



Vocal Development in Young Children

Presented by

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Excerpted from

First Steps in Music for Preschool and Beyond

by John Feierabend

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Singing is the instinctive language of the child.

—Zoltán Kodaly
Singing Games (1937)

Singing is the foundation of children's musical development. Singing in tune is a learned behavior that almost all children can accomplish. Just as children develop language by hearing and imitating speech patterns, they learn to match pitch and sing in tune by hearing and imitating musical patterns.

—OAKE Home/Membership Page



Tuneful singing is the marriage of tuneful thinking and physiological awareness. The child must be able to first “catch the tune” and then reproduce it in head voice. Young children must be given opportunities to experience and develop both of these important skills.

Once they are able to do this, they will be on their way to a lifetime of tuneful singing. The window of opportunity for the development of this lifelong gift is in early childhood, kindergarten, and first grade. We must start at the beginning with vocal development. We must help children explore the sensation of singing and then give them guided opportunities to reproduce the sound. However, to engage this age group, we must use techniques and strategies that are developmentally appropriate while remaining wonderfully childlike, playful, imaginary, and fun.

Points to Remember

1. Sing *for* the class, not *with* the class.
2. Most learning takes place when a child sings by him or herself.
3. A child learns best from another child model.
4. Develop vocal proficiency before instrumental application.
5. Move from group to independence in all activities.
6. Balance song and chant.
7. Balance beat groups in twos and beat groups in threes.
8. Provide experiences in major, minor, and modal tonalities.

First Steps in Music

AN 8-PART MUSIC READINESS CURRICULUM FOR 3-8 YEAR OLD CHILDREN

SINGING/TONAL ACTIVITY CATEGORIES

- 1. Pitch Exploration/Vocal Warm-up** (Discovering the sensation of the singing voice)
 - Vocal glissandos
- 2. Fragment Singing** (Developing independent singing)
 - Echo Songs
 - Call and Response Songs
- 3. Simple Songs** (Developing independent singing and musical syntax)
 - 3-4 Note Songs
 - Expanded Range
- 4. Arioso** (Developing original musical thinking)
 - Spontaneous created songs by the child
- 5. SongTales** (Developing expressive sensitivity through listening)
 - Ballads for children

MOVEMENT ACTIVITIES CATEGORIES

- 6. Movement Exploration/Warm-up**
(Developing expressive sensitivity through movement)
 - Movement with and without classical music accompaniment
- 7. Movement for Form and Expression**
(Singing/speaking and moving with formal structure and expression)
 - Non-Locomotor (finger plays, action songs, circle games, with recorded music)
 - Locomotor (circle games, with recorded music)
- 8. Beat Motion Activities**
(Developing competencies in maintaining the beat in groups of 2 and 3)
 - Child-Initiated Beat Motions
 - Non-Locomotor
 - Locomotor
 - Teacher-Initiated Beat Motions
 - Non-Locomotor
 - Locomotor



1. Pitch Exploration / Vocal Warm-up

(discovering the sensation of the singing voice)

- **Pipe cleaners**
- **Whistles**
Slide • Siren
- **Puppets**
Ghost • Cow • Whale
- **Drawings**
Pathway Cards • Yarn Shapes • Rollercoaster
- **Poems**
Two Little Puppets • Grandma's Glasses
- **Stories**
Pitch Exploration Stories
- **Books**
Georgie the Ghost, Robert Bright
Oops, David Shannon
Gobble Grawl Grunt, Peter Spier
Mama Don't Allow, Thacher Hurd
- **Songs**
Little Red Caboose • Alley Galoo Galoo
- **Games**
Bean Bag • Toss Across • Popcorn Zipper
Elevator • Magic Crayon

Fluidity ~ Expression ~ Flexibility ~ Inflection

Pitch Exploration / Vocal Warm-up

.....

Cowboy Joe

Cowboy Joe was a bold young man,
He dreamed of rustling cattle, most of
all.

He wanted to see if the cows would
come

When he let out his cowboy call.
yee-haa

He practiced all day from morning to
night,

And he practiced both summer and
fall.

