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The Joy of Music, Movement and  
Storytelling in Family Day Care

# The Joy of Music, Movement and Storytelling



culture in your Family Day Care service. It's also an invitation to celebrate and acknowledge the Traditional Owners of the land your service is on.

Music, movement and storytelling are part of who we are. They are part of everyday life, special events, celebrations, rituals and usually involve fun. Many cultures include their own stories, dance, songs and musical instruments, and this is an opportunity to celebrate your own and your children's

Music, movement and storytelling can be spontaneous or planned for intentionally as part of your program. You don't need formal training to sing, dance, play percussion instruments or tell stories. If you can *feel* music or respond to music, you can *do* music. If you can move one part of your body, you can dance. If you can make a sound or use Auslan, you can sing. If you know a story, you can tell stories. If you can read, you can learn stories to tell. Once you have the motivation, you have a starting place.

We invite you to experience the joy of music, movement and storytelling every day in your service with your children.

**In the words of Family Day Care educator, Sree Devi: "Listen to your heart, feel it and there you go, you got it!"**

# The Creative Arts

Music, movement and storytelling are part of the creative arts. The creative arts offer children a chance to express themselves in different ways, to imagine, to escape, or to pretend to be someone or something else if they wish. They support children to safely explore different identities and points of view, and to also learn more about who they are and the world they are in.

The creative arts is a powerful method of communication that is inclusive across all diversities and differences, including elements like language, age, culture and ability. (Scarlet, Dorrat & Thatcher, 2023)

**The creative arts through voice, poetry, stories, rhymes, chants, puppets, music and dance should be embedded in the curriculum every day. Our role is not to teach the arts but to encourage children to experience the arts in a joyous and positive way. Engage children to be participants rather than an audience and if you are enthusiastic and enjoying yourself, the children will usually be swept away with you (Dorrat, cited in Scarlet, 2018).**



# Children's Learning and Development

Music, movement and storytelling can be powerful tools for learning and development. Include them in your everyday program to promote brain development, relationship building, language learning, early literacy skills, a sense of physical and emotional wellbeing and identity. Singing, dancing and telling stories can help children to transition smoothly from home to Family Day Care, to increase

concentration and focus, to relax, to experience joy and to feel a sense of belonging.

They can also provide a predictable rhythm to your program, helping the day to flow smoothly.

Processing the musical components of songs, music and dance happen in the

same part of the child's brain as language development. The development of early reading includes the ability to understand differences and patterns in sounds and words, and this ability is developed through experiences which include singing songs and moving to a rhythm.

## Did You Know?

...that 90% of a child's brain development occurs within the first five years of life, and in these early years, music, movement, and storytelling are closely linked to brain development.

**Language and Literacy: in the early years, literacy includes a range of modes of communication including music, movement, gesture, dance, song, drama, storytelling, visual arts, digital literacies, and media, as well as listening, talking, signing, viewing, reading and writing (EYLF, p.66)**



## Music, Movement and Storytelling and the Frameworks

Including music, movement and storytelling in your program supports children to progress towards the Outcomes of the *Early Years Learning Framework* (EYLF) V2.0 and *My Time Our Place* (MTOPI) V2.0. These Frameworks provide examples of how educators can promote children's learning using the creative arts and what to look for in children's play as they learn. Some examples are provided on page 6; however, we encourage you to find others in the Frameworks.

### The Frameworks invite you to support children to:

Communicate through Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander verbal ways of storytelling and yarning and non-verbal ways of deep listening (EYLF Outcome 5, p.59 and MTOPI, p.61).

Tell stories about their family and culture (EYLF Outcome, p.31).

Move to the tempo and rhythm of music (EYLF Outcome 3, p.47).

Respond through movement to traditional and contemporary music, dance and storytelling (EYLF Outcome 3, p.47).

Engage in creative experiences such as art, dance and drama (EYLF Outcome 4, p.51).

Use the creative arts such as drawing, painting, sculpture, drama, dance, movement, music and storytelling (MTOPI Outcome 5, p.63).

