

THE MAGIC OF MUSIC IN THE CLASSROOM

Teaching with CLASS Podcast
Season 4 Episode 3
Guest: Mary Anderson



Welcome to this resource inspired by the Teaching with CLASS podcast episode featuring Monica Pujol-Nassif and guest Mary Anderson, founder of My Music Starts Here. In this guide, we will explore practical strategies for integrating music into early childhood classrooms to build connections, foster brain development, and support emotional well-being for both children and educators.

1. The Importance of Music in Early Childhood

+ Why Music?

1. **Brain Development:** Music strengthens neural connections, aiding in the development of communication, literacy, and problem-solving skills.
2. **Emotional Support:** Singing and moving to music fosters a sense of safety, love, and trust.
3. **Social Skills:** Group music activities promote empathy, cooperation, and a sense of community.

2. Implementing Music in the Classroom

+ Creating a Musical Environment:

1. **Daily Integration:** Incorporate music into daily routines, such as morning circle time, transitions, and clean-up activities.
2. **Variety of Instruments:** Use rhythm sticks, egg shakers, and homemade instruments like decorated toilet paper rolls filled with beans or rice.
3. **Movement and Dance:** Encourage children to move and dance to the music, enhancing their physical coordination and sense of rhythm.

+ Example Activities:

- **Fingerplays and Rhyming Songs:** These help develop sequencing and storytelling skills.
- **Steady Beat Practice:** Simple activities like patting laps or using rhythm sticks to keep a steady beat support literacy development.
- **Whole Group Music Making:** Singing and playing instruments together fosters a strong sense of community and belonging.

3. Music as a Love Language

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+ Tips for Teachers:

- **Start Small:** Practice singing in your car or with the classroom door closed to build confidence.
- **Use Music You Love:** Incorporate your favorite (child-appropriate) music to keep yourself engaged and happy.

4. The Science Behind Music and Learning

+ How Music Supports Learning:

1. **Auditory Working Memory:** Music activities enhance children's ability to retain and process auditory information, crucial for language development.
2. **Literacy Skills:** Songs and fingerplays with rhyming words and stories support vocabulary building and narrative skills.
3. **Social-Emotional Development:** Group music activities release oxytocin, fostering feelings of love and connection.

5. Music for Teacher Well-Being

+ Self-Care Through Music:

1. **Incorporate Favorite Tunes:** Play music that you enjoy during appropriate classroom activities.
2. **Relax and Rejuvenate:** Use music to create a relaxing classroom atmosphere, reducing stress for both you and your students.
3. **Joyful Interactions:** Singing and dancing with your students can bring joy and reduce burnout, making the school day more enjoyable.

+ Practical Steps:

1. **Create Playlists:** Curate playlists of your favorite songs for different parts of the day.
2. **Mindful Music Moments:** Take short breaks to listen to soothing music, helping you stay centered and calm.

Music is a versatile and powerful tool in early childhood education. By integrating music intentionally, you can create a nurturing, joyful, and stimulating learning environment. Embrace the magic of music to build connections, support brain development, and enhance your own well-being as an educator.

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