

# Music Together Supports HighScope Preschool Curriculum

## Research-based, Developmental Approach

The Music Together curriculum and HighScope derive from the same principles—namely a developmental rather than instructional approach to early education based on active, participatory learning.

The following principles are integral to both program models:

- The modeling of parents, caregivers, and teachers to support children's active learning experiences.
- Developmentally appropriate content that is presented through engaging materials and activities.
- Children's participation in shaping the flow of activity that is facilitated by teachers and parents.
- A research-based approach to learning and education that is continually developed and validated.

The harmony of HighScope and Music Together also lies in the people behind the program development. Dr. Lyn Ransom, coauthor of Music Together Preschool with Kenneth K. Guilmartin and Dr. Lili Levinowitz, also created the original music program for David Weikhart and HighScope. She served as a HighScope author and teacher trainer before joining the Music Together staff.

## Partners in Learning

Music Together clarifies teachers' roles as music catalysts (as opposed to music instructors) through the articulation of teaching principles that align with, and support, HighScope's adult-child interaction approach to education and development. These teaching principles help to guide classroom staff in leading music experiences that engage and delight children, offer ample opportunity for active learning, and help teachers to find a sense of playfulness while they teach. For example:

- "Accept and include," which refers to incorporating a child's movement or music suggestion into a song or movement activity. This teaching principle helps all children learn that they have valid music and movement ideas, and encourages children—and teachers—to experiment and play freely with music without concerns about making a "mistake."
- "Build relationships through music and movement," which refers to interacting through the arts rather than just learning about them. This teaching principle enhances the relationship between teachers and children by giving the teacher ways to use music and movement as a means of communication that is nonverbal and direct, yet playful.

## Curriculum Content Areas

The Music Together curriculum can support many of the Key Developmental Indicators (KDI's) in HighScope's curriculum content areas, such as: engagement in learning, problem-solving, social and emotional development, physical development, and language and literacy. Music Together also directly supports the Creative Arts curriculum content area for HighScope's Movement and Music curriculum, which can be enhanced by Music Together activities and materials.

## HighScope Classroom and Daily Routine

The HighScope Classroom and Daily Routine can be enriched through the Music Together curriculum, which includes the following key program model components:

- Each semester, children, teachers, primary caregivers, and parents are exposed to a song collection that is research-based and artistically conceived and produced. Supplemental

materials (classroom teacher guide, family songbook, SongCards) enhance and extend the learning experience for the children by providing teachers and parents with a variety of music and movement activities designed to stimulate and support music learning.

- Led by a trained music specialist and based on an activity template or routine, each session includes a variety of music and movement activities and opportunities for instrument-play. Song materials, movement activities, and instruments are also available for children and teachers to play with throughout the day, at circle time, and during transitions, to enrich learning in other curricular areas, as well as in the classroom's music-making area.
- Music Together provides each family with a CD and songbook that includes the same songs children and teachers are singing and moving to at school, which can help to create a tangible connection between the home and the classroom. Teachers are encouraged to facilitate at-home music-making, which promotes fun and family bonding and also supports music, language, physical, cognitive, social, and emotional development at home. Song activities suggested in the family songbook can be facilitated during family-school events, helping to deepen the parents' connection to the school and to their child's classroom.

### **Relationships: Central to Learning**

Like HighScope, Music Together emphasizes the importance of the adult-child interaction and relationship. Music Together trainings, in-service workshops, and supportive materials provide teachers with guidance on how to interact musically with children, regardless of music training or skill, giving them the tools they need to form a music-learning relationship with each child. Also, through singing, moving, and responding to the rhythm patterns and tonal patterns on the CDs, classroom teachers may find that they, too, are developing musically along with the children and parents.

### **Monitoring and Maintaining Quality**

The music and movement section of High Scope's Child Observation Record can be used in any classroom with Music Together. In addition, the music specialists who teach weekly can assess children's development in tonal and rhythm competency by using the Music Together Observation Record. This record can also be used to document music areas and circle areas, materials, activities, equipment, teacher-child interactions, and support for music at home. This checklist is designed to make roles, teaching principles, and materials specific, so understanding can be shared and improvements made.

### **Training Model**

Music Together supports an active teaching and learning community through:

- Online videos, webinars, and interactive teacher websites.
- In-person workshops held nationwide throughout the year.
- Ongoing teacher development in the classroom during the weekly active music-making visits by the Music Together specialist, along with post-class discussions, regular in-service workshops, and individual mentoring embedded in the program model.
- Nationally, internationally, and locally, teachers share ideas, concerns, breakthroughs, and song-presenting techniques, thus raising the general level of teaching.