

Musical Rain

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Early Arts Learning Pilot Project 2009-2010

Objective/Goal:

In order to begin to reach a level of musical improvisation, sounds made by children on their own bodies will serve as the point of departure. The children will explore sounds through a familiar song about a subject (rain) with which they can immediately relate. This particular experience also offers an opportunity for the children to experience and play with musical dynamics (quiet and loud) through both singing and body sounds.

Prerequisites of this experience (What do children need to know before this experience?):

- ✓ Optional: The song "Rain Rain Go Away".

*Rain, rain, go away,
Come again some other day,
Little Johnny wants to play
Rain, rain, go away.*

Educational Impact:

- ✓ Memory and recall
 - ✓ Imagination
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Suggestions for use with the *Songs for Singing and Learning* CDs:

- ✓ "Storm Soundscape" Use to set the tone or as background for body sounds.
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Materials Needed:

- ✓ A rain stick, or a homemade version (a cardboard tube taped closed with seeds or dry beans inside)
 - ✓ Optional: a small spray bottle of water
 - ✓ Optional: any story that involves a rain storm such as *The Eensy Weensy Spider* by Mary Ann Hoberman (New York: Little, Brown and Company, 2004), *Little Cloud* by Eric Carle (New York: Penguin Putnam, 1996), or *Rabbits and Raindrops* by Jim Arnosky (New York: Penguin Putnam, 2001)
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Procedure and Process:

Step One:

Ask the children to close their eyes and listen to the sound of a rain stick, and then ask them to identify the source of the sound. (Another option would be to show children a picture of a rainstorm and ask them to identify what they see.)

Step Two:

Invite the children to think of a familiar song about rain, or one that has the word "rain" in it. If they don't mention "Rain, Rain, Go Away," eventually guide them toward this song either by humming or singing it.

Step Three:

After singing "Rain, Rain, Go Away" together, invite the children to think of ways to show light raindrops with their hands. Choose one child's version, and try that body sound all together while singing the song. You may also have children sing the song while doing their own individual choices of raindrop body sounds. Another option would be to ask the children if they would like to feel the raindrops. Using a spray bottle, gently spray children as they sing the song quietly with quiet raindrops.

Step Four:

Ask the children how heavy rain might be created with their hands. Choose one child's version, and try that body sound all together while singing the song. You may also have children sing the song while doing their own individual body sounds. Ask the children if and how the raindrop sounds are different from the heavy rain sounds. (The children may need to be reminded that "heavy rain singing" does not mean shouting.) Use the words *quiet* and *loud* to describe the contrasting musical dynamics.

Closure:

In order to create a musical rainstorm composition, all sing song in the following sequential pattern:

- Rain stick, then *raindrops* version
- Rain stick, then *heavy rain* version
- Rain stick, then *raindrops* version
- Finish with the rain stick

In other words, play or ask one or more children to play the rain stick once through right before each version of the song, and then once more after singing the last version.

Overall Assessment (How will I know the children got it?):

Children will sing and use body sounds that align with both the quietness of the raindrops and the loudness of the heavy rain while performing the song.

Modification:

Different age group: Older children may choose body sounds for three types of rain – raindrops, shower, and heavy rain.

Variations:

- Substitute one of the children's names into the lyrics each time the song is sung.
- Divide the class in half, and assign each half a specific way to sing the song – either like raindrops (quietly), or like heavy rain (loudly).
- Vary the sequential order of the composition.
- Put the raindrops and heavy rain in other parts of the body, such as the feet (for example, tiptoes for raindrops or march in place for heavy rain).