He knew some day he'd have his
chance

To try out his cowboy call.
yee-haa

Well, finally one day, it was proudly
announced

That his ma and pa and all,
Were takin' a trip to his grandfather's
ranch

Where he could try out his cowboy
call.

yee-haa

He jumped for joy and grabbed his
gear

And he ran back down the hall.

He hopped into the car and was ready
to go

To let out his cowboy call.
yee-haa

When he arrived at the ranch he was
happy to see

That the cows were not in the stall.

He dashed to the field where they
quietly grazed

And he let out his cowboy call.
yee-haa

Well they all did come right up to the
fence

And he sure felt ten feet tall.

"I'm Cowboy Joe. See how the cows
come

When I let out my cowboy call."
yee-haa

Now, that was really some day for
Cowboy Joe

And he sure did have a ball.

Now he's wantin' to try bigger and
better things;

So he's practicing his elephant call.
(?)

— John M. Feierabend





2. Fragment Singing

(developing independent singing)

Echo Songs

Bill Grogan's Goat
Charlie Over the Ocean
Down by the Bay
I Met a Bear
Johnny on the Woodpile
Kye Kye Kule
My Aunt Came Back
No More Pie
Oh, In the Woods
Purple Light
Wise Old Owl

Call-and-Response Songs

Did You Feed My Cow?
Hill and Gully Rider
John Kanaka
John the Rabbit
Little Girl, Little Boy
Miss Julie Ann Johnson
Sea Lion
The Telephone

Fragment Singing

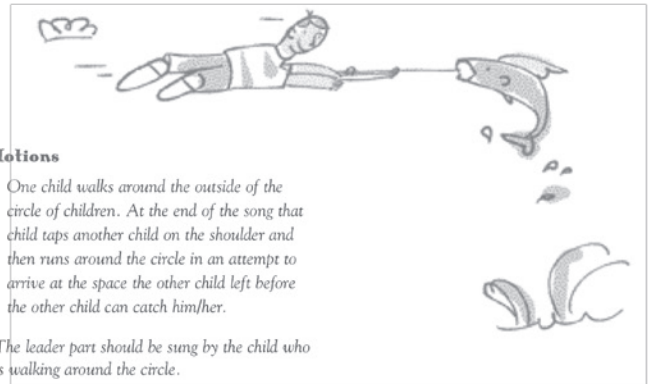
Echo Song

Charlie Over the Ocean

Leader: Group:



Char-lie o-ver the o-cean, Char-lie o-ver the o-cean,
 Char-lie o-ver the sea, Char-lie o-ver the sea.
 Char-lie caught a big fish, Char-lie caught a big fish,
 Can't catch me, Can't catch me.



Motions

One child walks around the outside of the circle of children. At the end of the song that child taps another child on the shoulder and then runs around the circle in an attempt to arrive at the space the other child left before the other child can catch him/her.

The leader part should be sung by the child who is walking around the circle.

Did You Feed My Cow?

Leader: Group:



Well, did you feed my cow? Yes, ma'am. Yes, ma'am.
 Well, did you feed my cow? Yes, ma'am. Yes, ma'am.
 What did you feed her? Corn and hay. Corn and hay.
 What did you feed her? Corn and hay. Corn and hay.

Additional Verses & Motions

Verse 2

Did you milk her good? Yes, ma'am.
 Did you milk her like you should?
 Yes, ma'am.
 How did you milk her? Squish, squish, squish.
 (Imitate milking motions with hands.)
 How did you milk her? Squish, squish, squish.

Verse 3

Did my cow get sick? Yes ma'am.
 Was she covered with tick? Yes ma'am.
 How did she die? Mm Mm Mm.
 (Shake head back and forth.)
 How did she die? Mm Mm Mm.

Verse 4

Did the buzzards come? Yes ma'am.
 Did the buzzards come? Yes ma'am.
 How did they come? Flap, flap, flap.
 (With hands under arms, imitate wings flapping.)
 How did they come? Flap, flap, flap.

Call-and-Response Song



3. Simple Songs

(developing independent singing and musical syntax)

Stationary Beat

Johnny Had One Friend

John - ny had one friend, one friend, one friend.

