

DEVELOPING CHILDREN'S MELODIC AND RHYTHMIC SKILLS WITH PLAYFUL TASKS IN CLASSROOM MUSIC LESSONS

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SUMMARY. The development of children's musical abilities and skills is a complex process, and educators play a crucial role in guiding this journey. Introducing playful tasks into classroom music lessons is a method that empowers educators to enhance children's rhythmic and metric skills. This paper presents playful tasks, allowing educators to guide children in developing their melodic and rhythmic skills through a variety of fun activities. By using these playful tasks, educators can effectively enhance the development of students' musical skills.

Keywords: development, elementary school, melodic skills, musical abilities, musical skills, rhythmic skills

Development of Musical Abilities in Schoolchildren

Introducing playful tasks into classroom music lessons is a powerful tool for enhancing children's melodic and rhythmic skills. Not only does it make the learning process more enjoyable, but it also significantly increases their musical abilities, including creativity, rhythm, and melody recognition.² These playful methods, such as singing, musical games, and using instruments, develop musical skills and contribute to broader cognitive and communicative abilities.³

Understanding age-related milestones in children's musical development is crucial for educators. Maintaining a steady tempo independently is still

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challenging for children starting school.^{4 5 6} Before age six, pitch and melody discrimination was still challenging.⁷ However, by the time children start school, at five to seven years of age, pitch matching becomes more accurate,⁸ vocal range increases, singing ability improves,⁹ selective hearing develops, and attention spans increase.^{10 11} From around seven, children can attend to more than one musical element at a time.^{12 13}

Children can sing a song correctly from six to seven years after learning it by ear.^{14 15} In song learning, children learn the words first, then rhythm, contour, and intervals.^{16 17 18 19} Children aged six to seven years have approximately an octave vocal range.²⁰

First- and second-grade students can clap back extended rhythm

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exercises more accurately.²¹ While clapping rhythm, using rhythm names develops rhythmic skills (rhythm reproduction) and memorization skills.²² Rhythmic skills continue to develop, during which children can demonstrate rhythms in various ways, such as clapping, tapping, moving, and singing.²³ ²⁴ By age five, children can match sounds with symbols,²⁵ and around the age of six, they can begin to learn to read music.²⁶

At seven years of age, the sense of tonality becomes more secure.²⁷ ²⁸ Children can observe the identity and difference between two chords from the age of seven,²⁹ so the development of harmony perception can be estimated to be around the age of seven to eight. The conceptual distinction between major and minor keys is only secure in 8-10 years. However, children as young as three years can distinguish between the happy and sad expressions associated with major and minor keys.³⁰ The ability to hear harmony develops between the ages of 10 and 12,³¹ whereas the sense of tonality is consolidated by age 10.³²

Children sing songs more accurately and clearly, including at small intervals.³³ Erős et al. have shown that children sing the intervals of frequently sung children's songs accurately. There is a significant improvement in the

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singing back of smaller intervals by the age of 10, a trend that continues at a slower rate until the end of lower secondary school and then stops between the ages of 14 and 16.³⁴ The length of the melody is the primary determinant of singing back, and hearing is closely related to memory development.³⁵ By age eight, intonation during singing becomes more stable.³⁶ By the third grade, the children's vocal range expands to two octaves.³⁷ The spontaneous developmental stage of rhythmic and singing abilities is completed around the age of seven to eight, which means that without musical training, these two musical abilities do not develop further and remain at this level into adulthood, or only very little development is observed.^{38 39}

Melodic hearing develops only after 11 years of age if students are trained in music and actively participate in musical action.⁴⁰ In adolescence, active participation in musical activities is essential to develop musical abilities and skills.^{41 42}

Developing children's rhythmic and metric skills with playful tasks

Development of a sense of steady beat

Conductor game: The teacher faces the class and, while singing the song, makes repetitive movements according to the steady beat, which the children imitate in a mirror image.

Marching game: Children mimic the tight posture and steady, audible stride while singing a marching song. *Variation:* The children walk in different shapes according to the steady beat while singing a song.

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Train game: The children stand behind each other, holding each other's shoulders. The one in the front is the engine, the one leading and the others are the wagons. The children walk in steady quarter-moving steps while singing.

Counting game: The children say the counting game, nursery rhyme in syllables, with a steady beat.

Clock-ticking game: Children imitate the clock's ticking by moving their arms from right to left (tick-tock, ta-ta).

