozen and canned vegetables are okay. Serving no vegetables because "you can't find good fresh vegetables" is not okay.
- **Never comment on your child's weight.** There is simply no need to--ever. If you have concerns about your child's weight, speak privately with her doctor.