

Singing With Young Children

Children 3-5 years old, who are not used to singing out, love to just sit and watch and be entertained. It is very important for both cognitive and language development, that they learn the words to songs. Some children will sing them at home at first, till they feel comfortable enough to do it at school. Our job as teachers is to entice the child into activity.

Never make a child sing or comment that they are not participating! I'll never forget a little boy from Thailand, who attended a school that I visited often. He would never participate in any of my activities. He would just squat in his place and watch. At first I thought it was a language problem, until I met his parents. They told me, that one evening a week, they tell stories and sing songs. This little boy would imitate me, using my facial expressions and hand motions. He had memorized me!

Here's a little trick that gets even two year olds to vocalize. I have a Turtle puppet which is capable of bringing his arms legs and head inside the shell. Children are amazed at puppets so when he says hello (in a character voice) to them or crawls over their legs they laugh. In my own voice I'll ask them to say boo! Usually one of them will but if not have an assistant or parent do it. Turtle gets scared and pulls inside. The children think that is very funny. Then I sing "Turtle come Out" When turtle comes out someone will say boo! The next time ask the children to sing "Turtle come out". Sometimes you just have to trick the little ones into singing. There is a little more information on using puppets to entice children to sing, later on in my discussion of puppets.

Singing Exercises

These are good vocal exercises for teachers too! Drink lots of water and keep your voice in good condition. Before singing with the children, let them get a drink of water.

1. Vowel Chants Have the children take a deep breath in the nose, and then breathe out the mouth. After doing this a couple of times ask them to breathe out the sound ooooo (like in zoo) and keep it going a long time.

Repeat this for these 5 sounds known as:

Vowel Chants.

OOO (like in zoo)

EE (as in me)

OH (as in flow)

AY (as in may)

AH (as in Ostrich)

2 Humming

Then have the children sing Sum and maintain the mmm sound.

They often pretend they are bees!

3. Humming Another humming sound is fun. Hold the nnn sound. This is more nasal.

4.. How Long Can You Go

A long or sustained note for each sound

There are more of these exercises that require a xylophone or a keyboard.!