

# Sing Into Reading

Songs and Ideas to Promote Early Literacy

Workshop by Nancy Stewart

[www.Nancymusic.com](http://www.Nancymusic.com)



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Workshop by Nancy Stewart  
(206) 232-1078

E-mail [Nancy@Nancymusic.com](mailto:Nancy@Nancymusic.com) [www.Nancymusic.com](http://www.Nancymusic.com)

## INTRODUCTION

Why sing? Quite simply, children *need* music to fully develop, and these days children have fewer and fewer opportunities for singing in their lives. Using songs in story times is a wonderful way to involve even the youngest children in language, and to model that involvement to parents and caregivers. By encouraging adults to sing with their children every day, you are helping them build relationships and a love of language.

- **Music Powers the Brain:** Simply singing with a child connects neuropathways, and increases the ability to retain information. In other words, it builds memory. Music builds a strong sense of rhythm, which leads to a better ability to understand and produce language. Singing develops spatial reasoning, which allows children to recognize patterns and later helps in problem-solving. Songs are rich in vocabulary and by nature build phonological awareness.
- **Music Influences Us:** Advertisers know this! That's why they spend millions of dollars on jingles. You can use music to influence children in positive ways. Using music, you can change a mood, stimulate creativity, and direct energy toward movement or stillness.
- **Music Connects Us:** Because music *is a language*, it can bring together a diverse group of people, and by simply singing together, give them a shared experience. You don't need to know what the words mean to understand the intention of a song. Until recently in our human history, people and cultures were connected by the songs passed down from one generation to the next. This also built a feeling of community, from work songs to lullabies, nonsense, and story songs.
- **Music Transports Us:** Music transports us in time and emotion. It can take us to far away lands, or back into our own childhoods. As we sing and do fingerplays, we are brought into the child's world, where everything is newly discovered.
- **Music Comforts Us:** Repeating the same songs in story time give children security, and memories that can be called on to comfort for a lifetime. Starting your story time with a theme song, singing a lullaby, and using an ending song are just some of the ways you can provide this musical comfort. All human beings find comfort in the familiar. When parents and caregivers sing with their babies and children, *they are calmed and comforted as well.*

## ABOUT THE SONGS IN THIS BOOKLET

All of the songs in this booklet can be found on Nancy's website, and/or on the recordings listed below. Please note the number in parentheses **next to each song title in the booklet**. That number refers to the list of recordings below and indicates where each song can be found. If you are unable to, or don't want to download the songs, you can purchase the recordings at [www.Nancymusic.com](http://www.Nancymusic.com). Or call Nancy at (206) 232-1078.

- (#1) *Plant a Little Seed*, Songs for Growing Children— recording and booklet
- (#2) *Rhythm of the Rocks*, multicultural songs
- (#3) *Little Songs for Little Me*— notebook includes CD, activities, lyrics and guitar chords, for 32 songs, felt pieces for use in 7 songs
- (#4) *Singin' Sidesaddle*, *Songs of the Old West*
- (SOM) Website Songs of the Month- free to download, or CD's may be purchased
- (WS) Website Workshop songs (found on website at bottom of workshops page at [www.nancymusic.com](http://www.nancymusic.com))

## ORGANIZING YOUR SONG COLLECTION

As new songs are learned, it's easy to forget favorites. Or maybe the holidays come and go, and somehow you've forgotten to sing the song your children loved best last year. Here are some tips to help keep you organized, so that you don't spend time looking for, or forgetting songs.

- If you have a songbook that has half a dozen songs out of a hundred that you actually use, copy those and put into a three ring binder. Have several different colored binders to identify different seasons or times of the year. Some binders may have the same song that you use at different times of the year.
- Put plastic page protectors in the binder to hold visual aids (a picture of a fire truck to show while singing a fire truck song), and felt board shapes to use for those songs
- Keep a list of songs in the front of the book
- Notebook can be divided into sections such as holiday songs, movement songs, animal songs, etc.
- Some librarians prefer to keep songs on index cards and file them according to use.
- Large props can be stored in clear hanging clothing bags, and hung in a closet.



# Music and Early Literacy

“ADVANCED BRAIN-SCAN TECHNOLOGY REVEALS THAT WHEN CHILDREN PARTICIPATE IN MUSIC, THE BRAIN ‘LIGHTS UP LIKE A CHRISTMAS TREE’ IN MANY DIFFERENT AREAS.”

- Young Children, March 2006

## What are the six early reading skills?

- Vocabulary- Knowing the names of things
- Print motivation- Being interested in and enjoying books
- Print awareness- Noticing print, how to handle a book, how to follow words on a page
- Letter knowledge- Knowing letters are different from each other, knowing their names and sounds
- Narrative Skills- Being able to describe things and events and tell stories
- Phonological awareness- Being able to hear and play with the smaller sounds in words

## How Does Singing Help Teach Children these Skills?

- Our brains are uniquely wired to respond to music, from *before* the time we are born.
- Because singing is interactive, it involves even the youngest children in language.
- Children learn language through repetition, and as songs are repeated the rhythm of the words is internalized.
- Singing brings a natural awareness of words, as each syllable or sound in a word gets a different note.
- Nursery rhymes and finger plays present a wide vocabulary, and teach sentence structure, story concepts and comprehension.
- The only things we remember word-for-word from our childhoods, are childhood songs and some rhymes!
- Children learn oral language before written language, and the more experience they have with oral language, the better prepared they will be for interpreting written words.
- Active participation in music (singing) increases retention, builds memory, and actually helps grow the brain in young children!
- Because children naturally love to sing, there is no “teaching,” just doing!

## How Can I Help My Child Build Early Literacy Skills though singing?

This is the fun part! You are probably already involved in activities that will lay the foundation for your child’s early literacy. So just sing and have fun!

- Sing throughout your day, as you’re in the car, playing, or working. Research shows that the more music a child experiences, the greater the benefits.
- Play “complex” music for your child to further grow the brain. Examples of complex music are classical music or singing rounds. There are some wonderful classical recordings available just for young children.
- Make up songs, or sing familiar songs like “The Wheels on the Bus” using family members’ names. And don’t forget to include the pets!
- Make up songs about the foods as you prepare them. Emphasize and exaggerate the letter sounds.
- Collect or make rhythm instruments, and use them to reinforce syllables and keep a steady beat as you sing. The same can be done with clapping.
- Use “books that sing” often as a daily part of your reading together time (suggested titles on resource page). Ask your children's librarian to help you find them in the picture book section.
- Sing traditional folk songs with your children, as they bring with them a knowledge of our culture and language. *Someday your children will likely sing them to their children!*



# The Music and Early Literacy Connection

## Language Acquisition to Early Literacy

## Role of Music

Babies develop sense of hearing while still in the womb



Babies hear and respond to music, which is their first language

Babies are drawn to oral language through rhythm, repetition, and rhyme.