Use materials to create art works (e.g. drawing, painting, sculpture, drama, dance, movement, music and storytelling) to express ideas and make meaning (EYLF Outcome 5, p.61).

Use language and representations from play, music and art to share and project meaning (EYLF Outcome 5, p.58 and MTOPI, p.61).

### The Frameworks encourage you to:

Seek Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander guidance to ensure that the authentic voices of Traditional Owners, Elders and community members are highlighted in planning and practice (p.60).

Invite grandparents and 'grandfriends' to assist in planned experiences such as storytelling (EYLF Outcome 2, p.39).

Provide ongoing opportunities for children to express their ideas, feelings and emotions through the creative arts (EYLF Outcome 3, p.48).

Encourage invite all children to share their history and culture, which could include songs, language, food, ceremonies and dance (EYLF Outcome 3, p.48).

Provide a range of resources that enable all children to express meaning through the arts, including visual arts, dance, drama and music (EYLF Outcome 5, p.61 and MTOPI, p. 63).

Plan for and participate in energetic physical activity with children, including dance, drama, fundamental movement skills and games (EYLF Outcome 3, p.47 and MTOPI, p.52)

Draw on diverse families and community experiences and expertise to include various forms of dance, e.g. Khon, Bharatanatyam, Bollywood, Shaku, Hip-Hop, Irish dance. (MTOPI Outcome 3, p.51)

Use music to develop children's understandings of patterns, e.g. clapping names (EYLF Outcome 5, p.61).

## OUTCOME 5: CHILDREN ARE EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATORS (from EYLF p.61)

### Children express ideas and make meaning using a range of media

This is evident, for example, when children:

- use language, sounds, gestures and movement to engage in play to imagine and create roles, scripts and ideas
- share the stories and symbols of their own culture and re-enact well-known stories
- **use materials to create art works (e.g. drawing, painting, sculpture, drama, dance, movement, music and storytelling) to express ideas and make meaning**
- experiment with ways of expressing ideas and meaning using a range of media
- begin to use images and approximations of letters and words to convey meaning
- enjoy engaging with and sharing a wide variety of cultural texts including those authored by Traditional Owners
- display literacy behaviours by incorporating reading and writing approximations and viewing in their play (including digital technologies)
- **view, listen and respond to simple printed, visual and multimedia texts or music and express how it makes them feel**
- use simple tools and techniques to shape, assemble and join materials they are using
- explore a range of materials and their properties.

Educators promote this learning for all children when they, for example:

- build on children's family and community experiences with creative and expressive arts
- **provide a range of resources that enable children to express meaning through the Arts, including visual arts, dance, drama and music**
- ask and answer questions during the reading or discussion of books and other texts
- provide resources that encourage children to experiment with images and print
- teach children skills and techniques that will enhance their capacity for self-expression and communication
- join in children's play and co-construct materials such as signs that extend the play and enhance literacy learning
- respond to children's images and symbols, talking about the elements, principles, skills and techniques they have used in order to convey meaning
- critically reflect on how they are embedding Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives and voices into every part of their planning and their setting
- use a range of questioning strategies appropriate to each child's capabilities to gain insight into their thinking
- provide Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children opportunities to communicate how they are feeling through writing, the Arts, and construction.

Add your own examples from your context:

## A note on puppets

Using puppets is a great way to invite participation in music, movement and storytelling experiences. They create a visual aid and a warm welcome which supports children's engagement.

Puppets fascinate and involve children in a way that few other art forms can because they allow children to enter the world of fantasy and drama easily. Puppets can be used to bring stories



to life, to spark the imagination, to invite children to sing, dance and tell their own stories. Puppets are particularly helpful for children experiencing trauma – children are transported to a safe place, as they feel safe to connect with the puppet, a non-threatening prop to support connection and engagement.

You can make your own puppets or purchase ready-made ones. There are many different types of puppets, which may include:

- ▶ Finger puppets
- ▶ Stick puppets
- ▶ Hand, glove and sock puppets
- ▶ Story puppets
- ▶ Shadow puppets
- ▶ Puppets on a string, etc.





## Music and movement

Offering opportunities for children to move to music, supports them to physically connect with the music and express how they feel about it. It also helps them become familiar with what their bodies can do and strengthens how they can move in large and small ways.