Playing with a tool (bean bag, ball, etc.): When singing the song, the children pass a ball or a small bean bag around each other according to the steady beat.

Development of the sense of music meter

Musical accent games: The quarter-clapping starts from a given child at a steady pace, followed in sequence by the child sitting next to him, and so on. The first heavy clap is followed by one unweighted clap, another heavy clap and so on (2/4). The first heavy clap is followed by two unweighted claps (3/4). The first heavy clap is followed by three unweighted claps (4/4). This can also be played by clapping only the heavy part of the beat and keeping the children quiet for the rest.

Conductor game with the expression of a musical accent.

Ball-toss round game with the expression of a musical accent.

Play that expresses a musical meter with an individual movement sequence.

Exercise that expresses meter, using a musically accented gait: When singing a song, we walk in a circle or freely in space according to the steady beat. We always step with total feet for the heavy beats while walking on tiptoes for the weightless beats.

Developing rhythmic reproduction skills

The following rhythm games can be composed of any rhythm values and rhythm patterns:

Rhythm echo game: The teacher claps and plays a rhythm pattern on a rhythm instrument or the same note of an instrument; then, the children repeat, clap back, and echo by saying the rhythm names. *Rhythm ball:* The rhythm pattern in which the teacher claps must be repeated by the child to whom the ball is thrown. *Rhythmizing of the name:* Each child says their

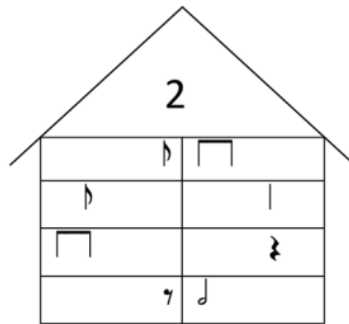
name in rhythm, followed by rhythm names. *Live rhythm*: The rhythm values are personified by the children challenged by the teacher, each child scoring a quarter. The quarter note is shown with hands lowered, the paired eighth note with hands raised, and the pause is shown with the hands crouching down. The other children, singing the rhythm names, clap the established rhythm formation.

Live rhythm piano: The teacher challenges the children, each given a rhythm board with rhythm values, patterns, or motifs to show to the rest of the class. The teacher points to a child holding a rhythm board at will, and the rest of the class has to clap or tap the rhythm on the board. *Rhythm guessing*: The board contains 4-6 rhythm patterns of the same size. First, the class claps all the rhythm patterns, saying the rhythm names. Then, the children choose one of themselves to go out or bow their heads. Meanwhile, the rest of the class discusses which rhythm patterns they will clap on the board. After the chosen child returns, the rest of the class claps the selected rhythm pattern without saying the rhythm name, and the chosen child has to guess which rhythm pattern is played and choose it from the board. Alternatively, the teacher claps a rhythm pattern of their choice, and the children have to identify which rhythm pattern - on the board - the teacher claps.

Rhythm pair finder: Each child is given a rhythm card, 2-2 identical, but no one knows their pair. One child claps or taps his rhythm pattern, and the other has the same rhythm pattern and becomes his partner. As proof, he also taps his rhythm pattern. *Rhythm phone*: The children stand behind each other. The person at the back, teacher or child - taps a rhythm pattern on the back or shoulder of the person in front of him, which he passes on to the person in front. Finally, the child at the front taps the rhythm pattern that comes to him, a "telephone message".

Rhythm Cottage: We mark the time signature at the top of the cottage, and each room is a beat. The rooms have already been occupied by tenants (rhythm values and rhythm patterns provided by the teacher) who are looking for roommates. The children add new residents to each room, finally clapping the entire rhythm pattern. Example:

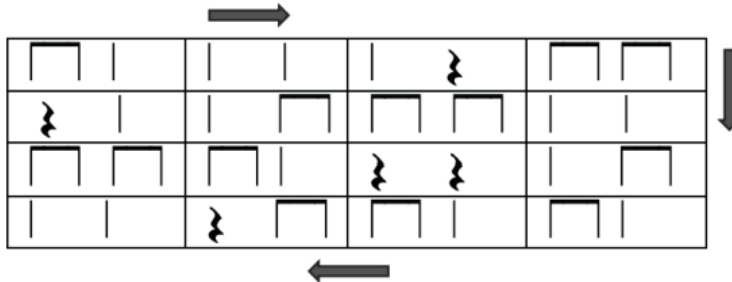
Fig. 1



Rhythm Cottage

Rhythm magic board: units of beats from the learned rhythm elements are placed on the magic board; the resulting rhythm line can be read in any direction and played. Example:

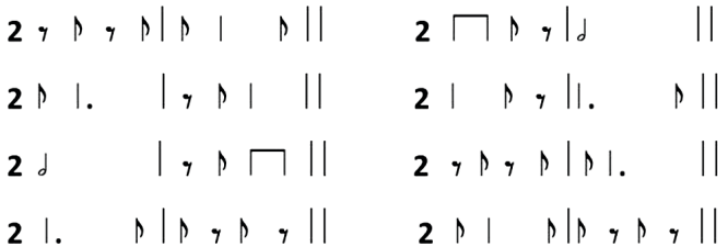
Fig. 2



Magic rhythm board

Mirror image search: Two columns on the board have the same number of rhythm patterns. After clapping, the children find the mirror image on the right for the rhythms on the left. Example:

Fig. 3

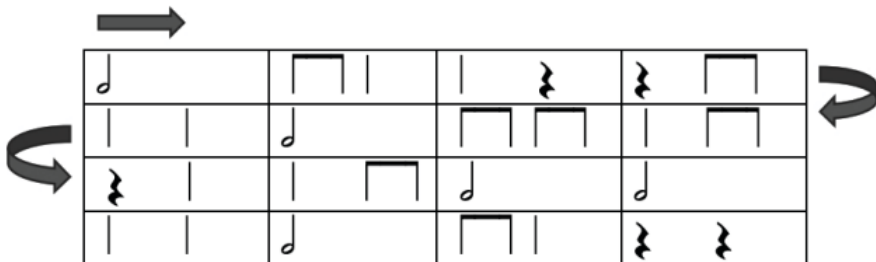


Mirror image search

Crab movement: Continuous repetition of the rhythm pattern back and forth.

Rhythm snake 1: Continuous, consecutive uttering of the rhythm pattern on the board, resulting in a prolonged rhythm pattern similar to a snake. Example:

Fig. 4



Rhythm snake 1.

Rhythm improvisation

Rhythm Puzzler: Puzzled rhythm exercise from the learned rhythm values and rhythm patterns.

Blended beats: Children do different rhythm patterns based on the beats on the board. *Rhythmic nursery rhymes:* Children rhythm the lyrics of unknown nursery rhymes. *Rhythmic question-and-answer.* *Ending a rhythm exercise*

Rhythm chain: The teacher claps the two-beat rhythm pattern; the first child repeats the second beat and adds another beat, and the next child repeats the second beat of these two beats and adds another, etc.

Rhythm Snake 2: Each child makes up a rhythm pattern of equal length, and then the children repeat them one after the other, evenly spaced. The children follow one after the other in a serpentine pattern. Another version: Each child repeats the rhythm exercise of the student in front of him and adds a beat to the rhythm exercise heard from the student in front of him, then the rhythm exercise swells and expands in this way.

Rhythmic Canon Improvisation. Making up for missing beats in rhythm practice. Rhythm gossip: The teacher claps a rhythm pattern, and the first child repeats the same pattern but changes it in one place. The next child repeats the variation but changes in another place, etc.

Shrinking melody: In the rhythm of a melody, the longer values are changed to shorter ones, so the number of beats decreases, and the melody becomes shorter. *Expanding melody:* The shorter values in a melody's rhythm are changed to longer ones, increasing the number of beats and expanding the melody. *Improvising a song accompaniment:* Improvising a rhythm accompaniment for a song. *Rhythm multiplication:* In a given rhythm exercise, the child substitutes shorter rhythm elements with minor changes in some places. *Rhythm thinning:* In a given rhythm exercise, the child substitutes more extended rhythm elements with minor changes in some places. *Rhythm improvising for melody tones.* Rhythmic polyphony. *Linking a steady beat to a song rhythm:* Clapping the rhythm of the learned song with a walk that gives a steady beat.