Songs have rhythm, repetition, and rhyme built in.

Babies and young children retain language based on repetition. Finger plays teach vocabulary



Songs have repetition built in  
Finger plays sung invite children to join in, vocabulary is better retained.

Young children begin to learn that words are made up of smaller sounds



Melodies divide words into smaller parts, and present language in patterns that make sense to the brain example: Alphabet makes no sense until presented in a song where the letters are learned and retained in a pattern

Young Children notice print, understand it links to words they hear; follow print to learned nursery rhymes and songs to connect the two.



Children already know melodies to nursery rhymes, and can participate in "reading"  
\*example: children are more likely to sing *Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star*, than say the words if simply read from a book

Children learn sounds of letters and phonemes in preparation for learning to read



Songs naturally divide words into syllables and sounds, so they are internalized. The built in repetition and rhyme increase understanding and retention.

### DEM BONES (#1)

pat thighs in rhythm and hold up a picture of a dinosaur after each verse

DEM BONES, DEM BONES, DEM DINOSAUR BONES  
PUT 'EM ALTOGETHER AND THIS IS WHAT YOU GET!

### PLANT A LITTLE SEED (#1)

PLANT A LITTLE SEED (one hand makes a loose fist for pot,  
other hand moves down through pot in three movements in time with music)  
WATCH IT GROW (hand comes back through pot in three movements with music)  
SOON WE WILL HAVE A VEGETABLE (move fist over fist upward in time with the music)  
\* you can either have pictures of vegetables and simply show, or with older children, give a hint and have them guess.

Other versions for fruit or fruit *and* vegetables

PLANT A LITTLE SEED, WATCH IT ROOT,  
SOON WE WILL HAVE A PIECE OF FRUIT

PLANT A LITTLE SEED, WATCH IT SPROUT  
LET'S ALL TRY TO FIGURE IT OUT

### FISHIES (#2) (SOM)

Cut out 5 felt fish in different sizes and colors

THERE ARE SO MANY FISHIES IN THE DEEP BLUE SEA  
WHAT COLOR FISHY DO YOU SEE?  
RED, RED, THIS ONE'S RED, THIS LITTLE FISHY IS RED  
(continue with other colors of fish)

THERE ARE SO MANY FISHIES IN THE DEEP BLUE SEA  
WHAT COLOR IS THE BIGGEST FISHY YOU SEE?  
(continue with smallest, and then others, giving each a different voice as you remove them from felt board)

### BLUEBIRD THROUGH MY WINDOW (#1)

traditional

Bluebird, bluebird, through my window (repeat three times)  
Oh Johnny I'm tired ("fly" blue felt bird onto felt board, and repeat with other colors)

Traditionally played as a circle game. Children hold hands in a circle, arms up. One child is chosen to be a bird who flies in and out of the "windows" created by raised arms. On last line, children drop arms, and a new child is chosen to be the bird. If you have a large group, you can have several birds at a time. Each one will choose a new bird at the end of his or her turn.

#### Variation 1 for preschoolers:

Cut birds from 4 colors of felt, and give one to each child, spreading out the colors. Place felt board in the middle of the circle. Sing the song once through for each color. As you sing each color, the children with that color bird stand and fly around the felt board until the last line, when they place their birds on the felt board and fly back to their seats. Repeat with other colors.

#### Variation 2 for infants and babies:

Cut out different colored felt birds. Sing shortened song (below) and slowly fly each bird up to the flannel board as you sing. Great for eye exercise and following an object, also colors.

Bluebird, bluebird through my window, (fly bird up to flannel board)  
oh Johnny I'm tired (rest head on hands and say "Night, night)



## WHEN DUCKS GET UP IN THE MORNING (#1) (SOM)

traditional– have pictures of animals

Slap thighs in rhythm as you hold up pictures of animals and sing. This is a favorite song of very young children.  
WHEN DUCKS GET UP IN THE MORNING, THEY ALWAYS SAY GOOD DAY  
WHEN DUCKS GET UP IN THE MORNING, THEY ALWAYS SAY GOOD DAY  
QUACK, QUACK, QUACK, QUACK, THAT IS WHAT THEY SAY, THEY SAY  
QUACK, QUACK, QUACK, QUACK, THAT IS WHAT THEY SAY, THEY SAY (repeat with other animals)

Note: My favorite book to use as a prop for this song is, *I Love Animals*, by Flora McDonnell available in hardcover, paperback, big book and board book format

## FRUIT SONG (#1) (WS)

by Marylee Sunseri, used by permission

(sing to melody of army chant)

MAMA, MAMA, CAN I EAT THIS JUICY FRUIT IN FRONT OF ME

slap a rhythm on thighs, and hold up a picture of a fruit after each verse. two year-olds can just say the name of the fruit. Older children can clap and then count the syllables. You can also give a hint before showing the picture. Children love this song, and can sing it *many* times!

## I'LL DRIVE A DUMP TRUCK (#2) (WS)

Hold up pictures of trucks and substitute names of each one, as you keep a rhythm by slapping thighs while you sing.

I'LL DRIVE A DUMP TRUCK, DUMP TRUCK, DUMP TRUCK

I'LL DRIVE A DUMP TRUCK, ALL DAY LONG

Note: My favorite book to use as a prop for this song is *Dump Trucks and Diggers*, by Robert Crowther (pop-up book)

## LOTS OF CARS (#1) (WS)

Cut out five felt cars in different colors and sizes. Put on flannel board one at a time.

THERE ARE LOTS OF CARS DRIVING DOWN THE STREET (hands on steering wheel, turning back and forth)

TELL ME WHAT COLOR DO YOU SEE (place a felt car on the board)

BIG CARS, LITTLE CARS, (spread arms on “big”, bring hands close for “little”)

BEEP, BEEP, BEEP (hand taps nose 3 times)

THERE ARE LOTS OF CARS DRIVING DOWN THE STREET

WHAT COLOR IS THE BIGGEST CAR YOU SEE (repeat with smallest, longest, etc.)

## WHO HAS A PENNY? (#1) (SOM)

Have enough pennies, buttons, and keys so that each child can have one item. Pass them out, and instruct children to keep items hidden until the end of the song

teacher sings: “Who has a penny?” Children with pennies answer, “I have a penny”

teacher sings : “Who has a key?” Children with keys answer “I have a key”

teacher sings: “Who has a button?” Children with buttons echo “I have a button”

teacher sings: “Now let us see” All children open their hands together.

You can have children trade items, and sing two more times, so that every child gets to have all three items. Then you can collect and count the number of keys, buttons, pennies. Talk about how many of each item there are.