The Munch & Move program, an initiative to support the health and development of children, has created a great resource called Munch & Move Music Playlist. It includes 15 songs you can learn to sing with children, many of them promoting physical activity.

- ▶ Here's a link to the [Munch & Move webpage](#).
- ▶ Here's a link to the [Munch & Move Song Book](#).



# Songs and Rhymes for All Ages

(Please refer to the recording of the presentation on the [NSWFDC website](#) to hear the below songs and rhymes. You might like to also search them online to hear how they sound)

Singing songs and playing with rhymes helps children practice sounds. They learn to hear and match words that sound the same and they will later begin to match these sounds to alphabet letters in text. They also support children to build numeracy skills as they engage with songs and rhymes with numbers.

## Turn off YouTube



Remember to learn the songs first, turn off YouTube and sing with the children. This increases engagement, connection and joy!

## Always repeat the rhymes a few times



Experience wires the brain.

Repetition strengthens the wiring.

## Type the words of rhymes or songs onto a card



“Actively use, engage with and share the enjoyment of language and texts in a range of ways” (EYLF, p.60).



# Greetings

## 1. Acknowledgement of Country

It's great to start each day by acknowledging whose Country you are on with your children. There are many ways you could do this and the Acknowledgement of Country below is an example created by Aunty Tracey Linn Bostock. Aunty Tracey is a proud Bundjalung and Mulungjali woman, which is her grandparents' Country. It is a contemporary song line that has spread across the country over 25 years. If you choose to adopt this, please remember to respect the cultural integrity and history of it. Also remember to insert the Land you are on if you are not on Gadigal Land.

*We touch the ground of the Gadigal Land*

*We reach for the sky that covers the Gadigal Land*

*We touch our hearts to care for the Gadigal Land*

– Aunty Tracey Linn Bostock

## 2. How Do You Do?

*How do you do-ti-do-ti-do-ti-do*

*How do you do to-day?*

*It's so nice to see you all to have a sing and a play.*

*I look forward to Family Day Care on Mondays*

*Just to here you say*

*How do you do ti-do-ti-do*

*How do you do today?*



### 3. Greetings in different languages

#### Italian

*Ciao Buongiorno Ciao Buongiorno*

*Come Stai Come Stai*

*Molte Molte Bene Molte Molte Bene*

*Grazie a te Grazie a te.*

#### Greek

*Calimera Calimera Tikanis Tikanis*

*Polikala efaristo Polikala efaristo*

*Yasoo Yasoo.*

#### Sri Lankan (Sinhala)

*Ayubowan Ayubowan Kohomade Kohomade*

*Hondai Sthoothi Hondai Sthoothi*

*Suba dawasak Suba dawasak.*

#### Indian (Hindi)

*Namasthae Namasthae*

*Aap kaise hain, Aap kaise hain*

*Main teek hoo, Main teek hoo*

*Namasthae Namasthae.*

#### Burmese

*Min-ga-la-ba, min-ga-la-ba*

*Ne kaun la, Ne kaun la*

*Ne kaun de, Ne kaun de*

*Bhinebhine, bhinebhine.*

### 4. Bumble bee

*Bumble bee bumble bee*

*Can you sing your name to me?*

(encourage child to sing their name back to you).

# Simple Songs and Rhymes Using Props or Instruments

You may have suitable props around your house you could use when you sing, dance, play music or tell stories. Use a variety of music that you love from records, cassettes, CDs or Spotify.

