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MUSIC AND THE LEARNING DISABLED CHILD

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A handicapped child may be placed into one of two large categories: physically handicapped, or learning disabled. Physical handicaps include muscular dysfunction, nervous system dysfunction, genetic deficiencies such as Down's syndrome (mongoloidism), and severe mental retardation. Physically handicapped children are easily recognized. The learning disabled child is not so easily recognized. This paper deals only with the learning disabled child, because he is most likely to inhabit the normal classroom.

WHO IS THE LEARNING DISABLED CHILD?

Take a pencil and a small tablet, about three by five inches, and stand in front of a mirror. Now hold the paper against your forehead and write your name on it with the pencil. Sounds easy?

The first thing you'll notice is that you can't hold the pencil in the usual fashion because if you do, you have trouble controlling its movement and difficulty seeing what you are writing. After finding a new way of holding the pencil you'll write your name without too much difficulty. Now look at the paper and see what you have written. You did not do what you had set out to do! The task was not to write the mirror image of your name; it was to write your name. Take a fresh piece of paper and try again.

Now imagine that there is someone standing over you who says, "Come on, that's not hard. Why don't you pay attention? What's the matter with you? You are not really trying. Everybody else is already finished!" This is what many learning disabled children experience. How does it feel?

The learning disabled (LD) child is one of at least average intelligence whose academic performance is impaired by a developmental lag in the ability to sustain selective attention. He has a disorder in one or more of the basic psychological processes involved with understanding or in using language, spoken or written, which may manifest itself in a discrepancy between expected and actual achievement in one or more of the following areas: listening, thinking, speaking, writing, spelling, mathematical calculations, and spatial orientation. Such children require specialized instruction in order to permit the use of their full intellectual potential.

Learning disabled children are neither damaged nor permanently impaired. Children not included in the learning disabled category are those whose primary problems are mental subnormality, educational or cultural deprivation, severe emotional disturbances, and/or sensory deficits (blind and/or deaf.)

Occasionally, and erroneously, the word "exceptional" is used synonymously with "learning disabled." Although these terms are related, they are not equivalent. A learning disabled child is a specific type of exceptional child. Neither term is generic for all children who have problems in school.

Basic learning processes are necessary for perception, expression, and association. These are brain functions. The inadequate functioning of the brain can result in a learning disorder. The dysfunction is related to one of three impairments: 1) loss of an established basic process; 2) inhibition of the development of such a process; or 3) interferences with the function of such a process.¹

Brain dysfunction results from conditions that can be either pre- or post-natal. Pre-natal conditions include premature birth, Rh factor, heredity, and poor pre-natal care on the part of the mother. Post-natal conditions include lack of oxygen during the first minutes of life, physical or emotional trauma, head injuries, and malnutrition. Learning disabilities can also be caused by poor environmental conditions and insufficient perceptual-motor experience. Children raised in crowded, dark, and/or extremely filthy homes have little opportunity to explore and develop the normal perceptual-motor

¹Donald D. Hammill and Patricia I. Myers, Methods for Learning Disorders (New York: Wiley and Sons, Inc., 1969), p. 6.

skills. Children who are made to stay within the confines of their crib, who are not played with, picked up, cuddled, talked to, or properly attended will be emotionally disjunct. The educational problems of these children are similar to the children who have brain dysfunction. Therefore, a child may exhibit any of three characteristics: 1) symptoms of brain dysfunction, but no detectable learning disability; 2) both brain dysfunction and learning disability; or 3) evidence of learning disability and no observable signs of brain malfunction.²

Children with severe learning difficulties have much in common with all young children. They rarely exhibit any kinds of behavior that are not also seen in the typical child. The child with developmental difficulties exhibits different intensities and combinations of behavior patterns that do create problems for the child and his social environment.

A basic belief in educational philosophy is that the difference of LD children is only one of degree; they are more like other children than unlike them. Labeling these children is only a matter of convenience for files and research. The manner in which LD children think, learn, and behave is not a different kind of behavior from that of normal children. The difference in degree makes the child learning disabled, whether this difference is in the learning or behavioral level.³ The LD child differs from the average to the extent that his differences warrant some kind of special adjustment in his schooling procedures. The disability is an inability to make use of the unspecialized instruction usually found in the typical classroom. Given proper and specialized instruction, the disability disappears.

²Hammill and Myers, p. 13.

³Walter B. Barbe, The Exceptional Child (Washington, D.C.: The Center for Applied Research in Education, Inc., 1963), p. 11.

The problem of identification is best solved through systematic observation. Most children with learning disabilities are not recognized until age 5 or 6, when they are uniformly tested within the school system. The tests will reveal perceptual and motor difficulties. A learning disability can be diagnosed much earlier as a child goes through the stages of eye tracking, walking, talking and exploring. If a child seems to have a developmental problem during the pre-school years, the parents can work through the family physician to have the child tested. The physician will be able to refer the parents to someone or an institution that can help. The observable characteristics which lead to the identification of the LD child can be divided into six categories: disorders of motor activity, disorders of perception, disorders of symbolization, disorders of attention, disorders of memory, and disorders of emotionality. The complexity of the child's disability depends on how many of these characteristics the child may possess.

Disorders of Motor Activity

All children are born into a world of muscular activity. Skill, efficiency, learning processes, and social advancement rely on how well a child can manipulate and control his motor activity. Motor skill difficulty is directly associated with special learning disorders. Motor activity disorders are defined as hyperactivity, hypoactivity, incoordination, and perseveration.

Hyperactivity. This is the most commonly recognized form of motor disability because it is the most annoying. A hyperactive child is constantly moving. He can not sit or stand without wiggling or squirming. Because he is hyperactive, he is unable to sit still for even short periods of time without shifting position, shuffling his feet, tapping his pencil, or shaking his head and arms. He occasionally will chatter endlessly and be invariably

inattentive. His activities are at random and form no set patterns.

Hypoactivity. This is the reverse of hyperactivity. The hypoactive child draws no attention to himself, and may frequently be undetected. This child is quiet, lethargic, and extremely inactive--even on the playground.

Incoordination. Physical awkwardness and/or poor motor integration are signs of incoordination. Clumsy children do poorly while skipping, catching, and jumping. All these activities require a high degree of motor coordination. The walking gait may be stiff and rigid; frequent stumbles and falls are experienced. The incoordinated child has difficulty with the fine motor skills that are required for writing, drawing, and playing small rhythm instruments.

Perseveration. The perseverating child involuntarily continues a motor behavior after it should be completed. This may be observed in speaking, drawing, writing, reading and music. The child who perseverates will cover an entire page with one color, continue playing a tone bell, or continue to sing the last or most appealing (to him) phrase of a song.

Disorders of Perception

The inability to identify, discriminate and interpret environmental stimuli results in a perceptual disorder. The ability to perceive provides information concerning the position of the body, and other objects, in space. Perception skills are related to the development of eye-hand motor coordination. The child who has the inability to perceive correctly will have difficulty reading, writing, and drawing. Severe perceptual disorders may also cause motor activity problems. "The greater the degree of intellectual impairment, the more difficulties there are in auditory and visual perceptual readiness

of academics."⁴

Disorders of Symbolization

Symbolization is one of the highest forms of mental ability and is involved with both concrete and abstract reasoning. "At this level of operation the brain integrates perceptions and memories, as well as other associations, and generates thought processes or chains which may greatly exceed the limits of any given stimulus."⁵ Symbolization can either be receptive or expressive. Receptive symbolic activity includes receptive-auditory and receptive-visual. Expressive symbolic activity is categorized into expressive-vocal and expressive-motor.

Receptive-Auditory. A child who displays poor understanding of spoken symbols, frequently requests repetition, repeats senseless words or sounds (echolalia), and confuses directions or commands is said to have receptive dysphasia. Receptive dysphasia means the inability to sort out symbols resulting in problems comprehending the spoken word.

Receptive-Visual. Difficulty in this subfunction results in poor reading comprehension. This child cannot decode the symbols on the written page fast enough for his brain to reorganize them in any logical order. If a word has more than one syllable, the first syllable is forgotten by the time the second one has been decoded.

Expressive-Vocal. This dysfunction involves the formulation of thought for speech. This child has expressive dysphasia. If the child is receptively

⁴Norris, G. Haring, ed., Behavior of Exceptional Children: An Introduction to Special Education (Ohio: Charles E. Merrill Pub. Co., 1974), p. 324.

⁵Hammill and Myers, Methods for Learning Disorders, p. 20.

dysphasic, he will also be expressively dysphasic. He may be unable to present concise and clear statements and ideas (circumlocution) or order sentences, clauses, and phrases (inadequate syntax.)

Expressive-Motor. Gesturing, formation of letters, and formulation of thought for writing (dysgraphia) are difficult for children with expressive-motor disorder. Letters tend to be omitted, reversed, or poorly formed. Spelling errors are frequent.

The young child acquires many of his behaviors through imitation learning. Children with disorders of symbolization are unable to visually and/or auditorily sort out the symbols as quickly as normal children. Therefore, children with poor imitation skills have trouble developing good learning skills.

Disorders of Attention


To be successful in school, a child must be able to fix his attention on one given task; he must be able to leave it and go on to another task at a moment's notice. The child who has insufficient attention, or excessive attention, cannot function properly in school.

Insufficient Attention. (Aprosexia) This child is positively unable to maintain sustained or active attention to one task. There is a strong competition between stimuli. When the child is required to focus his attention on a particularly complex activity, intensive daydreaming and periods of mental blocking (blanking out) can occur. "This child finds himself unable to make simple decisions, lacks normal impulse and balancing motives, and may be subject to fears and irresolution."⁶ This problem of attention is usually labeled as hyperawareness, hyperirritability, distractability, or short attention span.

⁶John Edward Bently, Problem Children (New York: W. W. Norton, 1936), p. 220.