**TWINKLE, TWINKLE, FIREFLY**  
(to tune of Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star)

Twinkle, twinkle, firefly lighting up the summer sky (hold hands in front, open and shut fingers)  
Sometimes fast, sometimes slow, send a message with your glow (open and shut fast and slow)  
Twinkle, twinkle, firefly, lighting up the summer sky

**DINOSAURS IN CARS (#1) (SOM)**  
Stand up and get physical!

THERE WERE FIVE DINOSAURS RIDIN' IN CARS (pretend to be driving)  
HAVIN' A "WHEELY" GOOD TIME  
THEY SAID, "STEP ON THE GAS" (step forward with one foot)  
WE'LL GO REALLY FAST! (push one hand out in front of body)  
AND THEY DID UNTIL ONE HAD A FLAT TIRE  
CA-CHUNK, CA-CHUNK, CA-CHUNK, CA-CHUNK (roll hands unevenly as if rolling a flat tire)  
WHOOSH—— (sink down to crouch position while making air sound)  
AND HE SAID, "GO ON WITHOUT ME!" (cup hands around mouth and shout upward)

REPEAT WITH 4,3,2, AND ONE DINOSAUR

LAST TIME- speak the following in a rhythmic, almost rapping way:  
AND *HE* SAID, " I KNOW WHAT I'LL DO, I'LL CHANGE THE TIRE"  
SO HE JACKED UP THE CAR (pretend to work a jack while making whoosh sound)  
AND HE TOOK OFF THE FLAT (pretend to lift off heavy tire, making a grunting sound)  
AND HE PUT ON THE SPARE (pretend to put on spare, making a grunting sound)  
AND HE SAID, "I'LL PICK UP MY FRIENDS"

THEN THERE WERE FIVE DINOSAURS, RIDIN' IN CARS repeat movements from 1st verse  
HAVIN' A WHEELY GOOD TIME  
THEY SAID, "STEP ON THE GAS, WE'LL GO REALLY FAST"  
AND THEY DID AND DOWN THE ROAD THEY WENT FLYIN'  
SO LONG! (spoken with a wave)

**I HAVE A CAT- A CHANT**  
children echo and copy movements

I HAVE A CAT cross arms in front of body  
MY CAT IS FAT arms rounded in front of body  
I HAVE A CAT cross arms in front of body  
MY CAT WEARS A HAT hands form hat above head  
I HAVE A CAT cross arms in front of body  
MY CAT CAUGHT A BAT fingers make wings that flutter  
I HAVE A CAT cross arms in front of body  
MEOW!

Repeat with other voices, low, high, robot

## MY AUNT CAME BACK (#1) (WS)

traditional

Actions are accumulative. So as each new verse is sung, the new actions is added to the others. This makes for a very silly and fun song! When singing with younger children, limit actions (verses) to three, or how ever many the children can do without becoming frustrated.

OH MY AUNT CAME (children echo)  
BACK FROM OLD JAPAN (children echo)  
AND SHE BROUGHT ME BACK (children echo)  
A PAPER FAN (children echo) right hand open, fanning back and forth

OH MY AUNT CAME BACK (children echo)  
FROM OLD ALGIERS (children echo)  
AND SHE BROUGHT ME BACK (children echo)  
A PAIR OF SHEARS (children echo) left hand makes scissors that open and close

OH MY AUNT CAME BACK (children echo)  
FROM HOLLAND TOO ( children echo)  
AND SHE BROUGHT ME BACK (children echo)  
A WOODEN SHOE (children echo)

OH MY AUNT CAME BACK FROM OLD CHILE  
AND SHE BROUGHT ME BACK (children echo )  
AN ITCHY FLEA (scratch various places while continuing to do other motions!)

OH MY AUNT CAME BACK (children echo)  
FROM THE COUNTY FAIR (children echo)  
AND SHE BROUGHT ME BACK (children ehco)  
A ROCKING CHAIR (lean forward and back as if rocking)

OH MY AUNT CAME BACK (children echo)  
FROM THE CITY ZOO (children echo)  
AND SHE BROUGHT ME BACK (children echo)  
A MONKEY LIKE YOU (children echo) point to children

## THE GREEN GRASS GREW ALL AROUND (SOM)

traditional song with hand movements

Accumulative echo song

THERE WAS A TREE (echo) (elbow of one arm rests on other hand for tree) ALL IN THE WOOD (echo)  
THE PRETTIEST LITTLE TREE (echo) THAT YOU EVER DID SEE (echo)  
WELL THE TREE WAS IN A HOLE (hands form large circle) AND THE HOLE WAS IN THE GROUND (flat hands move back in forth in front of body)  
AND THE GREEN GRASS GREW ALL AROUND, ALL AROUND, THE GREEN GRASS GREW ALL AROUND  
wiggle fingers of hands around in a circle in front of body

Add the following:

1. NOW ON THAT TREE (echo) THERE WAS A NEST (echo) hands form nest
2. NOW IN THAT NEST (echo) THERE WAS AN EGG make fist for egg
3. NOW ON THAT EGG (echo) THERE WAS A BIRD flap arms for wings
4. NOW ON THAT BIRD (echo) THERE WAS A FEATHER wiggle one finger
5. NOW ON THAT FEATHER (echo) THERE WAS A BUG pretend to hold tiny bug between fingers



## Website Songs for Early Literacy

These are a few of the songs available for free at [www.Nancymusic.com](http://www.Nancymusic.com). There is a complete list of categorized songs on page . The ones below are especially good for building early literacy skills.

- 1. Apple And An Ant:** Using alliteration, children become familiar with the sounds of letters (letter awareness) Print out the pages to use with this song.
- 2. Let's Go to the Market:** Place ten or so items from your pantry in a shopping bag. Sing and keep a steady rhythm. As you take out each item, ask your child what letter the item starts with (cereal starts with C ). When you have finished all the items, you can count how many start with the same letter, what order they are in the alphabet, or clap the syllables in the words. When you are at the market, have your child go on a “letter” hunt. The market is great for this, since there are words with pictures everywhere, on items children are familiar with. (print motivation, letter awareness)
- 3. Egg Shaking Song** - Guided shaking encourages children to keep a steady rhythm as they sing and play, matching the “shakes” to the words. (phonological awareness, vocabulary). Instructions for making egg shakers are included on the website.
- 4. Listen to the Drum-** Make the suggested drum, or use your own. Children develop listening skills as they respond to the directions in the song, and echo the rhythms using their hands or rhythm instruments.
- 5. Make a Little Rhythm-** Uses rhythm instruments to teach keeping a steady rhythm. This is a great song to use when you have one-of-a-kind rhythm instruments.
- 6. Take a Walk Around the Room (Letter Hunt)-** Song instructs children to walk around the room and identify letters throughout the song (letter awareness).
- 7. Five Little Dragons-** Song and instructions for making a folding, or accordion book. Print out the pages and follow the instructions for this variation on the Five Little Ducks song (print awareness, print motivation).
- 8. Bears-** Children look behind the letters that spell “Bears” to see a different bear behind each. Then additional memory games can be added (letter knowledge).
- 9. The Colors Of Winter-** ASL song with optional instrumental version
- 10. Felt Board Train** - great for phonological awareness and vocabulary
- 11. Rhyme Time-** Printable activity sheet lets children match rhyming words while listening to the song
- 12. When I Hear the Music** - builds listening skills and rhythm
- 13. Who Will Be My Valentine?** - game teaches children matching pairs. Modify for year-round use by making pairs of cards with a letter or word, instead of a valentine, and changing the words to, “Who will be a friend of mine?...”