## 1. Old Joan Muddlecomb

*She looked everywhere, this way and that.*

*She walked down High Street and everybody said*

*“Silly Joan Muddlecomb, you’ve got it on your head”.*

## 2. Roly Poly Roly Poly

*Roly Poly Roly Poly Up Up Up*

*Roly Poly Roly Poly Down Down Down*

*Roly Poly Roly Poly Out Out Out*

*Roly Poly Roly poly In In In.*

## 3. Jelly On A Plate

*Jelly on a plate, jelly on a plate*

*Wibble Wobble, Wibble Wobble*

*Jelly on a plate.*

*Jelly on a plate, Jelly on a plate*

*Wibble Wobble, Wibble Wobble*

*Jelly on the floor...*

**Actions: Sit the baby on your lap ensuring baby’s back is well supported.**

**Older babies and toddlers can sit on your knees. Stretch your feet out.**

**Gently bounce the baby and on the last line, sway them to the side and lift them onto the floor next to you.**

#### 4. Rat-a Tat-tat

*Rat-a-tat-tat. Who is that?*

*Only Grandma's pussy cat.*

*What do you want? A pint of milk*

*Where's your money? In my pocket.*

*Where's your pocket? I forgot it.*

*Oh you silly pussy cat.*

▶ Video: [‘Rat a Tat Tat’, shared by Louise Dorrat](#)



#### 5. Black Socks

*Black socks they never get dirty*

*The longer you wear them the stronger they get.*

*Just when I thought I should wash them, a voice deep inside me said*

*“Don’t wash them yet” – not yet, not yet, not yet.*

▶ Video: [‘Black Socks’, shared by Louise Dorrat](#)



## 6. Two Large Bunjils (creator spirit)

(Use the names of the children)

*Two Large Bunjils Flying to Maroondah*

*One named (Child's name), One named (Child's name)*

*Fly away (Child's name), Fly away (Child's name),*

*Come back (Child's name), come back (Child's name).*

▶ Video: [‘Two Large Bunjils’, shared by Louise Dorrat](#)

## 7. (Child's name) Is Beating On Her Drum

*(Child's name) is beating on her drum, on her drum, on her drum,*

*(Child's name), is beating on her drum then she stops!*

## 8. Ten Little Fingers

*I have ten little fingers, they all belong to me*

*I can make them do things, would you like to see?*

*I can close them up tight and open them up wide*

*I can clap them together and make them hide*

*I can put them up high, I can put them down low*

*I can fold them like this, and I can fold them so.*

▶ Video: [‘Ten Little Fingers’, shared by Louise Dorrat](#)



# Transitions and farewells

## 9. Postie Postie, Deliver Me A Letter

*Postie postie, deliver me a letter*

*Postie postie, two would suit me better*

*I can hardly wait and see*

*What is in the bag for me?*

## 10. Icka Bicka Boo

*Icka Bicka Boo out goes you*

## 11. Counting rhyme

*1, 2, 3, 4, I have a hunch. 5, 6, 7, 8, you can go to lunch*

## 12. I Can Lean

*I can lean (or shake/twist etc) this side*

*I can lean (or shake/twist etc) that side*

*1, 2, 3, 4, you can go out side*

## 13. If You're Wearing Stripes

*If you're wearing stripes, if you're wearing stripes*

*You can go and wash your hands (or get your bag)*

*If you're wearing stripes*

*(to the tune of 'Farmer's in the Dell')*

## 14. Let Your Hands So Loudly Clap

*Let your hands so loudly clap clap clap*

*Let your fingers loudly snap snap snap*

*Close your eyes, fold your arms and quiet be*

*Let your eyes so wide awake*

*Let your fingers shake shake shake*

*Touch your nose, touch your cheek.*

*Wave goodbye, see you next week*





# Moving to the Music

Moving to music:

- ▶ Teaches children about the movement and the feeling of dance
- ▶ Encourages feelings, expression and emotions
- ▶ Creates a sense of fun and increases endorphins, which is good for mental health
- ▶ Is physical and builds small muscles and large muscles
- ▶ Builds language and listening skills – listening to the beat and rhythm
- ▶ Is sensory and helps organise the learning process
- ▶ Encourages spatial awareness
- ▶ Helps with memory, concentration skills and builds children's confidence
- ▶ Introduces concepts; faster/slower, high/low, loud/soft, sound/silence

- ▶ Can be empowering, open-ended, therefore, there is no right or wrong.

*(Scarlet, Dorrat, Thatcher, 2023)*

## 1. Use clapping sticks or a tambour

Encourage the children to move to the beat.

Talk about different ways of moving; front, back, sideways, up, down, fast, slow, sideways, jerky, etc

The children stop moving when the beat stops.

