

Sing a song for learning

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Sing a song of sixpence. Why?

Brain experts are singing the praises of music. Neuroscience is proving that music triggers human activity and productivity. Brain research is showing us how neurotransmitters, synapses in our brains, and different parts of our brains are connected to our ears. In CBC's documentary "Working for a Song", Roberta Walker reports that humans may be the only species able to synchronize our movements to music. Whether we claim to have two left feet when we dance or not, music has been used over thousands of years to coordinate the ability of humans to collectively push, pull, lift, or row together. Innately our muscles respond to rhythm while our moods respond to pitch and melody.

The neuroscience of music reinforces child development research. Language and literacy experts tell us that learning rhymes, singing songs, rocking to lullabies, swaying, dancing or clapping out the beat in words or lyrics helps children make sense of syllables, stress in words, rhyme and alliteration. Musical, rhythmical activities help children decode complex spoken and written words by tapping into the musical abilities already hard-wired into their brains from birth.

Family Literacy Day is celebrated across Canada on January 27th each year. ABC CANADA, founder of Family Literacy Day, suggests that one valuable way in which families can brush up on their literacy skills is by singing together. "Singing is a great literacy activity for families because it provides a fun way to expand spoken vocabulary and creates a strong bond. Singing allows you to learn patterns of words, rhymes and rhythms, and is strongly connected to language skills."

Staff at the Child Centre in Sharbot Lake will be helping us celebrate the value and importance of family literacy with a family event themed around Books and Bugs. Parents, grandparents, caregivers and children are invited to The Child Centre from 10:00 to 11:00 a.m. on January 27th for fun 'bug' activities and stories. And if, while you are there, you find yourself inspired to break out in a rousing rendition of "The Ants Go Marching One by One" or "The Itsy Bitsy Spider", go ahead and sing. Through music you are helping your child learn language and literacy skills.

Neuroscience has never been so fun.