## MULTICULTURAL SONGS

### PICHI PICHI (# 3)

Japan

PICHI PICHI, CHAPU, CHAPU (hands make wipers back and forth)  
RAN, RAN, RAN fingers flutter down in front for rain)  
(repeat)

UNDERNEATH A WEEPING WILLOW (arms form tree leaning to side)  
STANDS A LITTLE CHILD  
NO UMBRELLA, CHILD IS WAITING (hands form umbrella over head)  
RAIN IS FALLING DOWN (fingers flutter down in front)

FALLING, FALLING, RAIN IS FALLING (hands beat thighs rapidly for rain)  
ON THE LITTLE CHILD  
MOTHER COMES TO BRING UMBRELLA (hands form umbrella over head)  
RAIN IS FALLING DOWN ( fingers flutter down in front )

### RUM SUM SUM (#3)

Morocco

A RUM SUM SUM, A RUM SUM SUM (slap thighs in time )  
GULI, GULI, GULI, GULI, GULI (roll hands)  
RUM SUM SUM (slap thighs in time)  
A RAFFI, A RAFFI (shake hands up high, and clap on last syllable- 2 TIMES)  
GULI, GULI, GULI, GULI, GULI, (roll hands)  
RUM SUM SUM (slap thighs in time)

1. In the little country of Morocco at the top of North Africa  
You can hear the sound of the children all around, a singin' a Rum Sum Sum (chorus)
2. In Morocco you can ride on a camel, out across the desert sand  
And sing a little song as you're moving right along, through this mysterious land
3. And under the shade of a palm tree, you can catch a little rest from the sun  
Hear the flute and tambourine as the children start to sing a little song of a Rum Sum Sum
4. And if we go to Marrakesh, you can visit the marketplace  
Where there's music in the air, and the dancers everywhere will put a smile upon your face

### OBWISANA (#3)

Ghana

Use small stones and play in rhythm. Older children can pass stones in a line, or a circle as the song is sung. You can also use other items like shoes, or crumpled pieces of paper

1                    2            1                    2  
OBWISANA SA-NA, OBWISANA SA  
1                    2            1                    2  
OBWISANA SA-NA, OBWISANA SA

\* pick up rocks on #1, and place in front of person to your right on #2  
Keep a slow steady rhythm as you sing, and get faster and faster!

Verses : 1. Listen to the rhythm of the rocks  
          What would they say if they could talk  
          So many years down under the ground  
          Listen to the sound, listen to the sound

2. Find me a rock that's smooth and round  
          Find me a rock down under the ground  
          Find me a rock that I can pound  
          Listen to the sound, listen to the sound

### **TOCAN LAS MARACAS (#3)**

Make four different colored “maracas” (shakers) out of empty containers filled with beans or rice, and let children play as they learn the colors in Spanish.

SI TIENE UNA MARACA, “ROJA” (if you have a red maraca)  
TOCA, TOCA, TOCA, TOCA, TOCA, (play it)

repeat with other colors: AZUL (blue), AMARILLA (yellow), VERDE (green)

TODOS TOCAN LAS MARACAS, TODOS TOCAN LAS MARACAS  
TODOS TOCAN LAS MARACAS, TODOS MARACAS AQUI  
(everyone play the maracas)

### **MI CHACRA (# 3)**

Argentina

Hold up pictures of the animals, and have children make animal sounds and use hands to form donkey ears, cat paws, dog paws, and cow horns

1. VENGAN A VER MI CHACRA, QUE ES HERMOSA (REPEAT)  
EL BURRITO HACE ASI (the donkey makes sound like this) HEE HAW!

CHORUS:

OH VA, CAMARAD, OH VA CAMARAD, OH VA, OH VA, OH VA,  
OH VA CAMARAD, OH VA CAMARAD, OH VA, OH VA, OH VA

2. VENGAN A VER MI CHACRA, QUE ES HERMOSA (REPEAT)  
EL GATO HACE ASI (the cat goes like this) MEOW!
3. VENGAN A VER MI CHACRA, QUE ES HERMOSA (REPEAT)  
EL PERRITO HACE ASI (the little dog goes like this) RUFF! RUFF!
4. VENGAN A VER MI CHACRA, QUE ES HERMOSA (REPEAT)  
LA VAQUITA HACE ASI ( the cow goes like this) MOO!

### **NAVAJO NIGHT CHANT (#4)**

May it be beautiful before me (arms outstretched)  
May it be beautiful behind me (arms over back)  
May it be beautiful below me (arms out, down low in front)  
May it be beautiful all around me (arms sweep around, over head and down)

### **HEE NAH NEE NAH (SOM)**

From Maidu tribe of Native Americans, who lived in the Sierra Nevada Mountains in California around the time of the Gold Rush. Slap thighs in rhythm, or beat a drum as one child holds a small “treasure” (could be a coin, or a shell), passing it back and forth from hand to hand. Younger children can hold the treasure behind their backs to make it easier to fool the other children.

Hee nah, nee nah, hee nah nee nah,  
Hee nah, nee nah, hee nah nee nah, ( children try to guess which hand the treasure is in)

Repeat as long as interest remains

# HOMEMADE INSTRUMENTS

## PLASTIC EGG SHAKERS

### MATERIALS :

- plastic Easter eggs
- filling - rice and barley are recommended, but you can also fill different eggs with different things and have children compare sounds
- hot glue gun, and hot glue

### INSTRUCTIONS:

Put a couple of tablespoons (you can experiment with sound before sealing) of rice or other filling in bottom half of egg. Run a bead of hot glue along the inside edge of the TOP of the egg. Carefully place top on and check to be sure it's on straight and tight.

comments: The larger size egg is fun, but if you use eggs the size of real eggs, you can store them in egg cartons painted to match the egg colors, and children can sort them when putting them away.

