Things to Do While You're Waiting: Music, Sound, and Movement

You're running errands with your children and suddenly you're stuck—in traffic, at the clinic, in the checkout line. Many parents find that playful learning activities can help reduce children's impatience when they have to wait.

Music, sound, and movement can ease the waiting time blues.

Creative movement helps children focus physical energy. Music involves math and the science of sound. When children sing, they often learn new words and gain a better understanding of language. Making music is one way to create beauty and have fun with other people.

Move to the beat.

Children can enjoy music from around the world. Even in a car seat, your child can:

- tap, clap, shimmy, sway, or wave a ribbon in time to music
- make fingers or toys march, dance, or pretend to direct an orchestra
- pretend to play band instruments
- do fingerplays such as "Eensy Weensy Spider"
- copy movements of other family members

Sing along.

It's best to do this when you will not disturb anyone else. Some parents keep a reminder list of favorite songs. Family members can:

- take turns choosing songs to sing together
- hum, chant, sing harmony, or lip-sync for variety
- make up songs about what you are doing
- sing along with music or videos your child chooses from the library

Listen.

Investigate sounds together. Sounds may help tell a story, as in Sergei Prokofiev's symphonic fairy tale "Peter and the Wolf." Your child's listening skills may grow when you help them understand terms like:

- Pitch: Is a sound high or low?
- Volume: Is a sound loud or quiet?
- Duration: How long does the sound last?
- Rhythm: Are there patterns to the sounds? Listen for heels clicking on a floor, the noise of the washing machine, the beat of a drum.
- Tempo: How rapidly do the sounds change?
- Mood: What feelings does the sound create—joy, excitement, fear, relaxation?

Create sounds.

Again, be sure not to disturb anyone else. Family members can:

- make sound effects with voices, fingers, objects, or instruments
- imitate animal voices or machinery sounds
- make up sound patterns for each other to copy. For example, tap-tap-clap, tap-tap-clap.
- listen to the rhythm of your own heartbeats and breathing

Any opinions, findings, conclusions, or recommendations expressed in this tip sheet are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Illinois State Board of Education.

Illinois Early Learning Project
University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign
Telephone: 217-333-1386
Toll-free: 877-275-3227
E-mail: iel@illinois.edu
https://illinoisearlylearning.org

ILLINOIS STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

10/25