

Songs in childhood

Characteristics of a children's song

Teachers should always choose an age-appropriate repertoire – encompassing range, intervals, length, repetition, content or subject matter, scales and text (Mason, 2014: 4; Moomaw, 1997: 9). Preschoolers discover the differences between speaking and singing voices which shifts songs in quality from light and airy to the “playground yell”, also known as the “toddler drone”, for lively songs. They sing spontaneous songs spanning two octaves and sing in tune within a range of five pitches, D to a above middle C. Six to seven year olds sing in tune in the range of middle C to B and can begin to develop a head voice with guidance. Seven to eight year olds sing in tune in the range of an octave, around middle C to C, while eight to nine year olds sing in tune in the range of B below middle C to E – approximately ten pitches (Campbell & Scott-Kassner, 2014: 73). Preschoolers enjoy six- to eight-line songs. Young children like repetition, as songs with repetitive words and melody are easier to sing and remember. The subject matter should be relevant to the learners' lives and encourage them to express their feelings or use their imaginations. Young children can most easily sing songs that move by step or have small skips between the notes (Moomaw, 1997: 10–12).

Resources

Campbell, P.S. & Scott-Kassner, C. 2014. *Music in childhood: From preschool through the elementary grades*, 4th ed. South Melbourne: Shimer Cengage Learning.

Mason, E. 2014. Sing, play, and create: All in 20 minutes! *General Music Today*, 28(1): 3–7.

Moomaw, S. 1997. *More than singing*. St. Paul: Redleaf Press.

van Vreden, M. 2020. Teaching Foundation Phase learners about Music. (In Naudé, M. & Meier, C., eds. *Teaching Life Skills in the Foundation Phase 2*. Pretoria: Van Schaik. pp. 199-249. ISBN: 9780627037245



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