## QUILTING HOOP DRUM

### MATERIALS :

- 14" quilting hoop (available at craft and fabric stores)
- white glue
- heat-shrink dacron fabric (sold at airplane supply stores- you can order from Aircraft Spruce & Specialty Co. ph. 1-800-824-1930. Specify item # 09-00500. One yard of fabric will be enough for 8 14" drums, and is under \$4 a yard).
- clear polyurethane and brush to apply it
- acrylic paint or permanent markers for making design on drum
- wooden dowel
- wooden ball with pre-drilled hole the same size diameter as the dowel

### INSTRUCTIONS:

Cut a 17" square of dacron. Spread a bead of glue on opposing faces of the two hoops. Place the inner hoop on a flat surface and overlay the fabric square so that the sides overhang evenly. Loosen the nut on the outer hoop so you can spread it enough to fit it over the inner hoop. Tighten the wing nut as you adjust the fabric, working out any wrinkle and puckers. Let glue dry. Heat-shrink the fabric by running an iron at the nylon setting repeatedly over the fabric. (each drum will tighten a little differently and have a slightly different sound). Trim the excess fabric with an exacto knife. Paint a design on the drum, if desired, and finish by sealing all surfaces with a coating of clear polyurethane.

Make the drumstick by cutting a dowel in 8" piece. Glue small wooden ball on the end.

## SAND BLOCKS

### MATERIALS:

- pieces of wood (1X4 cut into 4" lengths)
  - felt rectangles cut to fit blocks of wood
  - medium grit sandpaper cut same size as felt pieces
  - white or other glue
  - Polyurethane and brush to seal wood
- \* optional- stickers to decorate wood blocks

### Easy Sand Blocks!

Purchase swimming "noodles" at the drug store, and cut into 3" lengths, then cut in crosswise for blocks. An electric knife makes it super fast and gives a clean cut! They are brightly colored, and don't make too much noise even when clapped together!

INSTRUCTIONS: Lightly sand wood blocks, and check to be sure there are no rough edges or splinters. Glue 1 or 2 pieces of felt to one side of each block. Glue sandpaper to felt. If you are decorating the blocks with stickers, place them now. Then coat tops and sides of all blocks with 2 coats of Polyurethane. Let dry. Glue one or two pieces of felt, and then a piece of sandpaper onto the blocks, and place weight on them while they dry.



## AFRICAN TAMBOURINE

### MATERIALS :

- jar to set balloon in while forming paper mache
- 12" balloon
- masking or other tape
- awl or ice pick for punching holes
- hot glue and glue gun
- newspaper torn into 1" strips
- white glue and water mixture (1 part glue to 3 parts water)
- acrylic paint
- 1 3/4" wide cloth or duct tape (vinyl or electrical tape won't stick well)
- yarn or string
- cowry shells, buttons, or beads ( shell necklace is less expensive than individual shells)

### INSTRUCTIONS :

Blow up balloon to about 2/3 full size (this is arbitrary). Set the balloon in jar, and lightly tape it to keep it from rolling around. Dip strips of newspaper in glue and water mixture, and pull off excess by running paper through fingers. Cover top half of balloon with several layers of newspaper, and allow to dry for 2 days. When paper mache is dry, remove balloon from jar, and pop it. Using scissors, cut an even edge around the bottom so you have a bowl shape. Fold cloth or duct tape over the cut edge of the bowl. Using an awl or ice pick, punch holes all around the bowl, just below the cloth tape, and a couple of inches apart. Thread yarn or string through the holes, and attach shells , beads, buttons , or even macaroni on the outside of the bowl, allowing them to hang loosely making a sound when the tambourine is moved back and forth.

To play the tambourine, hold it in both hands, with fingers up, and twist wrists back and forth. Once you have mastered this, you can gently toss it while twisting your wrists.

## JINGLE BRACELETS

### MATERIALS LIST:

- elastic ponytail holders or Chinese jump rope (one jump rope will make 7 jingle bracelets)
- elasticized gold thread
- scissors
- jingle bells (available by the handful at craft and fabric stores, or on cards at variety stores)

### INSTRUCTIONS:

If using Chinese jump rope, cut into seven inch lengths, and form form bracelets by tying ends in a knot. Using elasticized thread, tie 4 jingle bells on each bracelet, Space them equally around the bracelet.

## PAPER MACHE FRUIT SHAKERS

### MATERIALS LIST:

- vegetable spray or cooking oil
- pieces of fruit
- newspaper torn in to small pieces
- large tray to catch mess
- Paper Mache mixture (paste made of 3 parts water to 1 part white glue)
- acrylic paints and clear finish material (water-based Polyurethane is recommended)
- paint brushes
- disposable gloves (optional, but very nice to have!)

INSTRUCTIONS: Put a thin coating of vegetable spray or oil on piece of fruit. This will keep the fruit from sticking to the paper once dry. Dip pieces of newspaper in paper Mache mixture and remove excess by pulling paper between fingers. Completely cover fruit with several layers of newspaper. Allow to dry for a couple of days. Cut fruit in half with a serrated knife, and remove fruit and skin. Discard or compost. Put small amount of rice or other filler in paper fruit (a tablespoon or two is all you need), and use small amount of masking tape to hold halves together. Add several more layers of paper Mache and allow to dry. Lightly sand any rough edges and paint with appropriate fruit colors. Seal with Polyurethane.

## RHYTHM INSTRUMENTS– 5 Ways to Use Them

Here are some of the ways you can use rhythm instruments everyday. Make sure your instruments are in good condition, sound good, and are well organized. Store them along with any other props you might use for the following activities. Put groups of one kind of instrument in separate containers, so they are ready to go!

1. Use with listening games to build listening skills and teach about sound.
2. Use to accompany specific songs, in specific ways to teach music skills.
3. Use as a basis for making up stories.
4. Use as sound effects when reading a book or singing a song.
5. Use with movement.

### 1. LISTENING GAMES TO BUILD LISTENING SKILLS AND TEACH ABOUT SOUND.

- Put several instruments in a box. Take out one at a time, and talk about it (what it's made of, how it sounds, etc. ). Then put it back in the box. When you have shown all of the instruments, play one at a time, keeping it hidden, and ask the children its name, and to describe it.
- Have children close their eyes and listen to different instruments. How long can you hear a sound? Do some instruments have longer sound than others? This will require quiet and careful listening!
- Hold up pictures cut from magazines, that show different activities. Give children instruments, and ask them to respond to the pictures by playing loudly, softly, slow, or fast. Children love this, and you'll want to have at least ten pictures!
- Echo the sounds– play a rhythm pattern, and have children echo. Older children can take turns playing the initial rhythm.