Excessive Attention. (Hyperprosexia) This child cannot attend to more than one thing at a time. The fixation is usually unimportant to the lesson. He may focus on the page number instead of looking at the picture or printed words. Absorbed in one line of thought, this child is frequently labeled hypoactive, and is much more dangerous, if not dealt with, than the child with insufficient attention. The excessive child is susceptible to "hypnotic behavior, pathological ecstasy, and delusions."⁷

Disorders of Memory

The child with memory disorder seems to know something one day, but to forget it the next. Disorders of memory involve difficulty in the assimilation, storage, and/or retrieval of information, and are connected with disorders of visual memory, auditory memory, and perception. The inability to reproduce rhythm patterns could result from poor auditory memory: difficulty with spelling or reproducing rhythm symbols may be caused by inadequate visual memory. Memory is highly related to the attention span of the child, similarities between material being learned, and the child's ability to transfer what he has learned to something new. Many LD children have difficulty with generalization. Behavior learned in one situation may appear to be highly specific, and the child must be retaught the skill in a new situation. A child may be able to recognize  on a tag-board card, but unable to recognize the same pattern notated in a piece of music.

Since memory is essential to the learning process, the child who exhibits a disorder of memory will have trouble reading, and subsequently, in every other academic task.

⁷Bentley, Problem Children, p. 221.

Disorders of Emotionality

Emotional instability is one of the most frequently mentioned characteristics concerning children with brain dysfunction (children labeled LD).

L. Bender has proposed the following reasons for the high incidence of emotional difficulties among these children:

1. Motor disorders in a child make for prolonged dependency on the mother.
2. Perceptual or intellectual problems which thwart the child's efforts to make successful contact with the world lead to frustrations, misinterpretations of reality, and bizarre behavior patterns.
3. Disturbed patterning of impulses leads to distortion in actual patterns.⁸

Bender deals only with the causes. The observable behavior is exhibited through either withdrawal or aggression.

Emotionally disordered children are prone to react in a disruptive manner to numerous aspects of their environment. They are characterized by a relatively low tolerance for frustration. The presentation of a new task that requires more attention and persistence than they are accustomed to, a delay in meeting their demands, the least sign of failure or rejection, a change in the kind or amount of positive consequences from that which is expected, or a minor confrontation with adult or peer are all likely to result in excessive emotional reactions.⁹ This child has difficulty delaying gratification,

⁸Hammill and Myers, Methods for Learning Disorders, p. 18.

⁹William I. Gardner, Children with Learning and Behavior Problems: A Behavioral Management Approach (Boston: Allyn and Bacon, Inc., 1974), p. 34.

waiting his turn, or accepting the fact that he cannot have everything he wishes at the moment he wants it. He may pout, scream, become angry, anxious, distractable, and hyperactive. The interruptions are frequently so intense that effective learning and social interaction are disrupted. These reactions interfere with obtaining any pleasure out of completion of a task.

Some emotionally disordered children are extremely dependent. They cling to adults for support and attention, and prefer being close to an adult rather than being with another child or other children.

The aggressive child may consistently lie, even when the truth would sometimes do just as well; cheat for the sake of cheating, even when he doesn't need to; steal, or report things of his own stolen when they are not; be intentionally destructive and cruel; consistently bully other children; and defy authority.

The withdrawn child may be so over-sensitive that he cries frequently. He daydreams a great deal and prefers his dreams to activities involving other children. He is selfish and tries hard to please, even at the expense of losing friends. He may make up stories about things to make himself feel important. He may be easily frightened.

As previously stated, every one of the listed behavioral characteristics can be found in normal children. The degree, intensity, and frequency with which these characteristics are exhibited constitute the exception. The LD child cannot be stereotyped.

Learning disabled children may exhibit one, some, or all of the six discussed disorders. Some individual characteristics are inseparable, and influence each other. For example 1) hyperactivity → lack of attention → poor memory → academic failure → increased hyperactivity; 2) inattention → distractability → failure to discriminate → poor decoding → lack of generalization → academic failure → emotional overlay →

poorer decoding.¹⁰

There is, at present, a growing concern for the child with learning disabilities. The enigma of the youngster who has difficulty in learning is, however, not new. Thomas Edison had trouble socializing in school and was tutored by his mother after being "released" from the public school system. The French sculptor, Auguste Rodin, was said to be uneducable and it was recommended to his parents that they put him to work doing menial tasks. Woodrow Wilson could not read until age 11. Nelson Rockefeller was troubled with dyslexia until his mid-twenties. The great Albert Einstein did not speak until the age of three and, until he was seven, formulated each sentence silently with his lips before speaking it aloud. He could never write well, and when he read he saw words, not concepts. All of these met the challenge of their disability and overcame it. These examples do not imply that being normal is not particularly desirable! These men constitute a very small percentage of the population. Although they all became great figures in history, they were learning disabled. If these men had been able to receive special help during childhood, the learning disabilities could have been remediated without disturbing the obvious genius of the individual.

Mary F. Berry, assistant secretary for education, Department of Health, Education and Welfare, stated in October of 1977 that: "The primary mission of education policy in the Carter administration is to help the states and private institutions insure equal access to quality education for all individuals and to focus on the unique educational needs of special student populations."¹¹ Every child is entitled to an equal education. Some children

¹⁰Hammill and Myers, Methods for Learning Disorders, p. 24.

¹¹Mary F. Berry, "New Emphasis in Federal Policy on Education," Phi Delta Kappan, 59, No. 2 (October 1977), 122.

are not born with the normal capacity for learning. Early identification, through controlled observation and testing, can be used to place the learning disabled child into special programs designed to correct his specific learning disability. LD problems can be overcome so that the child may have an equal opportunity both in school and in life. The responsibility for helping these children ultimately rests with the educators, for a learning disability is not so much a lack in the child's ability to learn as it is a lack in the educator's ability to identify and teach children with special educational needs.¹²

¹²Alan O. Ross, Learning Disability: The Unrealized Potential (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Co., 1977), p. 11.

WHAT MUSIC TEACHERS CAN DO

Music produces response. The fact that music and its effect has been argued for centuries proves it. Throughout the years philosophers have oscillated between two theories: some believe that music primarily affects the emotions and creates moods which in turn act on the body; others think the process works in reverse, from the physiological to the psychological. Most of the time the two processes react on one another. Music induces both emotional and physical responses.¹³

Music has been called the universal language; an expression; a communication of feelings. The fact that music is a non-verbal language makes it a virtually indispensable tool when working with learning disabled (LD) children. "The LD child has a potentially normal, or near normal intelligence. He can learn. He does learn--all the time. He is involved in functional, future-changing learning all the time. He is not achieving academically as a result of one or more perceptual handicaps. The act of perception requires being aware of the existence of information, then perceiving the information through the sensory avenues."¹⁴ What better way to reach the sensory avenues than through music. Music is sound. All LD children can hear sound. Sounds can be manipulated, and offer infinite possibilities for awareness, selection, and reorganization. "For many LD children, music is

¹³ Juliette Alvin, Music Therapy (London: Hutchinson & Co. Ltd, 1975), p. 73.

¹⁴ Betty T. Welsbacher, "Music for the Learning Disabled," Music for the Exceptional Child, ed. Richard M. Graham (Reston, Virginia: Music Educators National Conference, 1975), p. 137.

the first medium that holds their attention and, until communication is established, is sometimes the only one."¹⁵

Jerome Bruner states that "any subject can be taught effectively in some intellectually honest form to any child at any state of development."¹⁶ "Any child" is the key phrase for the music teacher who encounters children with learning disabilities. No age is suggested, only a "stage of development." When introducing music to the LD child, the teacher must first determine which facts the child already knows and build from there. Music is attractive to most people--an important consideration in terms of motivation for the LD child.

After the LD child has been identified, the teacher must know how to anticipate his behavior and how his handicap may best be overcome. The LD child must be handled with firmness. He must be shown warmth and be accepted as an individual who has worth. Most importantly, the teacher must be consistent--both in method and in discipline.

Music chosen to be used with the LD child should illustrate very clearly the concept the child is developing at the time. Activities should be child-centered, actively involving him in listening, singing, performing, or moving. The child should always know what he is to do, or what he is to listen for, before the activity or music begins. No more than one concept should be dealt with at one time, although the concept itself may be presented in more than one way. Variety, not drill-like repetition, will benefit the LD

¹⁵Betty T. Welsbacher, "More Than a Package of Bizarre Behaviors," Music Educators Journal, April, 1972, p. 11.

¹⁶Jerome S. Bruner, The Process of Education (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1963), p. 33.

child. The music teacher must be creative. Visual aids, varied techniques, and original compositions may all be needed to help relate one musical concept. An LD child is capable of understanding all the components of music. He can perceive pitch, rhythm, form, harmony, melody, and tone color, although he may not be able to verbalize his perceptions. Since music is a non-verbal communication, the LD child can "communicate" what he perceives or hears by drawing, picking the correct picture, pointing, moving, smiling, frowning, covering his ears, or responding in any way that he is capable.

Bringing pleasure to the LD child through musical exploration is not the only thing music can do for him. Music can help him to develop a good self-image, learn socialization skills, increase both gross and fine motor skills, and aid perception.

Three to eight percent of all school age children are learning disabled. The public school music teacher is not likely to see the LD children on a one-to-one basis, and therefore must carefully plan activities which encompass helpful activities and learning experiences for at least one or two of the children per music session.

