

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



It's happening again! 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. And 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 “direct the 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 in a purse or backpack. 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 CDs or DVDs 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 her 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 (“tap-tap-clap, tap-tap-clap”)
- listen to the rhythm of your own heartbeats and breathing
- practice “making silence”

For related Web resources, see “Things to Do While You're Waiting: Music, Sound, and Movement” at <http://illinoisearlylearning.org/tips.htm>

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.



13 Children's Research Center
University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign
51 Gerty Dr. • Champaign, IL 61820-7469
Telephone: 217-333-1386
Toll-free: 877-275-3227
E-mail: iel@illinois.edu
<http://illinoisearlylearning.org>

Illinois State
Board of Education