



PRESCHOOL SPRING MUSIC AIMS

The main aims of this season are to begin to develop skills in improvisation, to practice skills in changing the tempo and to develop a subconscious understanding of rest. In addition, every activity is linked to the Early Years Foundation Stage national curriculum. See [‘Lesson Plans and EYFS Links’](#) on the Sparkles Client Resources page of the website for full details.

Improvisation

Children learn through experimentation and discovery so it’s important that we build moments into our lessons where children are given the opportunity to experiment and discover! Lucy Sparkles & Friends music classes include many opportunities for the children think up ideas for new verses and/or actions during activities, which gives the children a sense of ownership of the music and helps to build confidence. These creative activities also help the children to develop skills in improvisation. Any activity where a child is encouraged to come up with an idea prepares for improvisation, even if the song or rhyme stays the same. E.g. In ‘Chop, Chop’, the children must decide which fruits or vegetables they are chopping up. This is taken further when the children’s ideas actually shape the lyrics of a song.

Improvisation encourages children to learn about each other’s interests and preferences, thus helping them to develop social skills as well as musical skills. Children enjoy expressing themselves and being creative and so improvisation encourages a love for music!

Examples from the spring curriculum:

1. Let’s Make a Circle- the children come up with ideas for new verses. This song is also fantastic for developing a sense of steady pulse as all the actions must be performed in time with the pulse.
2. Starlight Starbright- the children think of a wish and must fit their words into a set melody and rhythm. This song also encourages solo singing through the excitement of a prop (magic wand) and the fun of using their imaginations to make wishes.
NB: In the baby curriculum, this activity is replaced by ‘Hickory Dickory’, which helps the babies to develop a sense of pulse and prepares them for solo singing by helping them to experience turn taking.
3. Chop, Chop- although the ‘Chop Chop’ activity uses a set rhyme and the words and rhythm don’t change, it prepares for improvisation as the children must think up fruits or vegetables to add to the fruit salad or soup. ‘Chop, Chop’ also develops a sense of pulse (as the children chop in time with the pulse) and an understanding of tempo (as they chop the smaller fruits quickly with a small knife and the larger fruits slowly with a big sword).
4. Little Brown Seed- prepares for improvisation as the children choose the colour of the flowers they are growing.
5. Mice, Mice- the children think up sounds to make or words to say during the “silent parts”. This also helps the children to internalise the feeling of a crotchet rest.
6. If You’re Happy and You Know It- volunteers think up new verses. This song also develops a sense of rest as the children perform an action and/or sound indicated by the lyrics during the rests. E.g. *If you’re happy and you know it clap your hands (clap, clap)*.
7. What Shall We Do for Our Mums Today?- volunteers think of things they can do for mum on mother’s day and their suggestions create new verses and actions. The children tap their thighs in time with the pulse during the chorus to reinforce the feeling of pulse.



NB: In the baby and younger toddler curriculums, this activity is replaced by 'I Love Mummy', which also develops a sense of pulse.

8. Hot Cross Buns- the children tell you what they like about Easter and you use their ideas to create new verses and actions. The actions are inserted during the "gaps" in the song to help develop a sense of the crotchet rest.
9. Play and Stop- the children suggest alternative sounds and/or actions to make up new verses. E.g. *Play and play and nod/giggle/stomp*. This song is also used to experiment with fast and slow and to practice playing in time with the pulse.

Tempo

Lucy Sparkles & Friends music classes teach young children the difference between fast and slow. When demonstrating the difference between fast and slow, it's important not to alter the dynamics at the same time. If, for example, you sing quietly every time you sing slowly, some children may confuse the meaning of "slow" with the meaning of "quiet". The two tempi chosen should be faster or slower than normal as otherwise there will be no clear difference to discern. Lastly, be careful not to use two tempi, of which one is simply twice as fast as the other, as they will appear to have the same pulse, rather than a genuine difference in tempo.

