

BABY BASICS

From Beethoven To Bedtime: Music Made Just For Little Ears

(NAPSA)—Do babies enjoy music? Well, if smiles and cooing are any indication, you'll find that babies not only enjoy listening to music, they love it as much as Mom and Dad. Just as adults get sentimental at the sound of a nostalgic tune, or feel a burst of energy when their favorite song comes on the radio, babies can also develop an appreciation for music which makes introducing your baby to music the perfect thing to do.

Whether relaxing to baby-friendly tunes on a CD, or clapping along to the rhythms of a classical concerto, it's easy to incorporate daily doses of music into your baby's routine.

Learning Time

A lot can be learned from the rhythms and sounds that make up a song. Introduce your baby to various instruments by listening for them in different pieces of music. Music-based videos give you and your baby a chance to explore the world of music together. Coupled with colorful, real-life imagery, The Baby Einstein Company VHS/DVD "Baby Beethoven Symphony of Fun" (www.babyeinstein.com) lays the groundwork for musical discovery with a gentle, playful mix of baby-friendly instruments and stimulating visuals. Take learning a step further by giving your baby his own "instrument" to play. They don't have to be "real" instruments, just open a kitchen drawer and watch your baby tap to the beat with



Classical music-based videos can be great tools for introducing your baby to the world of music.

something as simple as "spoon cymbals."

Playtime

One simple way to introduce your baby to the world of music is through playtime. For starters, try singing to your baby. Your child won't mind if you're a little off tune—a baby will delight in your playfulness, and may even chime in. Incorporate musical sounds into daily activities by playing a favorite CD, humming your favorite tune while playing with toys, or whistling while putting your baby's toys away. Melodies that integrate antics and noisemakers like bells, whistles or beans in a jar, not only introduce your baby to a variety of musical sounds, but also make playtime more creative and interactive.

Drive Time

Traveling can be tiresome, so what better time to engage your baby in music than in the car. On long road trips, sing-alongs can

be fun for the whole family. The next time your baby gets a case of the travel tantrums, lighten your baby's mood with a soothing song or quiet tune. If you're not keen on your ability to carry a tune, try baby-friendly renditions of the classics, such as Mozart, Bach or Beethoven. With your preference as a guide, you'll find there is a wide range of melodies that will suit both you and your baby. Trying new songs will help you gauge what music interests your baby the most—making drive time more tolerable and fun for all.

Bedtime

Music before bed can be used greatly to your advantage. Choose special tunes at the end of each day that your baby will learn to associate with sleep. Experts recommend that these songs be slow in tempo, incorporating gentle, baby-friendly sounds and instruments. While lullabies are a bedtime favorite, try incorporating classical music into your baby's nighttime routine. One CD to try is "Baby Einstein Baby Mozart." Touting soft, re-orchestrated classics for babies' ears, the CD is great for winding down to a sound slumber.

Whether through Beethoven, a lullaby or sing-along, the opportunity to expose your baby to the world of music is just a beat away. You don't have to create a mini Mozart, just cultivate your child's appreciation for music and use it as a great way to enjoy time together.