Music and musical activities need to be evaluated with great care in the early phases of the educational program of learning disabled children. It is generally assumed that rhythmic tunes are good for group activities and games. This is undoubtedly true with normal children who are able to tolerate all that goes into music and the musical activities of rhythmic games. The learning disabled child cannot. Music, as an auditory stimulus, surround the child. He has trouble localizing it, and often he is disturbed by it. Rhythmic games performed with music accompaniment involve just too many motor and auditory stimuli, too much movement, too much awareness of visual stimuli, and too much opportunity to come into close motor contact with other children

to warrant their use in the early months of training. For the hyperactive child, this excess stimuli can prove disastrous. These activities will be utilized ultimately in the program, but they will come later after greater emotional integration has been achieved by the child.¹⁷

So where does the music teacher begin? Getting acquainted with the children takes time. A good way to initiate musical activity with LD children is to begin working on the enhancement of self-image. The concept of good self-image is learned. The child who has a learning disability knows what he cannot do. He needs to be shown what he can do. Good self-image is important if the LD child is to build a working relationship between himself and his teacher; between himself and his peers.

Experience games offer many opportunities for the LD child to taste success. Success helps to build a good self-concept. The games are often called "singing games," but singing is not always a necessary part when the games are adapted for different "experiences."

"That's for Sure" (Example 1)¹⁸ is a get-acquainted experience game. All children and the teacher sit in a circle on the floor. The teacher should always take an active part, doing exactly what is expected of the children. The teacher demonstrates by singing: "My name is _____. " The response is: "That's for sure." When singing the response, three body movements occur: clap, slap knees, slap floor in front of body. The three downward movements correspond to the downward movement of the melody. The teacher then

¹⁷William M. Cruickshank, Learning Disabilities in Home, School and Community (New York: Syracuse University Press, 1977), p. 127.

¹⁸All musical examples are listed in the Appendix of this paper. Most of the songs may be found in the Exploring Music series, published by Holt, Rinehart, and Winston.

sings her name again and all children respond: "That's for sure." Each child is given a chance to sing his name on the original or on an improvised melody. The group response remains constant.

If the children will not, or cannot, sing their names, they should not be forced. The rules and activity may be changed to something non-verbal. If a child shrugs his shoulders or shakes his head, the teacher may sing "He can shake his head." The response will be the same. The children may all enjoy exhibiting a motion, or may enjoy singing about something they like: "I like peanut butter." Later in the year the teacher may become quite specific and ask the children to name a particular toy or holiday they like best. Many children may like the same holiday, such as Halloween or Christmas, so before beginning the activity the teacher should explain that duplications are quite acceptable. Each child must be recognized for something positive and must never be passed by, even if the teacher has to make up a statement such as "Billy has on blue jeans."

"Mirroring" is a second technique that encourages children to explore themselves and their motor skills abilities. Mirroring begins with the children copying the teachers large muscle (gross-motor) movements, such as marching, arm swinging, body swaying, etc. Teacher begins; students copy. Only after gross-motor movements have been conquered can fine-motor movements, such as finger snapping, be used in the mirroring games. Each child is given a turn at being leader. Again, if a child stands in the center with seemingly nothing to do, the teacher may pick up on some mannerism that can be imitated by everyone. The mannerisms frequently exhibited include scratching the head, twisting the body, or shrugging the shoulders.

Music is then added. Hap Palmer's record "Movin'" contains an instrumental piece entitled "Pause." There are eight bar phrases with eight beats of quiet finger snapping between each phrase. Several students may be

asked to choose an action to be imitated by all of the other students. During the eight beat pause, another child takes his place in the middle of the circle or the front of the room and demonstrates his activity. This continues until each child has had a turn. With time, children will begin thinking of such activities as straddle-hops and even push-ups. No matter how strenuous, the act must be imitated. It lightens the hearts of children to see that they can pick movements that are sometimes difficult for their teacher!

The final and most difficult phase of mirroring occurs only after each child is confident that he can do something that is worth imitation. Children choose partners and sit Indian-style facing each other. One person is designated as the leader for each couple. The partner must imitate the movements of his counter-part. Slow instrumental music is good for the first encounters with this task. The movements done by the children will reflect the smooth and slow movement of the music. Later, faster music may be added and children may wish to stand up or even move around the room as mirrored couples.

Changing the words to an already familiar song is still another technique. "Shake Those 'Simmons Down" (Example 2) can be used throughout the year to test growth in the children. After learning the game, each child takes a turn in the center calling out, or acting out, directions. For example: "Shake your head," "clap your hands," "pull your ear." The rest of the song remains the same. The next version tests verbal discrimination. One child verbalizes an action (shake your foot) and the group acts out the verbal command. "Shake" and "foot" are the discriminating words. The last phase tests motor and verbal discrimination. One child shows an activity in the center (stomping both feet) and the group decides how it should be verbalized.

These last two processes may take months for some children. If carefully planned, no child will feel unworthy to participate.

Songs that deal with parts of the body and clothing identification, such as "Head and Shoulders" and "Mary Wore a Red Dress,"¹⁹ are excellent preparation for the last two versions of the "Shake Those 'Simmons Down" experience game.

Exploring the body's movements and parts is necessary for skillful musical development. The children must feel that the teacher will accept any movement they do as appropriate, but must also realize that the movements need to be structured. By staying within the confines of a circle, the children know there is order--an essential element for any LD classroom.

After the teacher has become acquainted with the children, and after the children have had ample opportunity to participate in experience games, musical concepts and tasks may begin. D. Meichenbaum and J. Goodman have devised a system called the "stop, look and listen," that is taught to each learning disabled child to help him in the completion of each difficult or new task. The system involves a thinking process on the part of the child and goes something like this:

Okay, what is it that I have to do? I am supposed to copy this picture. I have to go slow and be very careful. Okay, I draw the line down. Good. Then to the right. That's it. Now down some more and now to the left. Good. I'm doing fine so far. Now I have to go back up again. Oops, no, I was supposed to go down. That's okay. I just erase the line carefully...Good. Even if I make an error I can still

¹⁹"Head and Shoulders" may be found in the 3rd grade book, Exploring Music, 1975 series. "Mary Wore a Red Dress" is found in the 1st grade book, Making Music Your Own, 1968 edition, Silver Burdett Publishing Co.

go slowly and carefully. Okay, I have to go down now.
That's it. I'm finished. I did it!²⁰

The "stop, look and listen" system can easily be adapted to the music classroom tasks. The system allows for error and for the correction of those errors with little or no frustration felt by the individual child completing the task.

When beginning musical concepts with the learning disabled child, I recommend using the Kodaly method. The training is based on a carefully worked out sequential curriculum in which folk songs are used to teach the basics of music. Aimed at training all children and not just the musically gifted, it uses such techniques as signs, games, clapping, reading musical notes, rhythmic notation, and most centrally, singing. The primary grade musical phase of the program begins with teaching children folk songs from which the teacher may abstract basic rhythmic as well as melodic units. Through a step-by-step process, the teacher makes the child aware of these rhythmic entities in music and in turn uses these to create new rhythmical constructions which the child may use in new combinations. The child becomes involved in musical activities on a strong sensory and motor basis with significant emphasis on the rhythmical patterns expressed through these modalities.


In addition to this rhythmic emphasis, other aspects of the method may affect a child's development in areas besides music. Probably important to a potential influence on reading is the method's strong and sequential approach to the teaching of singing; it may provide valuable training in the ability to listen and pay attention. The method is also involved in other

²⁰Alan O. Ross, Learning Disability: The Unrealized Potential, p. 130.

skills, such as the ability to discriminate between visual symbols, to connect them with sounds, and to remember both auditory and visual symbols.²¹

Musical Concepts






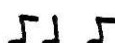

Rhythm. First rhythmic exploration begins with the beat of the heart. The pulse can best be felt by placing the fingers around the outside of the larynx. Some children may be able to feel their heart beat by placing their hands on their chests, but the most predominant beat can be felt in the throat. As the children sit and feel the throbbing, they are asked to tap very quietly on their knees every time they feel a beat. This beat can then be transferred to many different rhythm instruments. They usually prefer the drums. Children then hop in place for ten to fifteen seconds, sit, feel the throb, and transfer this beat to any instrument. The responses from the children enable the teacher to begin with slow and fast steady beats. Chalkboard or paper may be assigned each child so that each can draw fast and/or slow beats. Dots or short lines for fast beats, and long lines for slow beats are what the children are likely to draw. Occasionally a child may scribble quickly to a fast beat. These lines and dots assume the ikonic stage for rhythm. Lines drawn in the air or on the board also become useful ikons. (Figure 1)²²

Music moves in sets of beats. Sets of 2's and 3's may be demonstrated by playing a drum HEAVY - light, and HEAVY - light - light. The ikonic stage is now |' |' |'' |'' or . The movement becomes: STOMP - walk, and STOMP - walk - walk. The hand movements are:

²¹Irving Hurwitz and Peter H. Wolff, "Nonmusical Effects of the Kodaly Music Curriculum in Primary Grade Children," Journal of Learning Disabilities, 8, No. 3, March 1975, pp. 45-52.

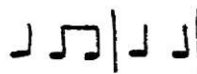
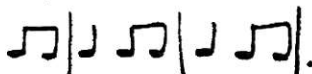
²²All ikonic reproductions and illustrations are listed in the Appendix.

slap knees, tap closed fists together, and slap knees, tap closed fists, tap closed fists. Accents are always exaggerated in early experiences with accent groupings. The first beat of the measure must be very obviously different from the rest.

After experimenting with movements such as walking, running, tip-toeing, marching, and waltz stepping, the children will be ready to see what rhythm looks like in its formal ikonic state and to hear it named. At this point the Kodaly rhythm method is introduced.²³ The nonsense syllables are both easy to say and easy to memorize. The basic characters are:  (1) = tah,  (n) = tee tee,  = rest,  = tah-ah,  (m) = tea-ry tea-ry,  = syn-CO-pah, and  = tah-ee tee. Tah and rest are the first to be taught. Tee tee is added when the first two characters have been mastered. Lots of large tag-board cards are helpful for drills. A favorite game is an elimination round. Each child gets one card to clap and say, or perform on any rhythm instrument and say. If he misses, he is out. The winner gets to help put up instruments, erase the board, or perform some other classroom task.