Many children find singing and moving slowly much more difficult than singing and moving quickly. A good way to encourage slow singing and movement is to introduce large, exaggerated pulse movements. If a child raises their hand as high as they can before tapping it on their knee, they will naturally do so more slowly than if they were to tap their knee from a close distance, as it takes time for their hand to travel the distance. Make sure to use rhythmically sung words (or spoken if a rhyme) to indicate the tempo of a song before the children join in. E.g. *Rea-dy. Hot cross buns...*

Examples from the spring curriculum:

1. Flutter, Flutter Butterfly- "Flutter, flutter very fast," is sung quickly whilst the rest of the song is sung at an average tempo. This song is also good for developing pitch awareness as your hands move up and down according to the pitch.
2. Hickory Dickory (babies curriculum only)- a "busy" bee is used during some repeats of the song to sing it quickly.
3. Chop, Chop- the children chop smaller fruits (e.g. grapes) quickly with small knives and big fruits (e.g. watermelons) slowly with big swords. This rhyme also prepares for improvisation and reinforces the pulse.
4. Slowly, Slowly- the children move slowly whilst being snails and quickly whilst being mice.
5. Incy Wincy Spider- the children perform big spider movements whilst standing. They do the actions quickly when they are "in a hurry and running late" and slowly when they are "tired" spiders.
6. Here is the Beehive- the children perform the song slowly with "old, slow, lazy" bees and quickly with "young, quick, busy" bees. This song is also good for developing a sense of pulse and for counting to five.
7. Penny on the Water- the parachute has a toy fish on top and the children move it to the pulse as they sing the song at a medium tempo. We then tell them "the water is now cold and so the fish must swim quickly to warm up" and sing the song quickly. This activity is also good for reinforcing the feeling of pulse.
8. Walkin' in the Rain- the children walk quickly like mice and slowly like snails. This song also reinforces the feeling of rest as the children jump in puddles during the rests in the song.



9. Easter eggs- the children play their shakers slowly like snails and quickly like mice. This song also reinforces a feeling of pulse.
10. Play and Stop- the children play their instruments quickly as the song is sung quickly and slowly as the song is sung slowly. This activity also reinforces the feeling of pulse and allows the children to practice changes in dynamics.
11. Heads, Shoulders, Knees and Toes- the children press “fast forward” to perform the song quickly and “slow motion” to perform the song slowly. This activity also develops inner hearing as the children use their “thinking voices” (e.g. thinking/hearing the word in their head but not singing out loud) for specified words.
NB: In the baby and toddler curriculums, this song is replaced by ‘Everybody Tap Your Head’, which develops a sense of pulse.
12. Horse and Buggy- the children ride their horses slowly as they hear the music slow and they ride their horses quickly as the music speeds up. This activity also develops the children’s listening skills.

Understanding of rest

Throughout the spring curriculum we encourage a subconscious understanding of rest (usually a crotchet rest) by inserting actions, words or sounds during the “gaps” in a song. This helps the children to internalise the feeling of a rest. We do this in a fun and creative way by using imaginative movements/sounds. E.g. During ‘Hot Cross Buns’ the children take a bite of their bun during the “gaps” in the song. These types of activities provide young children with the foundation for learning about rest on a more conscious level later in their musical development. E.g. When they learn the name and symbol for a crotchet rest at school they may recall “that’s like when we take a bite out of the bun during ‘Hot Cross Buns’!”

Examples from the spring curriculum:

1. Hello, Hello- children wave and say “hello” during the crotchet rests in the song. This song also develops skills in solo singing.
2. Mice, Mice- the children insert words, sounds and actions into the crotchet rests.
3. If You’re Happy and You Know It- the children perform an action and/or sound indicated by the lyrics during the rests. E.g. *If you’re happy and you know it clap your hands (clap, clap)*. This song also develops skills for improvisation.
4. Hot Cross Buns- the children blow on their buns and bite their buns during the crotchet rests. They also come up with their own ideas about what to do during the “gaps” in the song, which also develops skills in improvisation.
5. Pease Pudding Hot- the children perform words, sounds and actions during the crotchet rests.
NB: In the baby curriculum, this song is replaced by ‘Old Macdonald Had a Farm’, which gives children the aesthetic experience of singing along to or listening to a live instrument. In the toddler curriculum you can choose to sing ‘Pease Pudding Hot’ or ‘Old Macdonald Had a Farm’.
6. See the Candlelight- the children blow out a candle (blow on a finger then tuck it away) during each crotchet rest.
7. Walkin’ in the Rain- the children jump in puddles during the rests. This song also develops an understanding of tempo and dynamics.
NB: Baby classes that are held in nurseries replace this with ‘See Saw Margery Daw’, which develops awareness of pitch and a sense of pulse.



BABY & TODDLER SPRING MUSIC AIMS

The main aims of this season are the same as for the pre-schoolers, however all the musical learning is on a subconscious level. The babies listen and respond to the songs that they will learn and join in with when they are toddlers. The toddlers learn and join in with songs that they will explore in a more complex way when they are pre-schoolers. Thus, the activities prepare for when the children are ready to learn musical concepts on a conscious level.