John - ny had one friend, John - ny had two.

3-4 Note Songs

- Frog in the Meadow
- Hot Cross Buns
- Johnny Had One Friend
- Pitter Patter



Motions

Children tap their legs with one finger until the end when they hold up two fingers.

Verse 2

Johnny had two friends, two friends, two friends.

Johnny had two friends, Johnny had three.

Tap with two fingers, then hold up three.

Continue until children are tapping with all fingers.

Stationary Circles

Muffin Man

Oh, do you know the muf - fin man, the muf - fin man, the muf - fin man? Oh, do you know the muf - fin man who lives on Dru - ry Lane?



Verse 1 (motions)

The children stand in a circle while one child walks or skips around the outside of the circle. At the end of the first verse, that child chooses another child.

Verse 2

Oh, yes I know the muffin man, The muffin man, the muffin man. Oh, yes I know the muffin man, Who lives on Drury Lane.

The two children skip around the outside of the circle. At the end of the second verse, the original child returns to the circle. The game repeats with the new child going around the circle.

Expanded Range

- Bow Belinda
- I Can Hammer
- Lazy Bones
- Muffin Man
- Mulberry Bush



4. Arioso

(developing original musical thinking)

Strategies for Arioso

- **Create without words**
 - Conversations with neutral syllables
 - Kazoo
 - Humming
- **Create with familiar text**
 - Nursery rhymes
 - Known poems, stories
 - Jump rope rhymes
- **Create text and melody**
 - Conversations
 - Whole songs

Arioso Ideas

- **What I Had for Breakfast**
- **What I Did on Vacation**
- **Sing Me a Story**
- ***I See a Song*, Eric Carle**
- **Take It**
- **Pictures / Books**
 - Younger children: "Sing me what you see."
 - Older children: "Sing me the story."



Note:

An autoharp will help stabilize tonality.



5. SongTales

(developing expressive sensitivity through listening)

Ballads for Children

- All the Pretty Little Horses** (Linda Saport)
- Father Grumble** (adapted by John Feierabend)
- Frog and Mouse** (adapted by John Feierabend)
- Mommy, Buy Me a China Doll** (Harve and Margo Zemach)
- Over in the Meadow** (traditional)
- Risseldy Rosseldy** (traditional)
- Shady Grove** (traditional)
- Tailor and the Mouse** (adapted by John Feierabend)
- The Crabfish** (adapted by John Feierabend)
- The Derby Ram** (adapted by John Feierabend)
- The Fox Went Out on a Chilly Night** (Peter Spier)
- The Riddle Song** (traditional)
- There Was a Man** (adapted by John Feierabend)
- Who Killed Cock Robin?** (William Stobbs)



Experiences with pictures attached, even when they involve looking at picture books and learning new words, are not as valuable (as learning through the ears) because the child needs to learn sooner rather than later to go beyond just naming things that can be seen. Language that always comes with pictures attached will produce different brain organization than that which must be processed only through the ears.

Whatever the cause, studies have shown that early experience with careful, analytic listening can dramatically improve auditory processing, listening comprehension and, in turn, reading ability—even in children with an inherited weakness.

Unless the adult community decides to help us wrap these growing brains in the mental garments of language, reflection, and thought, I fear we will continue to see increasing numbers of children categorized as “educationally sick.”

—Jane Healy
Endangered Minds (1990)

SongTales

Opus!

The Tailor and the Mouse



There was a tai-lor had a mouse, Hi did-dle um-kum



fee-dle. They lived to-geth-er in a house, Hi did-dle um-kum



fee - dle. Hi did - dle um - kum, ta - rum, tan - tum,



Through the house of Ram - sey, Hi did-dle um - kum



o - ver the lea, Hi did - dle um - kum fee - dle.

Verse 2

The tailor thought the mouse was ill,
Hi diddle umkum feedle.
Because he took an awful chill,
Hi diddle umkum feedle.
(Chorus)

Verse 3

The tailor thought the mouse would
die....
And so he baked him in a pie....
(Chorus)

Verse 4

He cut the pie, the mouse ran out....
The mouse was in a terrible pout....
(Chorus)

Verse 5

The tailor gave him catnip tea....
Until a healthy mouse was he....
(Chorus)



Ask Me

(about my echo song)

Leader

Charlie over the ocean,
Charlie over the sea,
Charlie caught a **big fish**,
Can't catch me.