## 2. Dance to music with costumes

Cut holes in large pieces of fabric, so children can put them over their head. Find a variety of styles of music that you love including classical, jazz, contemporary, Indigenous and world music. Make sure you include music that is fast, slow, rap, rock, waltz and hip hop. After a few minutes, change the music and encourage the children to feel the music. Sometimes you have to move some furniture to allow enough space.



### 3. Using imaginary paint dancing to the music

Give each child a paint brush and provide coloured bowls containing imaginary paint.

Encourage children to pretend to paint the wall, door and furniture to the music. They can return to the bowls and mix the colours too. No right or wrong.

### 4. Dance with ribbons

Tie ribbons onto a rubber ring and encourage children to move to the music. You may wish to choose Aboriginal colours or rainbow colours

### 5. Clap to beats

Encourage the children to call out a vegetable, fruit or clothing with three syllables, two syllables or one syllable. As they call it out, encourage them to clap, stomp, tiptoe or step etc. to the sounds (syllables).

### 6. Beat the syllables to the child's name.

Use a drum, clapping sticks or an overturned bucket in the sandpit.

# Musical Instruments

You can make music using your voice, a formal instrument, body parts or any object that makes a sound. Musical instruments support children to feel the beat and rhythm of the music. Having musical instruments as a regular part of your program also supports children to be comfortable around instruments and confident in using and labelling them.

Instruments can be used in a spontaneous or more structured way – inside or outside.

The best instruments to use with children are good quality non-tuned percussion. Non-tuned percussion instruments are any instruments or objects that you can shake, beat or scrape to make a sound. For example; maraca, caxixi, cabasa, cymbal, triangle, castanet, wood block, tam tam, drum, djembe, guiro, clave, triangle and tambour.

To support you to program quality, engaging music and movement experiences, we encourage you to have at least a set of egg maracas and clapping sticks as part of your resource toolkit.



# The Elements of Music

Elements are the components or parts of music. They all have an important part to play in any musical style and genre like pop, classical, rock, soul, nursery rhymes, etc. When we understand what the elements of music do, we can recognise and talk about them in our everyday practice with children. This helps them understand and find a deeper joy for music.

The elements of music are:

**Pitch** High and low sounds

**Beat** A steady pulse like a clock

**Rhythm** The pattern of sounds in the music that occurs over time.

**Dynamics** Loud and quiet sounds and their movement, e.g. from loud to soft or soft to loud

**Tempo** Speed – fast and slow and can be called the pulse or heartbeat of the music

**Melody** The tune

**Harmony** Different notes (sounds) at the same time.



# Storytelling

Storytelling is a special way of sharing language, culture, ideas and stories with children. Stories can be told (oral stories), read, drawn, sung, shared with or without props, Reading and telling stories build nurturing relationships.

Learn more about [Reading and storytelling with children – Raising Children Network](#).

## Oral storytelling

Oral storytelling is one of the most ancient art forms and is how people have traditionally passed knowledge from generation to generation in many cultures. It has always played an integral role in Indigenous communities such as the “Dreaming” stories that have been passed down from one generation to another for 60,000 years, embedding the history of the Land, the seasons, people, animals and culture. Non-Indigenous Australians can learn from First Nations Peoples about the significance and the art of storytelling.

The beauty of oral storytelling is that you can do it anywhere; outside under a tree or inside, sitting in a circle watching the

flame of a candle. You could be standing up or sitting in the sandpit. You can tell a story to one child on your knee or a few children lying down. You can tell a story with or without props.