Alternating hand rhythm tapping. Call-and-response game: One group claps to a beat or rhythm motif while the other listens silently. Then, the other group claps, and the first group listens. *Rhythm canon:* Polyphonic sounding of a rhythm example, with parts entering with a time difference. *Crab canon:* Polyphonic voicing of a rhythm pattern, with the second part entering with a time difference and voicing the rhythm pattern from back to front. *Rhythm-quodlibet.* Playing the rhythm of previously learned, independently of each other. *Two-part rhythm exercises*

Developing children's melodic skills with playful tasks

Developing Melodic Reproduction Skills

Melody echo: Variation 1: The teacher sings a short melody with lyrics, and then the children repeat what they hear. Variation 2: The teacher sings a melody with sol-fa syllables (movable do), and then the children sing back with sol-fa syllables. Variation 3: The teacher sings a melody with neutral syllables "la-la," and then the children echo it with sol-fa syllables.

Showing the melody line: The teacher helps the children to show first the spatial positioning of the melody tones. *Sol-fa gymnastics:* It can be used effectively to develop high- and low-pitch perception. For example, in La, the children stand on tiptoe; in So, they stand on their feet; in Mi, they tilt their trunk forward; in Do, the children squat. *Hiding melody:* The children begin to sing a melody, then the teacher shows the red board, and they continue singing the tone silently with inner hearing. When the teacher shows the green board again, the children continue to sing out loud. *Live piano:* Some children personify the sol-fa syllables, showing the class their tone on the board. The other children must sing the tone that the teacher puts his hand on the child's head (shoulder).

Tone hiding: The class sings a well-known song together, and then the teacher sings it solo, always humming one tone. Which tone did I hide?

Flying sheet music: A cardboard sheet music head is glued to a stick, and then the teacher shows a melody on the five-line board, which the children sing. A further variation is to make one-half of the flying sheet green and the other half red. Children should only sing the notes the teacher shows with the green music head; for the notes shown in red, they should remain silent, following along with their inner hearing. *Sound staircase:* We write a series of sol-fa syllables on the stairs drawn on the blackboard. The teacher shows tones and melodies, which the children must sing with sol-fa syllables.

Sound column: A series of sol-fa syllables is written vertically on the blackboard. The teacher then shows tones and melodies on the board, which the children must sing with sol-fa syllables. *Living-line system:* The five fingers on one hand represent the five-line musical score, and the other hand shows the notes and melody.

Melody improvisation

Musical name card: Children make their names into music using a given set of tones. *Melody ending. Call and response game. Setting the rhythm to music:* Create melody variations for a given rhythm pattern from a set of tones. *Melody line:* The teacher sings two bars of a melody, then the first child repeats the second bar and adds another bar, the next child sings the second bar of these two bars and adds another bar, etc.

Melody snake: Each child repeats the melody of the student in front of them and adds one bar to the melody of the student in front of them; then, the melody swells and expands. *Melodic Canon Improvisation. Sequence improvisation. A simple story, a short children's poem set to music.* Melodic polyphony. *Question and answer singing. Singing with organ point:* Singing above or below a sustained note. *Singing with the bagpipe bass:* Singing a bagpipe bass for a song.

Singing with melody-ostinato accompaniment: Singing a short repeated melody to a song. *Quodlibet:* Singing several songs at once. *Canon Singing.* *March of the Horns:* The consonance of the motives mi-re-do and do-so,-mi. *Two-part singing in the third interval in parallel Two-part singing* Rhythmic and Melodic Polyphony.

Singing with an ostinato rhythm: Play a repetitive rhythm pattern while singing the song. *Hiding melody:* The two parts sing the melody alternately in solos, while the rhythms written under the melody are clapped.

Rhythm ostinato: playing a repeating rhythm pattern alongside a learned song. Variation 1: Rhythm ostinato with body percussion, individual or pair exercise. Variation 2: Creative singing games based on rhythm ostinato, performed in groups. *Playing the rhythm of a song with an o ostinato rhythm as an accompaniment to a song:* Playing the rhythm of another song with an ostinato rhythm when singing a song. *Counter-rhythm:* For singing, we clap (knock) so that we always clap a pair of eighths for the melody quarter and a pair of eighths for the quarter. *Song and its rhythm in canon with body percussion.* *Play a different rhythm pattern with body percussion while singing a song.*

Conclusions

Playful rhythmic and melodic tasks in classroom music lessons are powerful tools for enhancing children's melodic and rhythmic skills. In this paper, I presented playful tasks for children to improve their musical development. Introducing playful tasks into class music lessons is an effective tool to enhance children's musical development.

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