Auditory discrimination is aided through games that involve clapping back a rhythm, clapping the next phase of a song, and picking out a repeated rhythmic pattern. When music is used, children may experience difficulty for a while if a rhythmic pattern is repeated, but the words or melodic patterns are not. Therefore, it is best to begin with instrumental music where only

²³Threshold to Music, by Mary Helen Richards, has adapted the Kodaly method. Three sets of charts and records are available from the Mary Helen Richards Institute of Music Education and Research, 149 Corte Madera Road, Portola Valley, California, 94025.

one factor can be different--the melodic pattern. For instance, in the slow movement of Beethoven's Seventh Symphony, the rhythmic pattern of  is sustained throughout. The pattern may quickly be recognized and played on drums or wooden instruments. The first movement of the third Brandenburg Concerto, by J. S. Bach, is also a good example. The violin pattern will be quickly identified and may be augmented and represented by . Children may wish to step-out the repeated patterns as they play or as they listen. Paul Nordorff's book, Fun for Four Drums, is excellent for more advanced auditory discrimination skills. Children play only when their assigned pattern has been played by the piano.

After the children are adept at locating like patterns, they may then wish to begin making up their own patterns, writing them in notation, and playing their rhythmic compositions for the class. Listening to and discussing Percussion Melle, by Rudolph Ganz, may give the children further insight as to how patterns and instruments may be fitted together.

Melody. Organized sounds create music. Children have to become aware of sound and its sources before successful melodic work may begin. Sounds start and stop, begin and end. The following are three game exercises that may aid children in their awareness: 1) The children are instructed to hold up one arm when a specified sound begins, and to lower the arm when the sound stops; 2) Beginning with open hands together, the children are asked to let their hands separate slowly, fingers extended, while the teacher sings one pitch on "la." When the sound stops the child stops his hands and closes his fists; 3) Each child is given a large piece of paper and a crayon or a position at the chalk board. They are instructed to begin drawing when the sound starts and to cease when the sound stops. Eventually, this mapping of the sound becomes a visual reinforcement for what is heard, and may later

be expanded to include melodic countour and phrases. The child who perseverates will benefit from structured lessons in which he must begin and end on cue. The hyperactive child is given something on which he can focus his attention and will also benefit from structured activities.

When melodic patterns are first introduced, the teacher should present the concept in an obvious manner. Visual aids should be used throughout the entire process. Step bells and/or tone bells arranged in stair-step position are invaluable. Flannel board stair-steps with one side for up and one side for down are also good. Flannel circles may then be cut out to use as notes going up and coming down. Tone bells placed on a magnetic board should never be placed side by side in a straight line. They should present a picture of the melodic movement. Having two sets is helpful, but not necessary. Charts using lines and/or numbers should also indicate melodic movement (Figure 2). Hand signals are excellent visual aids. When using hand signals, the teacher must take special care that the signals are consistent. When drawing phrases or melodic movements in the air, the teacher must perform the movements in reverse, or backwards, so the children will see the correct left-to-right progression.

High-low and scale are the easiest melodic concepts with which to begin. On the step bells and flannel board stairs, high will be the top or "up" and low will be the bottom or "down." These are familiar terms to most children. The musical terms don't matter as long as the child understands the concept of high-low. Experiments with bells in extreme ranges come first. Children have to be able to hear the high and low of a 13th before a 6th may be used. After much exposure and experimentation, 2nds and 3rds may be used for "higher than" and "lower than" games. Each child may be given one tone bell. The children take turns playing their bells. The class decides who has

the highest bell. The highest bell remains standing; the lower one sits down. The next child plays his bell and compares it to the bell of the standing child. This process is repeated until the highest bell is found. At another time, listen for the lowest bell. Never mix both concepts within the same game.

Songs with obvious high's and low's are good for range discovery. "I Can Sing" (Example 3) employs the octave skip. The two "C" bells are placed on the board and children take turns playing the high and low bells on the appropriate words, which happen to be "low" and "high."

"Do-Re-Mi" from The Sound of Music, by Rodgers and Hammerstein, utilizes the entire major scale, and exposes children to the succession of tones that make up the major eight-tone progression.

Introducing numbers and lines with melodic movements come next. Beginning with familiar songs, numbers are added at obvious places. "That's for Sure" uses the pattern 3-2-1 for the response. When playing the game, the child who is the leader may play 3-2-1 during the response, while the group continues with the singing and hand motions. Assigning numbers can be used with any familiar song so long as the numbers begin with the obvious melodic steps and skips. One and eight may be added to "I Can Sing;" 1-2-3-4-5-6-7-8 to "Do-Re-Mi."

As soon as number assignments have been made, children can be formally introduced to the hand signals. The signal for "1" is demonstrated, named and imitated. Next comes low 5 (low sol). It is demonstrated, named, imitated and practiced with "1". The children are now ready for "Scotland's Burning" (Example 4). Two phrases of this song use only low 5 and 1. The song should be sung with and without the hand signals. Signals for 2, 3, and 5 are added one at a time. "Scotland's Burning" may be used as an auditory memory exercise.

The children are instructed to put the song in their hands and in their heads. The class sings the first two notes out loud. The test is to see if everyone can hand-sign the entire song, keep the melody going in their heads, and end on the same pitch on the word "water." This exercise never fails if properly sequenced. The children squeal with delight, having succeeded both individually and as a group.

Songs with repeated melodic patterns, such as "Lavender's Blue" (Example 5) and Bizet's "Carillon" from L'Arlesienne, Suite No. 1, are excellent for auditory perception. The pattern F-E-D-C occurs four times on the words "dilly, dilly" in Lavender's Blue." The children must remember where the pattern occurs and play it in proper sequence--from high to low. "Carillon" employs the repetition of three bells--E, F-sharp, and G-sharp. The sequence that is repeated begins on G-sharp and skips down to the E.

After the children have identified and played many repeated patterns, and know the number sequence of one to five on the bells, songs may be written in ikons and played by the children. The songs should be familiar to the children. "Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star" and "Mary Had a Little Lamb" are both familiar songs and may be two of the first songs written in ikons (Figure 3).

The Children's Symphony, by Harl McDonald, is based on ten nursery rhymes. Before attempting to use this with the children, they must be familiar with all of the tunes. Some are likely to be unfamiliar to young children such as "Lazy Mary" and "Sing a Song of Sixpence." Ten cards, with a picture on each card representing each of the nursery songs, are passed out to the children. Each child comes to the front of the room and stands in order when his rhyme is played. Later, the introduction and bridge section, featuring a drum and trumpet, may be added to the set of picture cards.

When the sequencing activity has been accomplished as a group, each

child receives a packet including a picture representation of all ten nursery rhymes. As the teacher plays the melody of one of the rhymes, each child selects the appropriate picture and holds it above his head. Another time the children may be asked to spread the pictures out on the floor and put them in order according to the sequence played by the teacher.

Harmony. Harmony should be introduced in its simplest terms first. Two different sounds occurring simultaneously produce harmony. This definition allows for infinite possibilities when combining classroom rhythm instruments, instruments and voices, and other sound sources.

Pentatonic songs are perfect for improvisational harmonizing and assure that the child will be successful. Nothing he plays as an accompaniment can be considered "wrong." Most Japanese songs in elementary music books are excellent sources for pentatonic activities. Occasionally a song may be found that will not work. All pentatonic harmonizing should be tested by the teacher first.

Numbering sets of five black piano keys or placing identical sets of five pentatonic bells around the room enables several children to be involved in improvisational harmony at the same time. Some children may enjoy performing for the rest of the class.

Rounds and echo songs are good tools for the understanding of harmony. Singing a round is much more difficult for an LD child than acting one out. Four movements may be chosen and represented in a four-square box. Each movement is performed four times. The first time the round is performed, the children begin and the teacher enters when they reach the beginning of the second box. A cut-off is signaled to the children when they reach the end of the fourth box and the teacher completes the round. The children are asked to explain what transpired. They will realize that the teacher began and ended after they did.

The word "round" is introduced. The starting roles are then reversed. When the children become adept at doing this in two parts, they may be divided into three groups. Each group is started by the instructor, but the children are responsible for stopping themselves at the end of the fourth box. (The conductor's "cut-off" is quickly imitated by the children and becomes a handy device for the children to use when stopping themselves and others while singing.) The boxes may be taken in any order as long as the order is determined and made clear to the children before the game begins.

Next, a familiar song, such as "Scotland's Burning," is used and the children suggest activities for each of the four phrases. This time they sing and move at the same time. A kind of line dance may also be created that can be danced while singing. Two equal lines of children face each other. One line begins; the second line follows. The children have now sung, danced, and experienced a round (Figure 4).

Form. Ikonic symbols, such as squares, circles, and triangles, are incorporated to teach form. Once again, the first examples must be extremely obvious. Bells may be arranged on the board in two patterns. For example: 1-3-5 on one side; 2-4-6 on the other. 1-3-5 are played. One child is asked to pick a symbol to represent that group of bells. The choice is placed underneath the set. The same procedure is followed for 2-4-6, reminding the children that the shape must be different because the bells do not sound the same as 1-3-5. 1-3-5 is played again and the children are asked which shape fits the bells. Soon they will be able to retain three to four note patterns and will be able to assign a correct shape to each series of notes.

A familiar song, such as "Scotland's Burning," may be divided into four phrases. (They have already done this in the four-square round activity). Each two-measure phrase is played and a shape is assigned to it. It will look

something like this: ● ▲ ■ ● . Next, letters are assigned to each shape: A B C A. Remember that some LD children will have trouble hearing alike patterns that do not have the same words. If they experience difficulty, the hand signals may be employed and the song may be sung on a neutral syllable. Their hands will tell them which patterns are the same and which are different.