### 2. ACCOMPANY SPECIFIC SONGS, IN SPECIFIC WAYS, TO BUILD MUSIC SKILLS

- Use fruit maracas for *Apples and Bananas* traditional song, can be found on Raffi Recording , and
- *Mango Fandango*, found on *Rhythm of the Rocks*, by MaryLee and Nancy
- Use bracelet jingle bells for Tingalayo, traditional song, can be found on Raffi recording and book
- African tambourines for KWANZAA, by Nancy Stewart, A Season for Singing, or Shell Song, by Nancy Stewart
- Juice can shakers for *Tocan Las Maracas*, on *Rhythm of the Rocks*, by Nancy Stewart-
- Old Macdonald's Band - assign individual instruments

### 3. USE AS A BASIS FOR MAKING UP STORIES (DIFFERENT INSTRUMENTS REPRESENT DIFFERENT CHARACTERS)

Instruments can represent characters in the story ( animals, foods, vehicles, etc.), and, or sounds in the story (rain, thunder, etc.). You can get things started by playing an instrument and asking children what animal it sounds like. Once you think of a few characters, you can build a story.

### 4. USE AS SOUND EFFECTS WHEN READING A BOOK OR SINGING A SONG.

- Use in songs or books that are accumulative ( *The Old Lady Who Swallowed a Fly*, *Fiddle-I-Fee*)
- Use in songs or books that have a repeated line, such as *Bones, Bones, Dinosaur Bones*, or *Trashy Town*.
- Act out familiar nursery rhymes, assigning a different instrument to each character (Hickory, Dickory, Dock)
- Can be used with any story that has recurring characters or actions.
- Younger children sometimes do better and enjoy holding a piece of paper with their character on it.

## 5. USE WITH MOVEMENT

March to the music- This simple activity is always popular with preschoolers, and shouldn't be overlooked. You can simply march around to recorded music, or relate the music to the book you are reading for storytime. For example, if you are reading a story about a train, play a train song. Many story themes can be easily reinforced with recorded music. Children also love to dance and freeze when the music stops.

### **Egg Shakers Songs**

To tune of Mary Had a Little Lamb:

If you have a egg, yellow egg, yellow egg, if you have a yellow egg, shake your egg with me (repeat with other colors)

To tune of London Bridges:

Shake your egg along with me, now put your egg on your head (repeat with other body parts)

Variation 1. Last line, Now do this! ( teacher can freeze and pose, children copy)

Variation 2. Shake your egg and follow me, follow me, follow me

Shake your and follow me, now put your egg on your head

Marching Band: Have children march with instruments, put on music, have children freeze when it stops.

### **Some songs to Use with sets of Instruments :**

Hot Crossed Buns

Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star

Jingle Bells

Tingalayo (SOM) (with jungle bells on wrists)

Add your own favorites here, so you don't forget them!

## www.Nancymusic.com

Below is a summary of the activities available to you on my website. That means they are free to you, 24 hours a day, to use as often as you want! You can print out as many activities, make as many CD's of the songs, and use these materials in your classroom or story time as much as you want! If you don't have access to a computer, just go to your local library. What a deal!

### SONGS OF THE MONTH

- Listen to a new song every month, and save it to a file of CD if you like. There are simple instructions for those of you who have CD writers in your computer, but don't quite know how to use them to get songs off the internet.
- Print out the sheet music, lyrics, and guitar chords.
- Print out the activity sheets, patterns, and prop patterns to go with the songs.
- Visit the related links (example: on one song, *Los Animales*, there is a link to a translation site where you can get instant translations to words or phrases you type in).
- Access all of the past songs of the month! This will give you over 100 songs as of December, 2010.

### RHYTHM INSTRUMENTS

- Instructions for making kid and teacher-tested homemade instruments that actually sound good!
- List of songs and activities for use with specific rhythm instruments
- Ways to incorporate rhythm instruments into your story times.
- General tips on making and using rhythm instruments.
- Instructions for having your own Music Box Makeover Party ( a fun teacher event).

### ACTIVITIES

- Companion activities for Nancy's other recordings
- Printable activity sheets related to concert topics
- General information for teachers and parents

### LINKS

Links to other helpful websites with lots of free ideas for your children's art and music. I have specifically tried to find websites that offer free printable materials and activities.

### INTERNET HELP

My site is loaded with general website know-how which will help you when navigating other websites. Step-by-step instructions will show you how to:

- Save the songs to your computer
- Write the songs to CD's if you have a CD writer in your computer
- Print out the pages so they look good with your printer

www.Nancymusic.com Songs of the Month January 2001 – November 2010 (some songs in more than one category)

Fingerplays & Misc.	Fingerplays & misc. (cont.)	Instruments	Languages & Letters	Activities	Seasonal & Holidays	Movement
5 Coyotes Flower Song Scallop Song 2 Big Crows Valentine Song Nocturnal Animals Little Cat Gung Hay Far Choy Trees Wheels Thread A Needle Five Pretty Gourds Humpty Dumpty Make a Bit of Butter When Ducks get Up in the Morning Five Little Dragons Tingalayo The Gift In Our Solar System Felt Board Train Song Thinking Cap There Was a Tree Rocks in the Crust of the Earth Circle Round Easy Habits Five Little Snowmen One Little Dragonfly Little Bitty Bug Easy habits One, Two Bounce a Bouncy Ball	Bluebird Through My window A hunting We Will Go Fishies To Market, To Market I Like Sandwiches Keeping the Germs Away Plant a Little Seed One Little Sea Star	Listen to the Drum Egg Shaking Song Make A Little Rhythm Shake Your Apples The Birthday Train Shells	Little Cat (ASL) Los Animales Gung Hay Fat Choy Bonjour, mon ami I Love You, Mom (ASL) Apple and An Ant Just Like Me (ASL) Colors of Winter (ASL) Father's Day Song (ASL) Es Un Dia Hello My Friends (ASL)	Let's Go to the Market Fuzzy Slippers Nocturnal Animals Backyard Detective Rhyme Time Row Your Boat and Things That Go Apple Tasting Fun Bears Shapes Humpty Dumpty Ladybug Spots Can You Sit in a Circle Clapping in the Castle Cows are in the Castle Five Little Dragons Who Would Like to Buy My Flowers? Hey There/What are you Thankful For Take A Walk Around The Room Singin' the Color Blues Easy Habits Who Has a Penny? Lots of Cars Four Little Paper Dolls Henry the Dog Clean Up Song We're Finished Now!	Who Will Be My Valentine? Valentine Song Hee Na Nee Na Our Thanksgiving Day Ramadan Winter Dance Gung Hay fat Choy Nocturnal Animals Limbo Under the Spider's Web Two Big Crows (Big Black Crow) Celebrate Eid (Muslim celebration at end of Ramadan) Colors of Winter Leprechauns and Shamrocks Pumpkin Farm Summer and Winter What are You Thankful For? Star Shine Bright A Season for Singing Mother's Day Song Father's Day Song Pass the Potato January's Here See the Baby Jesus Celebrating Holi (Hindu spring celebration) Birthday Train I Have a Little Box I Am A Camel Five Little Snowmen Sweetie Pie Owl Song	Can You Nod Your Head? Sea Life Dance Winter Dance I'm hopping like a Bunny Limbo under the Spider's Web Listen to the Drum Sticky Bubblegum Can You Sit in a Circle Dancing Rainbow Colors Clapping in the Castle Dinosaurs in Cars Fly Little Bird Elbow Room Take a Walk Around the Room January's Here Dancing Pajamas When I Hear the Music Ants in Your Pants Dinosaur Dance Floor Jump Beanbag Song The Old Gray Cats

