

## It's Time for Play! Music and Play

[Music]

Children: It's time for play!

[Music]

Marley Jarvis: Hi, my name is Marley, and today, we're going to talk about music and play. Music is a really key part of cultures around the world, and it's something that we're picking up on, and our brains are learning from a really, really early age in development – by some estimates, even in the first few months of life. This doesn't mean that babies need to be enrolled in music lessons, but it does suggest that young children are listening to and learning from the music around them. So, for example, research shows that musical play, where children have the opportunity to move and play to a beat or to a rhythm, it builds children's ability to detect patterns. [Playing ukulele melody] So, things like that. And one of the best ways to enjoy music with children is through synchronized movements like dancing or clapping. And listening and moving to music may also help infants learn the rhythms and patterns that make up speech.

So, research suggests that one of the reasons for this is that there's actually a lot of overlaps of these different networks in our brain, so there are some networks that are engaged with music and others that are engaged with language, and there is overlap between these networks. So, this overlap might mean that musical experience can help strengthen networks used for language as well. Moving in time to the beat with another person might also help build interpersonal relationships. For example, studies show that moving together can play an important role in how we create emotional bonds with one another. Moving in sync with another person – so maybe dancing or clapping – can increase pro-social behavior like helping. There's also a really great connection to working on our fine and gross motor skills.

So, it can be a really wonderful idea to get some physical exercise using music, even when we're stuck indoors. So, you might try cutting out pieces of paper or circles of cardboard or even making an X on the floor with painter's tape, and you can either stand in place and dance, if space is an issue or you have a lot of children in your care, or you might even do these Xs on the floor with painter's tape and then hop in time to the beat from one to the next.

And don't forget that adults benefit from music too. So, different types of music can evoke or be appropriate for different types of moods. [Playing gentle, upbeat tune] So, if you're in the mood for something kind of mellow, music that you pick might be different than when you're wanting to rock out and be silly and dance around in your living room. And it also really doesn't matter what kinds of music you're choosing. There's no evidence that any one type of music is any better for your brain or for learning than any other, so pick what music you like or maybe some music that is culturally relevant to you or to the children and families that you work with.

So, learning to play a musical instrument like this is great, of course, but you also don't need to play a specific musical instrument. Kids don't need access to an expensive instrument in order to have musical experiences and engage in music play. So, look around, found objects, outside, inside, even in your kitchen ... Kitchen is full of fun things to drum on. [Metal percussion] And even maybe your produce basket ... Turns out, this squash makes kind of an interesting noise. And these are just some sticks that I found from outside that turned into some wonderful, wonderful drumsticks. And even they can be used to play together. [Wooden percussion] So, really, you don't need to be thinking about buying expensive music instruments for all the children in your care. You can stomp your feet. [Patting, slapping] Play different parts of your body. Try clapping, hitting logs or stones outside with a stick. Anything like this. It's a great way to join in the fun of music and learning about rhythm and pattern and even boosting language skills.

So, I hope you too will be able to enjoy music as you make time for play. Bye!