When the children are ready to retain longer melodic patterns, songs such as "Yellow Submarine" and "All Night, All Day"²⁴ may be taken apart and assigned shapes and letters. Bizet's "Carillon" can be charted, using different colors to denote section changes. The children will enjoy playing with the 3-bell pattern each time it recurs.

Structured compositions may be composed by the children. Each child is assigned a different instrument and chooses one pattern to play. Each instrument is assigned a letter. The children decide the order (form) they wish to use for their composition.

Tone Color. Every experience and musical activity that has been explored contains tone color. Learning disabled children need to learn how to discriminate sounds. The children must become aware of the sound source. Sound discrimination begins with the human voice. The following experience games are beginning resources.

One child is blindfolded and sits in the middle of the room.²⁵ The

²⁴"Yellow Submarine" is in the 4th grade Exploring Music, 1975 series. "All Night, All Day" is in the 2nd grade Exploring Music, 1975 series.

²⁵Some children are extremely frightened and threatened by the thought of being unable to see, so the first experiences with this game should be only with those children who volunteer to be blindfolded.

other children quietly move to a position in the room and stand still. On cue from the instructor, one child sings and the blindfolded child guesses who it is. He may also point in the direction of the sound source. Later, after classroom instruments have been explored, children may play an instrument and the blindfolded child must respond by pointing to the sound and naming the source. At some other time, all children may be blindfolded and seated in a circle. The teacher chooses one rhythm instrument and begins moving slowly, striking the instrument constantly.²⁶ The children should try to follow the sound source by pointing and mapping the sound in the air. The children then remove their blindfolds and map how the sound moved; first by trying to retrace the movement in the air, and then by mapping it on paper.

Another game is played by placing ten to twelve different, familiar, classroom instruments behind a sheet, a board, or the piano. One instrument is played. When a child knows which instrument he hears, he comes behind the divider, picks it up, plays it appropriately, and names it if possible.

Introduction to the orchestral instruments requires that large pictures of each instrument are available and that the instrument being named can be heard as a solo instrument.

The flute, violin, timpani, and piano are the easiest instruments to introduce. These seem to be the most commonly known to the children. Attempts to place instruments into categorical families will be futile at first. Some children may group the tuba, string bass, timpani, and bassoon together because they all produce low sounds. The grouping has not been done incorrectly, but

²⁶It is best to use instruments that do not ring or resonate, such as wooden and plastic rhythm instruments. Resonator bells and triangles leave a trail of sound behind.

in a way that musicians do not normally group instruments. The string family will be the easiest to integrate because they all look similar and all have strings and bows. The ideal situation would be to have all of the instruments available for demonstration. Older band students and sometimes community members can be valuable resources.

Several songs have been written about the instruments, but unless a good recording accompanies the song, the song is useless. Two songs that are excellent are "Tell Us Gentlemen" and "Johnny Schmoker."²⁷ Benjamin Britten's Young Person's Guide to the Orchestra and the Bowmar series Meet the Instruments both include records that have solo excerpts for each instrument. The Bomar series furnishes a large chart for each of the instruments and four "family" charts. Four filmstrips are included that may be adapted for use with LD children.

Motor Skills

An individual's first learnings are motor learnings--muscular and motor responses. Learning difficulty may begin at this stage because the child's motor responses do not evolve into motor patterns. The differentiation between a motor skill and a motor pattern is an important element of this framework.

A MOTOR SKILL is an act that may have a high degree of precision. It has a purpose of performing a specific act or the accomplishment of a certain end. The MOTOR PATTERN may have less precision, but it has more variability. The purpose of the motor pattern is broader, beyond mere performance; it

²⁷"Tell Us Gentlemen" is in the 3rd grade Exploring Music, 1975 series. "Johnny Schmoker" is in the 2d grade Exploring Music, 1975 series.

provides feedback and more information to the individual. For example, throwing a ball at a target may be a motor skill, but the ability to utilize this skill as part of a baseball game may be called a motor pattern.²⁸

Music class experiences can greatly improve the gross-motor and fine-motor skills of learning disabled children.

Gross-motor skills require large muscle control. Experience games, dances, marching, hopping, and mirroring activities are a few of the ways in which music stimulates the use of the gross-motor muscles.

Fine-motor skills include snapping the fingers, tapping the toes, using chalk, hitting small rhythm instruments, playing the autoharp with a pick, playing the tone bells, and finger plays.

It usually proves better for the child to use large items in his early motor-skill tasks. More gross-muscle operation is required for manipulation of rather large objects than for small objects. Large-muscle development is required before small muscles can be effectively utilized. As a child becomes more skillful and more successful with large-muscle activities, reduction in the size of his materials may be indicated. The music teacher should never begin instrument exploration using finger cymbals and triangles, that both require small-muscle skills, but should begin using large hand drums and tambourines that require large-muscle activity such as hitting and shaking. The need to call into play additional muscles and parts of the child's body aids the child's learning in many things which require eye-hand coordination--for example, reading, writing, or steering a bicycle. As a child progresses, the need for motor activity as a major part of his work

²⁸Janet W. Lerner, Children with Learning Disabilities (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1976), p. 98.

is lessened. Closely related to this is his need for concrete materials. With success on the child's part becoming somewhat of a habit, the teacher may then help him extend his learnings into more abstract areas.²⁹

It is essential also to differentiate between motor-skills training and the physical exercise programs usually found with the elementary school. There is a difference, and an important one for the music teacher to keep in mind when initiating and carrying out motor-skills in the music classroom. The physical education program may place an emphasis on physical fitness, and to that end, children may engage in a variety of exercises and compete with each other for high achievement. The motor-training program is not concerned with competition whatsoever, but is essentially concerned with the development of motor coordination and the appropriate utilization of motor skills. Motor-training is intended to bring the child into a full awareness of his body as an effective tool to learning. Motor-training must have as its purpose the development of a good body image, and this may develop only from the child's recognition that he is the master of his body and his knowledge of how it is to function for him in all situations. Gross-motor functions are emphasized first, which lead to fine-motor functions.³⁰

Robert E. Valett, Professor of Education and Consulting Psychologist at California State University, has written a handbook of psychoeducational resource programs entitled The Remediation of Learning Disabilities, published by Fearon Publishers, Inc. in Belmont, California. In this handbook, Dr. Valett outlines program ideas for the remediation of gross-motor development,

²⁹William M. Cruickshank, Learning Disabilities in Home, School and Community, p. 188.

³⁰Cruickshank, p. 272.

sensory-motor integration, perceptual-motor skills, language development, conceptual skills, and social skills. He begins with operational definitions and the educational rationale behind each skill.

I have extracted the skill areas that may be dealt with within the music classroom, and have listed musical activities that can be used for the remediation of each skill.

Gross-Motor Development

Sitting: The ability to sit erect in normal position without support or constant reminding.

Educational Rationale: To work and learn effectively, children must be taught how to relax and to maintain proper sitting for reading, writing, and participation in varied activities.

Program Ideas:

1. Sit Indian-style on the floor. While listening to quiet music, practice proper breathing for singing.
2. Sitting Indian-style, arms extended to their sides, the children take a large breath and lower the arms slowly as the air is released.

Walking: The ability to walk erect in a coordinated fashion without support.

Educational Rationale: Walking is a neuromuscular act requiring balance and coordination.

Program Ideas:

1. Walk and march to music and/or drum beat. Walk on tiptoe, backward, with arms out at sides, straight over head, etc.
2. Follow the directions given in "Marching Fun" (to the tune of "Let It Be") on the record Perceptual Motor Skills, published by Educational Activities Co., Freeport, L.I., New York. Activities include marching in a square, marching in a circle, marching backward, marching low, marching high, clapping and marching in place, and many more.

3. Animal walks: using appropriate music, have the children walk like a rooster, bear, elephant, duck, etc.

Jumping: The ability to jump simple obstacles without falling.

Educational Rationale: Children should be taught to coordinate themselves as required in simple jumping tasks.

Program Ideas:

1. Rhythm jump: Jump to varied musical records.
2. Follow the directions given in "The Bouncer" (To the tune of "Hey Look Me Over") on the record Perceptual Motor Skills. Activities include jumping in place, hands on hips; jumping while turning left and right; and jumping on one foot.

Skipping: The ability to skip in normal play.

Educational Rationale: For many children, skipping is a difficult task of coordination and timing that requires strength and endurance. Children should be taught to skip by direct imitation and guidance and through involvement in games and activities.

Program Ideas:

1. Circle games: "Ring Around the Rosie," "Farmer in the Dell," "London Bridge."
2. To aid the skipping process, 12-inch contac paper or carpet circles may be cut out in two different colors and labeled. One color is for the left foot; one color for the right. The circles are placed on the floor in the patterns shown in Figure 5. Each child steps, hops, and steps again, following the foot pattern. The pattern should extend so the child may repeat it at least four times.
3. Free improvised skipping to record, "Skip to my Lou" or other music.
4. Skipping to music in pairs.

Dancing: The ability to move one's body in coordinated response to music.

Educational Rationale: Children need to be taught the enjoyment and emotional response to music and rhythm.