## RESOURCES AND INFORMATION

### WEBSITES

- [www.Nancymusic.com](http://www.Nancymusic.com) - Free songs and activities to download, instructions for homemade instruments, links to many other useful websites.
- [www.Preschooexpress.com](http://www.Preschooexpress.com)– The legendary Jean Warren has created a wonderful website bursting with preschool activities including songs, arts and crafts, and ideas. You'll want to go back again and again!
- [www.Enchantedlearning.com](http://www.Enchantedlearning.com) - THE best website for anything educational, from maps and drawings, to printable activities and just plain information. I encourage you to subscribe, even though you don't have to in order to access the materials.. We want to keep these folks in business!!
- [www.Nellieedge.com](http://www.Nellieedge.com): Nellie Edge has free little books to download, and links to articles about music and early literacy.

### CLIPART FOR PROPS

*The Big Box of Art*, Hemera Technologies

### CARING FOR YOUR VOICE

Here are some tips for taking care of a tired, overworked, and disappearing voice!

- Keep your throat lubricated as much as possible. Drink lots of water, and get in the habit of always having a water bottle nearby.
- Breathe steam!- use a humidifier or vaporizer, especially during the winter months, and especially at night. This can work miracles for both treatment and prevention of problems.
- If you do feel like you're losing your voice, try wrapping a hot towel, or heating pad around your neck, while sipping ice water. Do this for 15-30 minutes several times a day if you can. Even once will help enormously. The idea is that the heat relaxes the muscles, while the cold reduces the inflammation on your vocal folds.
- Drink hot lemon juice or tea with honey. (Throat Coat tea is available at most drug stores, and is a nice treat!)
- Avoid clearing your throat, and whispering .Both are very hard on vocal folds.
- Gargle with warm salt water.
- If you suffer from allergies, stay on top of them. Once they grab hold, you are wide open for catching a cold, and losing your voice.

### “WHAT IF I'M NOT COMFORTABLE SINGING?”

Some adults are not comfortable singing, but there are many other ways you can bring music and rhythm into the classroom.

- Use recordings with instructions, that the children can sing along with, or follow activities. There are many such recordings available.
- A lot of music training is actually listening skills. You can put items in a box, make a sound, and let children guess what the sound is.
- Go on a “sound” hunt. Take a walk and stop along the way. Have children close their eyes and listen to the sounds around. Some sounds will make a rhythm, such as hammers, bird songs, machinery. Have children try to imitate those rhythms.
- Spend some time by yourself listening to a variety of recordings by different artists. Try to find songs sung simply, without harmonies or a lot of instrumentation. It may be that there are some singers you can more easily sing with than others. Explore your own voice, and conduct your own listening exercises.
- Chant, rather than sing song lyrics. Keep a steady rhythm by slapping your thighs, and use different voices (whisper, loud, soft, sad, mad, silly).
- Have a parent come into the classroom and sing with the children, or combine with another class for a special music time, if there is another teacher who is more comfortable singing.

## BOOKS THAT SING

Often known as “books that sing,” these books can work magic on a restless group of children. Most are based on traditional songs, and many even have the melody in the back. The illustrations serve to expand the original lyrics, and present a wide variety of artistic styles. The combination of singing, reading, and looking at the pictures can capture even the squirmiest group of children

There are hundreds of these books in the library. Look for these characteristics for the greatest success with these books, especially when using in storytimes.

- Simple and familiar melodies
- Page breaks that follow the rhythm of the lyrics ( you shouldn't have to turn the page in the middle of singing a line)
- Large colorful illustrations
- Strong rhythm (children can keep a beat by patting their thighs as they sing, involving the whole body)

Here are several of my favorites, and the reasons why

*Old Macdonald*, by Jessica Souhami (flap book)- simple and colorful illustrations, lots of letters to identify and incorporates vehicles!

*If You're Happy and You Know It*, by David A. Carter (out of print pop-up book). Children love the animals

Go Tell Aunt Rhody, illustrated by Alikei - Illustrations give a positive twist to this old folk song, and there are great opportunities for children to use their narrative skills as they try to figure out the ending!

*What Shall We Do When We All Go Out?* , illustrated by Shari Halpern - strong rhythm and brightly colored illustrations depict activities children know and love. This book even works well with young children.

It's also fun to make up a melody to a repeated line in a book, and sing whenever it appears. Singing tends to invite participation more than just reading. Keep the melody simple.

Here are a couple of examples:

*Bones, Bones, Dinosaur Bones* , by Byron Barton. I sing “Bones, bones, we look for bones, we look for the bones of the dinosaurs”

*Trashy Town* , by Andrea Zimmerman and David Clemesha- I sing, “I dump it in, I smash it down, I love to clean up Trashy Town.”

## IDEAS FOR PATRONS TO USE WITH CHILDREN AT HOME

- Copy and distribute Early Literacy pages (3 and 5 ) in this booklet. These are also available on Nancy's website.
- Keep a list of songs from my website that you use in your story times. Encourage parents to download and use the songs at home, stressing the importance of repetition in early learning.
- Use books that are available to patrons to check out, and encourage them to read them at home as well.
- Encourage parents to build a “music kit” to use at home. Instructions for homemade instruments, songs, and printable activities can be downloaded from my website.

