

Wisdom

10 Pro Tips for Parents

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Incorporating music and movement into everyday moments with your child can lead to lasting impacts on their development. Try some of these tips to extend learning beyond the music therapy session to improve emotional regulation, support emotional connection and bonding, develop communication skills, and foster independence.

1. Join your child in clapping, swaying, or marching to movement-based songs. This integration of sensory input supports coordination and body awareness and improves self-regulation.
2. Use live music, rather than recorded, for the ability to adjust the tempo, volume, and tone as needed to adapt to your child's ability level and emotional needs in the moment.
3. Reflect your child's emotional expressions through the music to strengthen attachment and co-regulation. If your child is excited, match their energy with upbeat and energetic songs. Slower, quieter music can help your child calm down and reengage when they feel overwhelmed.
4. Signal transitions with familiar hello, clean-up, or bedtime songs. These consistent, predictable musical routines help children develop a sense of safety and structure and support emotional regulation.
5. Sing simple songs during daily routines like brushing teeth, getting dressed, or going potty to turn everyday moments into bonding opportunities while also building communication skills.
6. Include your child's name in songs or sing about their interests (e.g., pets, colors, toys) to boost attention and engagement. Children learn best when musical interactions are personally relevant.
7. Echo rhythms, pitches, and melodies that your child makes to show that you value their input. Imitating your child's musical sounds or movements can spark shared joy and deepen connection.
8. Offer choices of instrument, songs, and movements to invite participation while supporting self-direction, encouraging autonomy, and building intrinsic motivation.
9. Repeat familiar songs and activities at home to help your child anticipate, participate, and succeed. This repetition can deepen your child's sense of mastery and encourage generalization of skills.
10. Ask your music therapist how to incorporate a song or strategy into your daily routines at home or in the car. Your involvement and follow through extends the impact of each session and creates a rich opportunity for connection and growth.

Dr. Darcy DeLoach made her mark in 2010 with a visionary contribution to *imagine*, spotlighting the vital role of parent involvement in the home environment.

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