Program Ideas:

1. Basic rhythm: Encourage children to explore body movements to varied tempos and beat patterns. Acknowledge free eurythmic expression during class rhythm band music.
2. Action songs: introduce action songs such as "Row, Row Your Boat," etc., to teach movement responses to music.
3. Free movement: Using music such as "The Nutcracker Suite," music from Hap Palmer's record Movin', and music from To Move Is To Be, published by Educational Activities Inc., instruct pupils how to move about freely with arms over head, waving arms at sides and in front of body, tiptoeing, doing bending movements, etc.
4. Fundamental steps: Introduce meters and appropriate movements to use in 6/8 time such as swaying, swinging, skating, and rocking; and appropriate movements for 2/4 and 4/4 meter such as stepping, walking, tiptoeing, running, marching, stepping sideway, etc.
5. Circle steps: Pupils join hands in a circle and follow directions given by the teacher, or a fellow student. All activities reviewed in the section on enhancement of self image are appropriate here.
6. Acting out: Using "Flight of the Bumble Bee" and "The Sorcerer's Apprentice," have children act out a specific trait of the bumblebee and the qualities found in a storm.
7. Animals and people: Using "Peter and the Wolf," or similar music, children imitate the wolf, bird, duck, hunters, etc.
8. Bunny hop: Group "hop and kick" holding hips of person in front--make variations of hop.
9. Using three-foot strips of colored crepe paper, have children move around the room in free movement to a gentle piece of music. Some of the instrumental

pieces included on Hap Palmer's Movin' record are excellent for this activity.

10. Individual dance steps: Use records that have Hawaiian dances, Scottish dances, Tinikling, etc. Let the children experiment with modern dance steps to contemporary tunes.

11. Group dances: Use simple folk and square dances to teach folk dance patterns. Steps may have to be altered and simplified for smaller children.

12. Self-expression: Free movement to "mood music" to express emotion.

Movin' includes a piece entitled "Haunted House" that changes mood three times. The first section is violins playing pizzicato, the second is flowing, the third adds a heavy rock-type beat. Children may move about the room expressing these sections with their feet--running tiptoe, sliding, and dancing--and their whole body.

13. Peer instruction: Pupils teach a dance or step to other pupils. Perceptual Motor Skills includes an action game entitled "Clap and Shake." After the routine is comfortable with the children, the actions may be changed by the children and danced by the whole group.

14. Arobics: Arobic or jazz dance movements may be used to make routines to popular songs.

Body localization: The ability to locate parts of one's own body.

Educational Rationale: Before a child can develop an adequate self-concept, he needs to be able to locate himself in space.

Program Ideas:

1. All songs listed in the section of this paper dealing with body parts should be included here. "Head and Shoulders," "Shake Those 'Simmons Down," plus any other songs that include body parts such as "If You're Happy."

2. Hokey-Pokey: Sing and play circle game: "Put your left foot in, put your left foot out, shake it all about," etc.

Body Abstraction: The ability to transfer and generalize self-concepts and body localizations.

Educational Rationale: Children should be provided with varied experiences whereby they may gain psychophysical awareness, and control themselves.

Program Ideas:

1. The children should be made aware of the physical presence of other children around them and the fact that each child needs his own "space" when doing movement activities. Have children move freely about the room without interfering with another child's "space." Begin with slow, smooth music.
2. Body positions: Make stick figure people frozen in several positions on large pieces of oak tag. When the music stops or pauses, the children try to freeze in a position shown to them on a card. Children can also dance or skip to music until the music is stopped and assume the position taken by the leader.
3. Each child makes up a different way to move to the beat, naming, if possible, each action. (Tap fists together, tap top of head, bouncing on toes, tapping the floor, etc.)

Sensory-Motor Integration

Balance and Rhythm: The ability to maintain gross and fine motor balance and to move rhythmically.

Educational Rationale: The maintenance of body balance and the perception and expression of rhythmic patterns are fundamental to readiness for more advanced perceptual-motor experiences.

Program Ideas:

1. Use varied rhythm records and teach children to move to the beat of the music.
2. Bounce a small rubber ball to the beat of the music; on the accented beat of each measure.
3. Use drums and other large rhythm instruments to keep a steady beat with

music; hit only on the accented beat of each measure.

4. Children play rhythm patterns on drums while listening to music.

(Advanced stage activity)

Body-Spatial Organization: The ability to move one's body in an integrated way around and through the spacial environment.

Educational Rationale: Body awareness and control of movement in space should be taught through imitative and exploratory exercises.

Program Ideas:

1. Finger plays: "Where is Thumkin," "Eency Weency Spider," "Two Blue Birds," etc.

2. Assume body positions as directed in records such as Perceptual Motor Skills, and To Move Is To Be.

3. Four-square canon: Choose five active movements to be performed at four different places in the room. For example: march four steps forward, beat a drum for four beats, walk backward four steps, clap hands and walk forward four steps, and fancy step back to the original corner of the square. Each child begins after the first activity has been completed by the child preceding him. (Advanced activity) Any number of activities may be added to the sequence.

4. Mirroring activities.

Tactile Discrimination: The ability to identify and match objects by touching and feeling.

Educational Rationale: Since tactile discrimination and sensory integration are primary to higher level perceptual and cognitive learning, all remedial programs should provide systematic training in these areas.

Program Ideas:

1. Rhythm instruments are explored by feeling the shape, weight and material content. Later, with eyes shielded, identification of each explored instrument should be made by the children.

2. Sand paper and felt may be used to represent smooth (legato) and rough (staccato) places within musical compositions.
3. Explore felt-board musical notes and symbols by feeling the shape and contour of each. Present a note or symbol to each child and, with eyes shielded, have each child find a duplicate note or symbol from several placed within his reach on the floor or on a table.

Directionality: The ability to know right from left, up from down, forward from backward, and directional orientation.

Educational Rationale: Since many learning and problem solving situations require directional orientation, it is important that these skills be specifically taught. Such instruction should begin with body orientation.

Program Ideas:

1. Experience games: Teacher gives directions which specifically include the use of left and right hand, arm, leg and foot.
2. Follow directions given on records: "Hokey-Pokey," "Marching Fun" and "Isolations" from Perceptual Motor Skills.
3. Up-down: Using step-balls, direct each child to play a step up, skip up, step down, or skip down. (Advanced activity)
4. Chalkboard activity: Practice writing Kodaly rhythm symbols from left to right on the chalkboard.

Time Orientation: The ability to judge lapses in time and to be aware of time concepts.

Educational Rationale: Body organization in time reflects sensory-motor integration in space and is prerequisite for advanced perceptual and conceptual skills. Children should be provided opportunities to explore and judge space-time relationships in order to develop synchrony of movement.

Program Ideas:

1. Serial movements: In time to a metronome, mark once on the chalkboard or on a piece of paper each time the metronome ticks. Vary the speed.

2. Beat a drum each time the metronome ticks. Begin slowly and progressively get faster.
3. General time line: teach a formal time-line in music history by relating it to other events within the historical framework. Discuss how long it took some composers to write a small and a large work. (Advanced activity)

Perceptual Motor Skills

The perceptual-motor theory of learning disabilities postulates that normal perceptual-motor development helps a child establish a solid and reliable concept of the world.

For many LD children, the perceptual-motor world is unstable and unreliable. These children encounter problems when confronted with symbolic materials because they have an inadequate orientation to the basic realities of the universe that surrounds them--specifically the dimensions of space and time. To deal with symbolic materials the child must learn to make some rather precise observations about space and time and relate them to objects and events.³¹

Auditory Acuity: The ability to receive and differentiate auditory stimuli.

Educational Rationale: The ability to receive and to respond to auditory stimuli is a result of the integration of experience and neurological organization. The training of children in listening skills with emphasis on the development of good habit patterns of auditory attention and motivation should be stressed.

Program Ideas:

1. Common noises: Present pictures and recordings of animals, trains, boats, household appliances, storms, etc. The first grade books and records of both

³¹ Janet W. Lerner, Children with Learning Disabilities, p. 99.

the Exploring Music and Making Music Your Own series contain units on common environmental sounds. These sounds are presented and identified by the children.

2. Environmental awareness: Sitting quietly for 30 seconds with eyes closed, the children listen to all of the sounds they hear. Talk about their experiences.

3. Vocal quality: Listen to recordings that contain examples of one man, one woman, one child, many children, many women, many men, and mixed men and women's voices. Talk about one voice (sound) and many voices (sounds.)

Discuss the quality of each voice category.

4. Singing: Teach unison singing.

Auditory Decoding: The ability to understand sounds or spoken words.

Educational Rationale: Children need to be taught to listen carefully and to understand and respond to oral stimulation and instructions.

Program Ideas:

1. Tone matching: Teach children to match step-bells or piano notes by holding hands high for high notes, squatting for low notes, etc.

2. Instrument sounds: Arrange pictures of musical instruments and use records or actual instrument to teach the sounds. Play the sound on tape or record and have the child point out the appropriate picture.

3. Contrasting sounds: Teacher walks noisily, then tiptoes, rapidly, then slowly; talks in a high voice, low voice. Child then describes the sound--loud, fast, high, etc. After the child can respond to the teacher's voice and foot patterns, instruments may be substituted.

4. Play rhythm and activity records such as Dance a Story and teach children to carry out directions.

5. Symbol association: Arrange cards with musical symbols and Kodaly ikons on them in the chalktray. Clap or say one of the symbols, i.e. "tah," "rest," "tah-ah," etc., and have the child pick the correct symbol.

Auditory-Vocal Association: The ability to respond verbally in a meaningful way to auditory stimuli.

Educational Rationale: Children must be taught to listen and to respond in meaningful ways through the use of association, logical inference, and judgment.

Program Ideas:

1. Primary Association: "Tell me every place you can think of where you hear music." "Tell me how many commercial jingles you can sing."
2. Analogous Association: Prepositional "Do I hit the bell in the middle?" "Is the piano bench on top of the piano?" Class differences "Which of the following words does not belong--triangle, drum, bird, wood block?", etc. Verbal-opposite "Name the opposite of slow, high, smooth, up, etc." Logical analysis Question games with leading questions: "It is round, made of wood, has jingles, and can be hit or shaken. What is it?"

Auditory Memory: The ability to retain and recall general auditory information.

Educational Rationale: Children must be taught that what they are hearing is important and that they will be expected to recall and use auditory information following training activities.

