

CREATING A SONG OR CHANT

Step #1 - OBJECTIVE: What is my goal for teaching this song or chant? For example:

- learn new vocabulary
- reinforce behaviors
- actively engage in storytelling
- transition between activities
- repeat a sequence

Step #2 - WORDS: What words or phrases are essential to support your objective?

- Repeating key words or phrases helps children learn and remember.

Step #3 - RHYTHM/MELODY: Is there a song that fits the rhythm/inflection of your key words?

- Chant = rhythmic spoken words; Song = melodic tune
- Speak the key words with exaggerated rhythm and inflection. What kind of rhythm or melody do they naturally create? (Steady, bouncy, smooth, etc.)
- Do the words or rhythms remind you of a song or rhyme you know? Can you adapt a familiar song with new words to support your objective?

ABC's (Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star)
Are You Sleeping? (Frere Jacques)
The Bear Went Over the Mountain
B-I-N-G-O
Do You Know the Muffin Man?
Down By The Bay
Eensy, Weensy Spider
Farmer in the Dell
The Green Grass Grows All Around
Here We Go Round The Mulberry Bush
Hokey-Pokey
I Had a Rooster
If You're Happy and You Know It
I'm A Little Teapot

London Bridge
Mary Had a Little Lamb
Miss Mary Mack
The More We Get Together
Old MacDonald
Rain, Rain Go Away
Row, Row, Row Your Boat
She'll Be Comin' Round the Mountain
Skip to my Lou
This Old Man
Three Blind Mice
Two Little Blackbirds
The Wheels on the Bus
Where is Thumbkin?

Step #4 - GESTURES: What movements or gestures can you add to support learning?

- Maintaining a steady beat is an important skill for developing language and math skills! Can children keep a steady beat with their bodies as they sing?
- Incorporate gestures (stomping feet, waving hands, nodding heads, etc.) to support the rhythm and meaning of the words in the song. This helps children learn with their whole bodies and minds!

Tips:

- **Keep it simple!** Don't make your lyrics, melody or movements too complicated. Young children benefit from repeated patterns, a steady beat and predictable tunes.
- **Sing in the range of the children.** Adults often sing too low for young children. Be sure to sing in a higher range so the children can sing along comfortably!

SONG-WRITING EXAMPLE: "Rain Song"

#1 OBJECTIVE - To make predictions about what might happen in a story about a rainy day

#2 WORDS - Ask open-ended questions to gather ideas from the children. "What might you wear in the rain?" "What might you see or hear?" Include the children's words ("we wear our boots," "we splash in puddles," "lightning flashes," etc.) in the song to honor their predictions. Repeat the phrase "...when it's raining outside" to reinforce the theme.

#3 RHYTHM/MELODY - The traditional song "Early in the Morning" includes short repeated phrases which makes it easy to adapt the children's ideas into easy-to-sing lyrics. The final line of the song always stays the same - "when it's raining outside!"

#4 GESTURES - Ask children to show a simple gesture to act out each idea (putting on boots, splashing in puddles, etc.) Repeat the gesture with a steady beat throughout the song.

*This is the way we wear our boots
Wear our boots, wear our boots.
This is the way we wear our boots
When it's raining outside.*

*This is the way we splash in puddles
Splash in puddles, splash in puddles.
This is the way we splash in puddles
When it's raining outside.*

...OR...

*We put umbrellas in the air...
Lightning flashes in the sky...*

*Let's all put our raincoats on...
The rain will make the flowers grow...*

TRY IT!

#1 OBJECTIVE: What is my goal for teaching this song or chant? _____

#2 WORDS: What words or phrases are essential to support your objective? _____

#3 RHYTHM/MELODY: Is there a song that fits the rhythm/inflection of your key words? Write it out:

Song Title: _____

Lyrics: _____

#4 GESTURES: What movements or gestures can you add to support learning? _____