Echo

*Charlie over the ocean,
Charlie over the sea,
Charlie caught a **big fish**,
Can't catch me.*

Child A skips around the outside of the circle and sings the Leader part. Class echoes each line. On "me," Child A gently taps the person closest to them (Child B) who then being skipping around the circle trying to catch up to Child A. Child A keeps skipping until he/she arrives at the empty spot left by Child B. Child B becomes the new leader.

Verbal Linguistic, Naturalist, Visual Spatial Connection

Ask the children to name as many animals as they can that live in the ocean or the sea; then substitute that animal instead of big fish (*Charlie caught a hermit crab... or Charlie caught a jelly fish...*). Have the children draw those creatures. They came up with an ocean full of sea creatures.



Ask Me

(about my counting song)

Johnny had **one** friend,
One friend, **one** friend,
Johnny had **one** friend,
Johnny had **two**.

*make a flat bed with one hand,
tap on it with one finger of the other hand*

Johnny had **two** friends...**three**.

hold up two fingers at end of verse

Johnny had **three** friends...**four**.

tap two fingers; hold up three

Johnny had **four** friends...**five**.

tap three fingers; hold up four

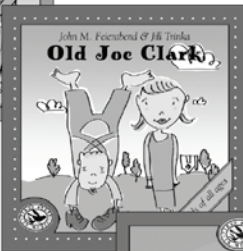
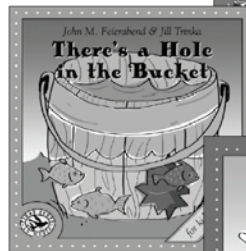
tap four fingers; hold up five

now switch hands

Available Resources

Books for Preschool and Early Elementary

- G-5880 First Steps in Music for Preschool and Beyond
- G-5276 The Book of Pitch Exploration
- G-5277 The Book of Echo Songs
- G-5278 The Book of Call and Response
- G-5280 The Book of Children's SongTales
- G-5876 The Book of Movement Exploration
- G-5877 The Book of Finger Plays and Action Songs
- G-5878 The Book of Beginning Circle Games
- G-5879 The Book of Songs and Rhymes with Beat Motions



Recordings for Kids of All Ages

by John M. Feierabend and Jill Trinka

- CD-645 There's A Hole in the Bucket
- CD-646 Had a Little Rooster
- CD-647 Old Joe Clark
- CD-493 First Steps in Classical Music Keeping the Beat

- G-7001A Complete Curriculum Package Set of all books and recordings above

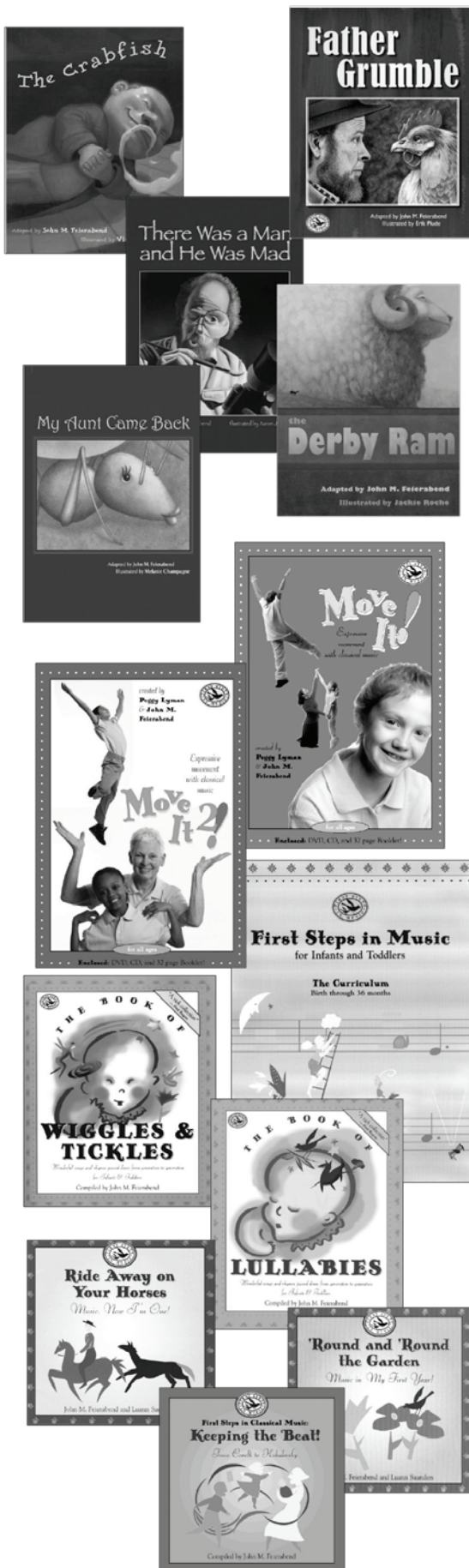
Save over \$40 with this offer!