Program Ideas:

1. Have one child explain to the class how a bell mallet is held, and how and where the bell is hit.
2. Children tell about their favorite songs--what the titles are and why they like them. Children name as many different records and songs as they can.
3. Name that tune: Children are divided into two teams. Teacher plays a familiar song on the piano. One child from each team runs to a melody bell, placed on a cart or table several feet away, and rings it to answer with the correct title of the song. (Advanced activity)

Auditory Sequencing: The ability to recall, in correct sequence and detail, prior auditory information.

Educational Rationale: Pupils need instruction in attending to specific directions and in the identification and location of sound patterns and sequences.

Program Ideas:

1. Singing: Choose a familiar song and ask persons in the class to sing a portion of it. Have each successive child sing the part already sung and add the next phrase, or just sing the next phrase, until the song has been completed.
2. Rhythm: Wrote a short, three or four beat, rhythm pattern on the board. Say and clap the pattern. Erase and have the children repeat it.
3. Recall: Sing a short, two phrase, song and have the children repeat it. Sing a melodic pattern and children repeat it. Clap a two to three bar rhythm pattern and children repeat. Play a short phrase on the octave step bells and have children duplicate it.

Visual Figure-Ground Differentiation: The ability to perceive objects in foreground and background and to separate them meaningfully.

Educational Rationale: The differentiation of meaningful objects in the environment requires visual concentration, attention, and stability. Children should be trained in the skills of visual scanning, peripheral discrimination of boundaries, and detecting significant details; pointing, matching, describing, and kinesthetic-motor modalities should be used in the remedial education program.

Program Ideas:

1. Object differentiation: "Point to the step-bells." "Point to the hand signal for 'do'." "Point to the cymbals."
2. Sorting: Arrange several of each flannel board symbol on a table and have the children stack them in piles of alike symbols.
3. Using a large chart book that contains short songs, have the children find the treble clef, time signature, number of musical staves used, lines that are the same, lines that are different, alike rhythm patterns, etc. (Advanced activity)

Visual Memory: The ability to recall accurately prior visual experiences.

Educational Rationale: Visual recall and retention must be sufficiently developed to insure success in reading and related abstract learning tasks. Training should be provided in the recall of material through pointing, matching, and verbal description from memory.

Program Ideas:

1. General verbal recall: Children may describe a musical assembly or concert they have seen in person or on television. Have each child describe one classroom instrument without looking at it, or holding it in his hands.
2. Arrange rhythm cards in chalk tray. Briefly expose a card with the same rhythm on it as one of the cards already in the chalk tray. Remove model and have a child find the duplicate.
3. Have the children recall the sequence of movements involved in one of the perceptual motor games.
4. Arrange melodic cards in the chalk tray. Remove cards and shuffle. Give cards to the pupils to rearrange in sequential order. (The cards may, in order, be a familiar song.) (Advanced Activity)

Visual-Motor Fine Muscle Coordination: The ability to coordinate fine muscles such as those required in eye-hand tasks.

Educational Rationale: The coordination of visual perception of stimuli with fine motor responses required in many educational tasks is prerequisite to academic success.

Program Ideas:

1. Draw the symbols for tah, rest, tah-ah and whole note on the board. Have the children come up and trace the symbols with their fingers. Later more difficult symbols, such as treble clef, may be added.
2. After symbols have been traced using their fingers, children duplicate the symbols on the chalkboard, using chalk. Next, have the children duplicate the symbols on paper, using crayons or large pencils.
3. Children will play up and down the scale on the step-bells, hitting each bell in the center and hitting only one bell at a time.

Visual-Motor Speed of Learning: The ability to learn visual motor skills from repetitive experience.

Educational Rationale: Most visual-motor skills can be improved through refined practice and drill. The specific skill to be learned must be broken

down into its component movements or processes and a systematic approach developed to accomplish the task to the point of overlearning.

Program Ideas:

1. Present verbal and visual instructions for a folk-dance step. Allow the child to practice, at his own pace, until he can successfully duplicate the pattern so that he may participate in the folk dance, i.e. "Tinikling."
2. Autoharp: Verbal and visual instructions for playing the autoharp are presented to the children. Cards with two and three chord sequences are made up and given to the children. Each child should be given ample time to figure out how to strum and change chords so that he can play his chord sequence while the class sings. Some children may have trouble holding a small autoharp pick. Plastic lids from coffee or powdered drink cans can be cut, rounded off, and made into very functional picks. The buttons on the autoharp can be color-coded with tape. The charts are then made to correlate the color and the chord being played.

Language Development

Every song taught to children contains words. Vocabulary, fluency, articulation, encoding and reading comprehension are developing continuously every time a child learns the words to a new song. Categorical songs, seasonal songs, nonsense songs, etc. may be coordinated with units being presented within the classroom.

Conceptual Skills

The teaching of music involves the teaching of concepts. Number, shape, sequence, form, reasoning, general information, classification and comprehension are all part of the musical training program.

If the music program is to be a successful one to learning disabled children, the music teacher must be able to adapt the songs, instruments, and conceptual ideas to meet the needs of the students.

Social Skills

Social acceptance, the ability to get along with one's peers, is important to the enhancement of good self image. Musical games and activities that require the taking of turns are invaluable to the learning disabled students in the learning of patience, tolerance and acceptance.

Social maturity, the ability to assume personal and social responsibility, is a social skill that can be practiced during music classes. All of the experience games mentioned earlier assume that each child will exhibit an appropriate action and will know what is proper and what is silly. Singing together with the rest of the class reinforces the idea that sometimes the whole class must work together, rather than individually, to produce the desired end.

As is apparent, these skills are not listed in order of difficulty, or in order of priority for the LD child. Some of the musical activities and concepts presented overlap into other skill areas than those the activity is suggested to remediate. All of the examples cited can be used in many more ways and could be tools for teaching other concepts. The main consideration must be the children. What can they do? How obvious will the concept be in a selected piece of music? Can it be used at a later date (as a familiar song) to teach another concept? Are the examples used valuable as music?

Obviously there will be times when the teacher will want to teach a song to the students for song value only. Music should also be fun. Music offers success to children who receive so little success in their daily school routine. As music teachers, we have a valuable tool. Music educators have a large responsibility when working with LD children because music may be the only communication available.

The success of music education for LD children depends on the willingness of the profession to work for the MENC ideal of: "Music for every child."

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APPENDIX I

Examples

Example 1

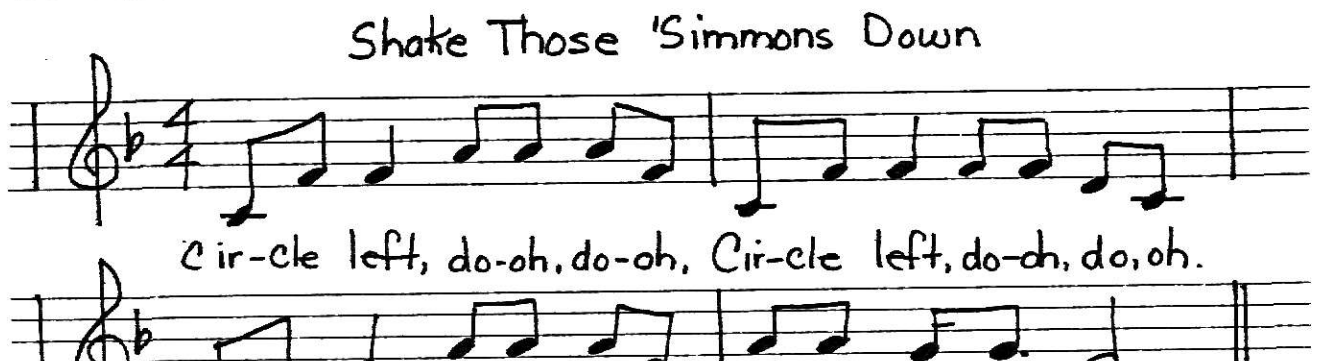
That's For Sure



My name is _____. That's for sure.

Example 2

Shake Those 'Simmons Down



Cir-cle left, do-oh, do-oh, Cir-cle left, do-oh, do, oh.

(shake hands and bend down to floor.)

Cir-cle left, do-oh, do-oh, Shake those 'sim-mons down.

Example 3

I Can Sing Nancy Scriven

I can sing, I like to sing. I can sing most an-y-thing.
 I can sing high. I can sing low. I sing with glad-ness, I sing with
 joy—. I can sing, I like to sing. I can sing most an-y-thing!

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Example 4

Scotland's Burning

Scotland's burning, Scotland's burning! Look out! Look out!
 Fire! Fire! Fire! Fire! Pour on water! Pour on water!

Example 5

Lavender's Blue English Folk Song

Lav-en-der's blue dil-ly, dil-ly, lav-en-der's green.

When I am King dil-ly, dil-ly, you shall be queen.

Who told you so dil-ly, dil-ly, who told you so?

'Twas mine own heart dil-ly, dil-ly, that told me so!