**Draw the children to you by using your eyes and varying your voice, tone, pitch and volume. Be authentic and real.**



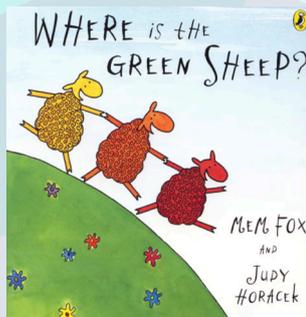
## Stories with props

- ▶ [Old Joan Muddlecomb's Hat](#)

## Stories in boxes

Choose your favourite story and learn it off by heart. Then find simple, natural props to represent the characters and the scenery of the story. You might like to also photocopy the book cover for the top of the box. Some examples of great books that make great stories in boxes include:

- ▶ *Where is the Green Sheep?*, by Mem Fox
- ▶ Video: [‘Dear Zoo’, by Rod Campbell, told by Louise Dorrat](#)
- ▶ Video: [‘Peace at Last’, by Jill Murphy, told by Louise Dorrat](#)
- ▶ Video: [‘My House’, by Brenna and Vicki Harding, told by Louise Dorrat](#)
- ▶ *The Big Hungry Bear*, by Don and Audrey Wood.



MEM FOX'S

## 10 Read aloud Commandments



### Storytelling with picture books

► *Ten Read Aloud Commandments*, by Mem Fox.

- 1 Spend at least ten wildly happy minutes every single day reading aloud. From birth!
- 2 Read at least three stories a day: it may be the same story three times. Children need to hear a thousand stories before they can begin to learn to read. Or the same story a thousand times!
- 3 Read aloud with animation. Listen to your own voice and don't be dull, or flat, or boring. Hang loose and be loud, have fun and laugh a lot.
- 4 Read with joy and enjoyment: real enjoyment for yourself and great joy for the listeners

- 5 Read the stories that your child loves, over and over, and over again, and always read in the same 'tune' for each book: i.e. with the same intonations and volume and speed, on each page, each time.
- 6 Let children hear lots of language by talking to them constantly about the pictures, or anything else connected to the book; or sing any old song that you can remember; or say nursery rhymes in a bouncy way; or be noisy together doing clapping games
- 7 Look for rhyme, rhythm or repetition in books for young children, and make sure the books are really short.
- 8 Play games with the things that you and the child can see on the page, such as letting kids finish rhymes, and finding the letters that start the child's name and yours, remembering that it's never work, it's always a fabulous game.
- 9 Never ever teach reading, or get tense around books.
- 10 Please read aloud every day because you just adore being with your child, not because it's the right thing to do.

# Further Resources

Click here to hear a Family Day Care educator read the 'Three Billy Goats Gruff' story: [Connecting with practice: Discovering – story time transition to naptime.](#)

## Resource Books for educators

- ▶ *That Music Book*, (Scarlet, Dorrat, Thatcher & illustrated by Bostock, 2023).
- ▶ 'The Power of Dramatic Arts with Children', (Dorrat, 2018, in *Becoming with Art in Early Childhood*, Scarlet).
- ▶ *Reading Magic*, (Fox & illustrated by Horacek, 2007).

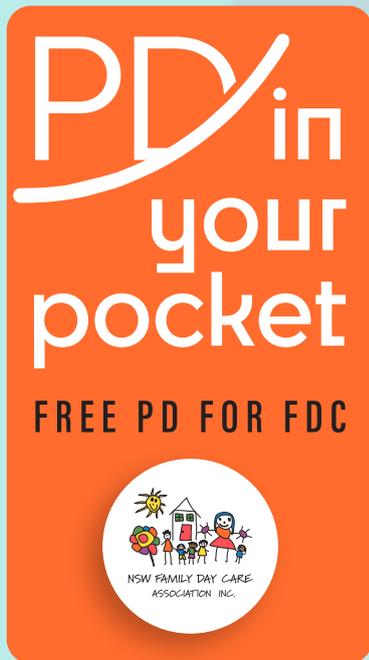
## Ethical Indigenous Resources

- ▶ [Yarn Strong Sista.](#)





# This booklet is part of the PD In Your Pocket professional development program.



This topic – **The Joy of Music, Movement and Storytelling in Family Day Care** – has an accompanying webinar and video, both of which can be viewed as videos or listened to as podcasts.

There is also a Facebook Group where you can discuss the topic with other Family Day Care educators in NSW.

For more information about PD In Your Pocket, go to:

[www.nswfdc.org.au/pdinyourpocket](http://www.nswfdc.org.au/pdinyourpocket)





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NSW FAMILY DAY CARE  
ASSOCIATION INC.