Sample of songs to include:

Apple and an Ant  
Felt Board Train  
Rhyme Time  
Fishies  
Five Little Dragons

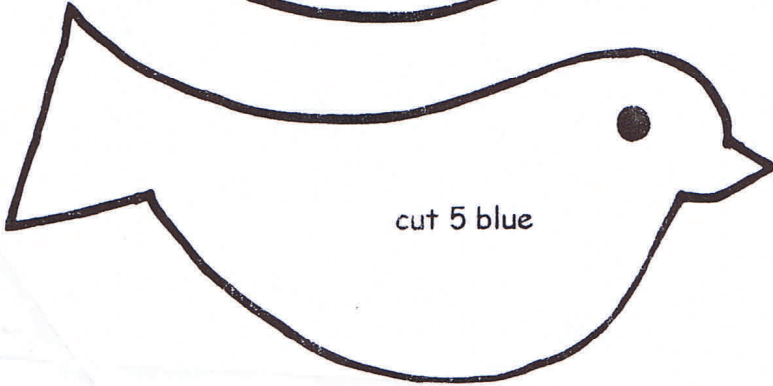
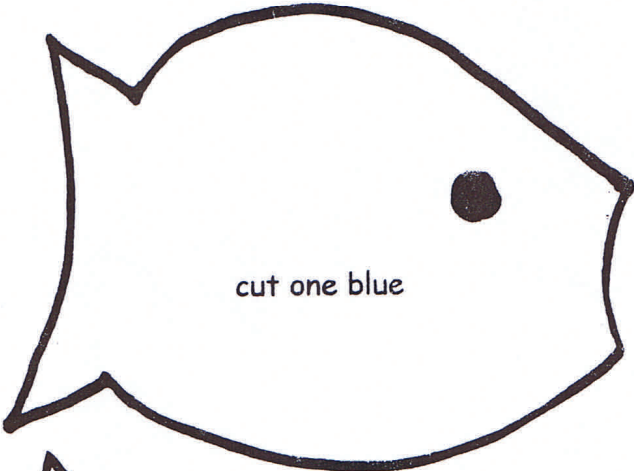
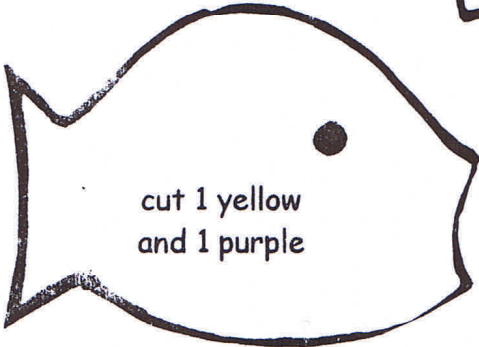
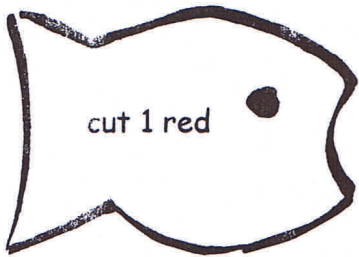
\*all of these songs have printable visuals, and activities to accompany songs.

\*you might want to make up a sample kit to show parents what's possible. Be sure to include a felt board, which can be a felt rectangle glued to a piece of cardboard, or a shoe or sturdy shirt box with the felt glued to the top. Felt pieces can be stored inside.

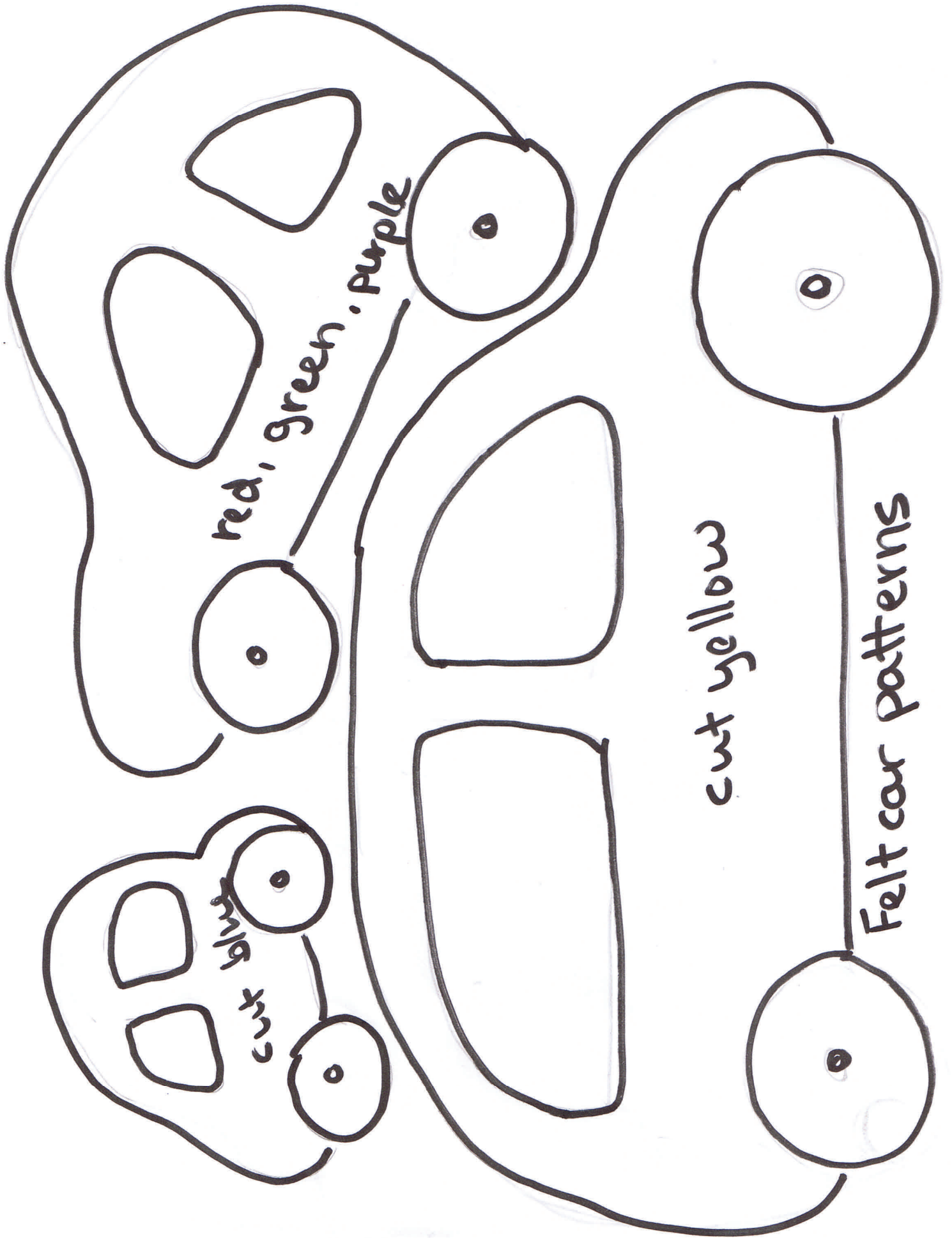




Patterns for Felt Shapes







red, green, purple

cut blue

cut yellow

Felt car patterns



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