APPENDIX II

Figures

Figure 1

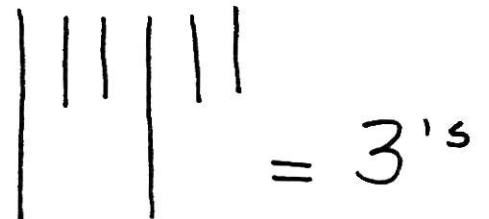
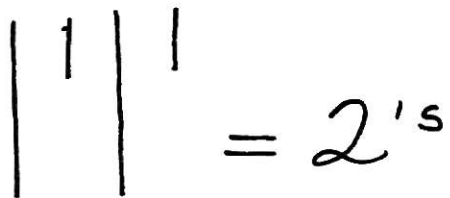


Figure 2

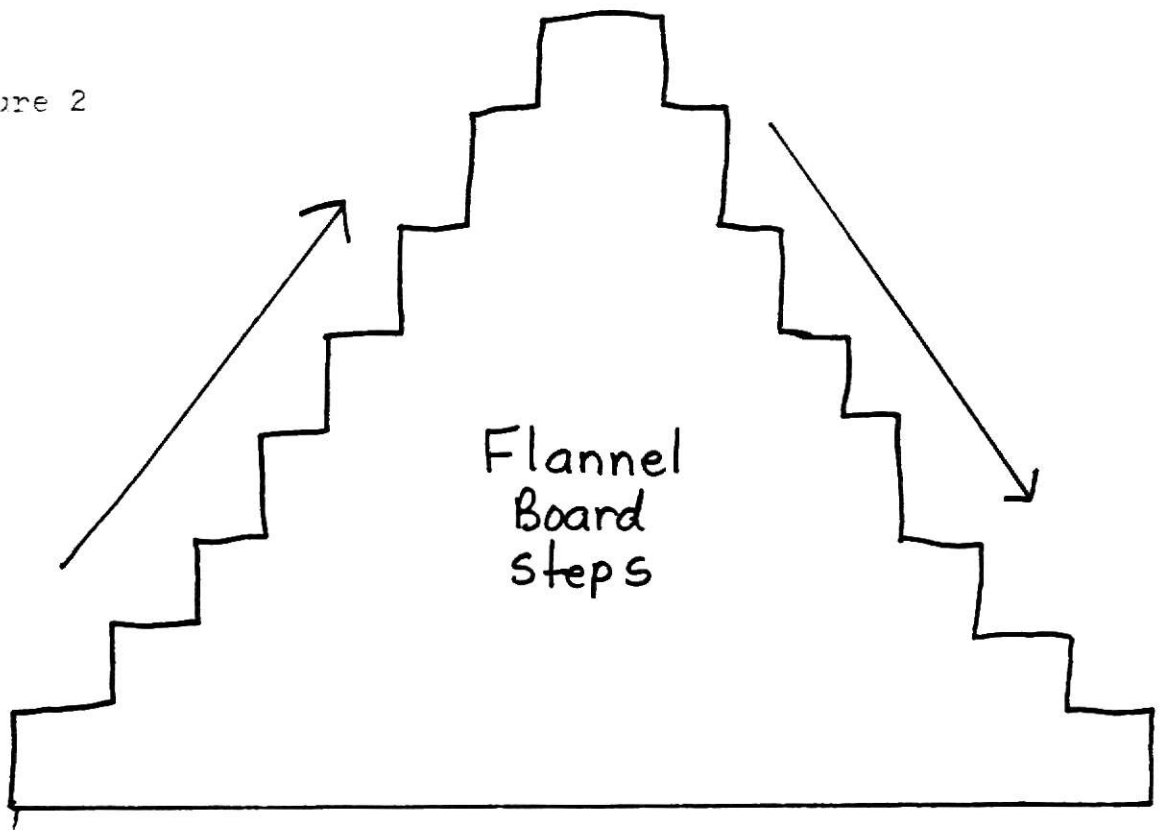
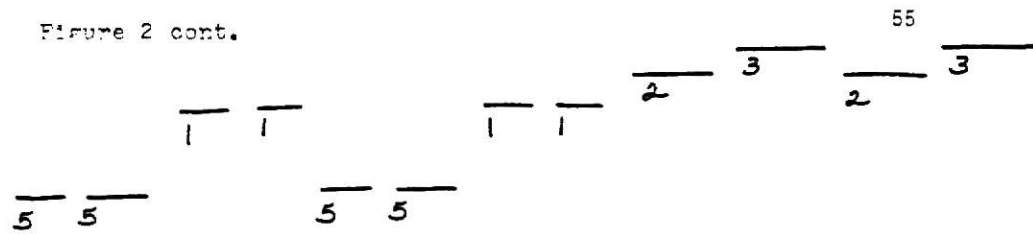
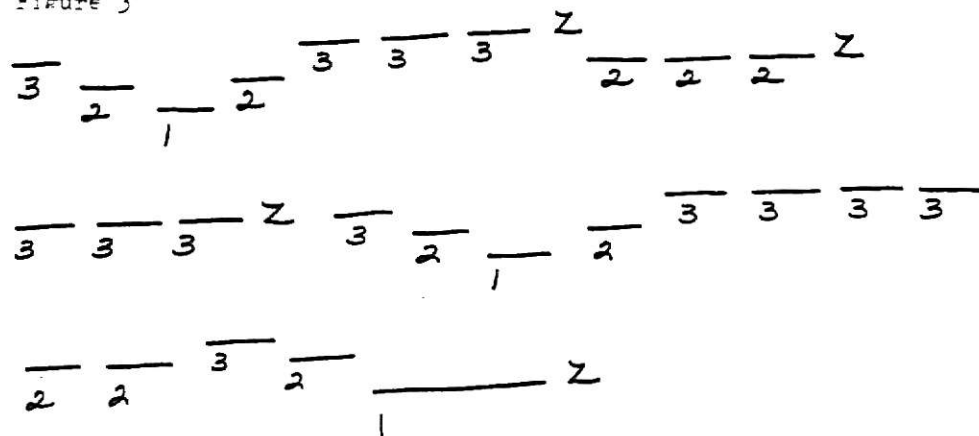


Figure 2 cont.



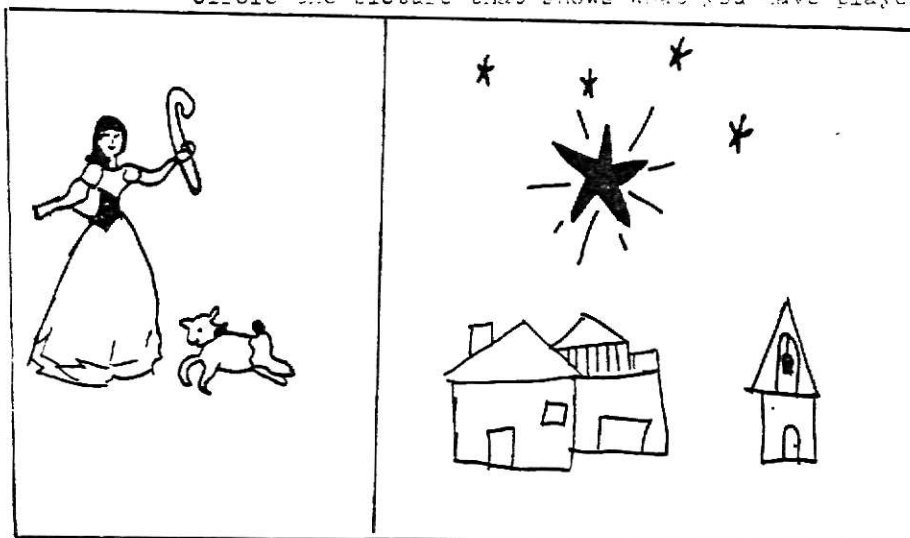
First two phrases of "Scotland's Burning"

Figure 3



"Mary Had a Little Lamb"

Circle the picture that shows what you have played.



APPENDIX III

Records

Basic Concepts Through Dance for Exceptional Children. Educational Activities Inc., Freeport, L.I., New York, 11520. Dances simplified and taught step by step. Presented in three tempos.

Capon, Jack and Rosemary Hallum. Perceptual Motor Skills. Educational Activities Inc., Freeport, New York. One record and teacher's manual. Twelve motor skills activities with voice cues the first time, music only the second time.

Carpet Squares. Melody House. Available in Lyon's Teacher's Guide. Exercises to be performed with carpet squares.

Dance-A-Story. Ginn and Co. Eight stories with records and books to be dramatized and interpreted in creative dance and body movement. One side contains the story and the music, one side music only.

DeBoeck, Evelyn. Music for Modern Dance.

Gray, Vera and Rachael Percivol. Listen, Move and Dance Volumes I and II. Good supplement to Kodaly.

Liccione, Georgianne. Fun Activities for Fine Motor Skills.

Palmer, Hap. Creative Movement and Rhythmic Exploration. Educational Activities Inc.

_____. Getting to Know Myself

_____. Mod Marches.

_____. Movin'.

To Move Is To Be. Educational Activities, Inc.

MUSIC AND THE LEARNING DISABLED CHILD

by

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B.M.E., Wichita State University, Wichita, Kansas, 1972

AN ABSTRACT OF A MASTER'S REPORT

submitted in partial fulfillment of the

requirements for the degree

MASTER OF MUSIC

Department of Music

KANSAS STATE UNIVERSITY
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1978

The purpose of this report was to define the possible learning disabilities that could be found within three to eight percent of the elementary school population, and to provide suggestions, instructional methods, and techniques that a music educator can put to use within the music classroom to help the learning disabled child overcome his specific disability.

The report attempted to answer the following questions:

1. Who is the learning disabled child?
2. What can a music teacher do to help?

The report was based on four years of library research, college classes dealing with the learning disabled child, independent observation at the Institute of Logopedics in Wichita, Kansas, and four years of personal experience working with learning disabled children.

Chapter I defined the learning disabled child and how the disability may manifest itself within the classroom. The following disorders were defined: *disorders of motor-activity*, *disorders of perception*, *disorders of symbolization*, *disorders of attention*, *disorders of memory*, and *disorders of emotionality*.

Chapter II offered practical and usable instructional ideas for teaching each musical concept--melody, rhythm, harmony, form and tone color--to children with learning disabilities. The operational definitions and educational rationale behind each skill for the development of gross-motor development, sensory-motor integration, perceptual-motor skills, language development, conceptual skills, and social skills, that music can help to remediate, were extracted from Dr. Valett's handbook, The Remediation of Learning Disabilities. His suggestions for program ideas to be used within the self-contained learning disabilities classroom were modified and adjusted to include program ideas that are usable within the music classroom.