- G-7001 Set of all four recordings above plus *First Steps in Music for Preschool and Beyond*

Companion Materials

- G-6400 Vocal Development Kit (Puppets, toys, and instruments with manual)
- G-6509 Pitch Exploration Stories (12 large picture cards)
- G-6510 Pitch Exploration Pathways (12 large picture cards)
- G-6511 Oh, In the Woods (12 large picture cards)





Beautiful Songtale Books

- G-6535 The Crabfish
- G-7178 My Aunt Came Back
- G-7179 There Was a Man
- G-7416 Father Grumble
- G-7690 The Derby Ram

Move It!

DVD-549 DVD, CD, and booklet

Move It! 2

DVD-756 DVD, CD, and booklet

Books for Infants and Toddlers

- G-4974 First Steps in Music for Infants and Toddlers
- G-4975 The Book of Bounces
- G-4976 The Book of Wiggles and Ticks
- G-4977 The Book of Tapping and Clapping
- G-4978 The Book of Simple Songs and Circles
- G-4979 The Book of Lullabies
- G-5145 Set of 5 books above

Recordings for Infants and Toddlers

- CD-437 'Round and 'Round the Garden: Music in My First Year!
- CD-438 Ride Away on Your Horses: Music, Now I'm One!
- CD-439 Frog in the Meadow: Music, Now I'm Two!
- CD-493 First Steps in Classical Music: Keeping the Beat
- G-5483 Set of all four recordings above plus *First Steps in Music for Infants and Toddlers*
- VHS-499 *Music and Early Childhood* (30-minute documentary produced by Connecticut Public Television)

Conversational Solfege

Level 1:

- G-5380 Teacher's Manual
- G-5380FL Flashcards
- G-5380S Student Book
- CD-526 Classical Selections CD

Level 2:

- G-5381 Teacher's Manual
- G-5381FL Flashcards
- G-5381S Student Book
- CD-527 Classical Selections CD

Level 3:

- G-5382 Teacher's Manual
- G-5382S Student Book

- G-5547 The Book of Tunes for Beginning Sight-Readers

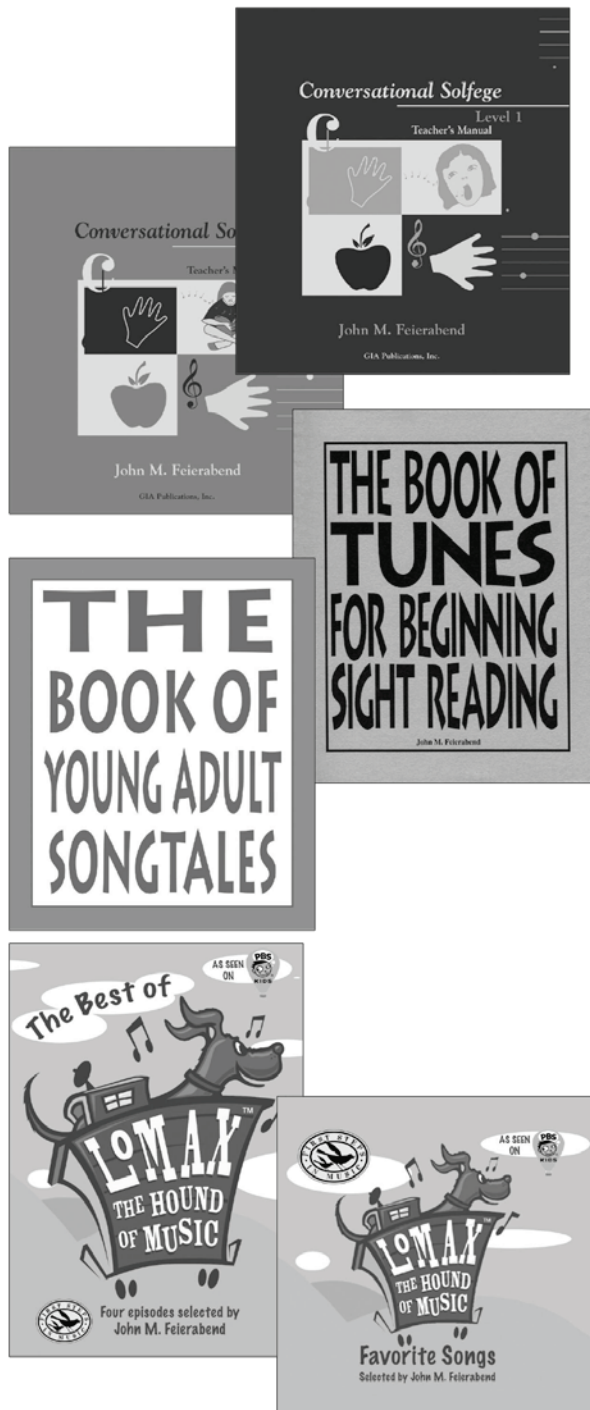
Books for Older Children

- G-5279 The Book of Young Adult SongTales
- G-5281 The Book of Canons

Lomax the Hound of Music DVD and CD

- DVD-829 The Best of Lomax the Hound of Music (2 hours)

- CD-830 Lomax the Hound of Music: Favorite Songs (25 songs)



First Steps in Music Series by John M. Feierabend

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John Feierabend

Dr. John Feierabend is considered one of the leading authorities on music and movement development in early childhood. He is a Professor of Music and Director of the Music Education Division at The Hartt School of the University of Hartford and is a past President of the Organization of American Kodály Educators. Dr. Feierabend makes frequent presentations both in the United States and abroad and is the author of over sixty books, articles, CDs, DVDs and videotapes.

A music educator for over thirty years, he continues to be committed to collecting, preserving and teaching the diverse folk music of our country and using that folk music as a bridge to help children understand and enjoy classical music. His books are a result of his belief that when many generations share common experiences such as traditional folk songs and rhymes, it helps them develop a valuable but dwindling commodity—a sense of community. When adults share child like memories with children they not only connect children with their ancestors, they enrich their children's childhood and enable their children to some day tap into their own delicious childhood memories in order to share that same repertoire with their children.

Dr. Feierabend's research has resulted in two music curricula: *First Steps in Music*, a music and movement program for infants through early elementary-aged children, and *Conversational Solfege*, a music literacy method for use in general music classes. He has been honored by the National Association for Music Education (MENC) as a Lowell Mason Vellow, received the Outstanding Educator Award from the Organization of American Kodály Educators (OAKE), and was the first American recipient of the international LEGO Prize, an award given annually to someone who has "helped to make the world a better place for children to live and grow."

Lillie Feierabend

Lillie Feierabend is known for her work with young children and instilling a love of music within them. She has been a general music teacher in Connecticut for the past twenty years and a director for the Connecticut Children's Chorus for the past twelve years. She received the 1998 Teacher of the Year Award from her district for her innovative and inclusive music programs. In 2008, she again received her district's Teacher of the Year Award and the Outstanding Elementary Music Educators Award from the Connecticut Music Educators Association. She is a frequent clinician at local, state, and national conferences, speaking on many aspects of early childhood music.



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