

Juneau Parent Bulletin

March, 2025

From Twinkle, Twinkle to ABC: The Magic of Music in Early Literacy

Music plays an important role in supporting early literacy development. Research shows that integrating music into early childhood education can enhance phonological awareness, vocabulary acquisition, and motor skills which are foundational to reading and writing. Let's take a closer look at how music fosters early literacy skills.



Music Promotes Phonological Awareness

Phonological awareness is the ability to recognize and manipulate sounds in spoken language. This skill is crucial for developing reading skills because it helps children understand that words are made of different sounds. Songs, with their inherent patterns, rhymes, and rhythms, provide a natural way for children to practice these skills. A 2020 study by Brady emphasized that phonological awareness begins as young as preschool and that songs with rhyming words and repetitive patterns help children break down words into parts, a critical first step toward phonemic awareness (Brady, 2020). The interactive nature of music makes learning enjoyable and encourages children to engage with language through activities like clapping to the beat of a song or predicting rhyming words.

Music Supports Vocabulary Development

According to a 2023 study, musical activities can increase children's vocabulary because songs introduce them to a wide variety of new words in a fun and engaging way. This can reinforce their understanding and retention of language.

Music Can Strengthen Motor Skills

Music can also strengthen motor skills, which are linked to literacy development. Tapping out rhythms or clapping to syllables helps children develop coordination, which is essential for writing. A study in 2023 emphasized that children who participated in rhythm-based activities showed improvements in both motor skills and literacy outcomes (Selinus University, 2023). Rhythmic experiences have also been linked to better reading comprehension because they encourage children to focus on the timing and the flow of language.

Music is a Multisensory Learning Tool

Using music in early literacy instruction engages multiple senses, making it easier for children to internalize and process information. Songs often combine auditory, visual, and kinesthetic learning styles, which helps engage both hemispheres of the brain and supports cognitive development.

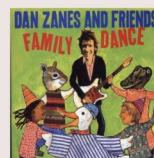
Music is a valuable tool for supporting early literacy development in children. It helps build essential phonological awareness and motor skills needed for reading by engaging children in rhythmic, rhyming, and repetitive activities. Music also builds vocabulary and creates a multisensory learning environment that is both effective and enjoyable. Caregivers can leverage music by incorporating simple activities like singing nursery rhymes, using songs to teach syllable segmentation, or clapping to the beat of familiar tunes.

Written by Lynne Hall, Research Associate for Indiana University. To view the full article, please visit Indiana University's [Literacy from the Start](#).

Musicians Your Little Ones Will Love!



The Laurie Berkner Band is a beloved children's musician known for her catchy, upbeat songs that inspire movement and joy. With hits like "We Are the Dinosaurs" and "The Goldfish", she has become a favorite among families, blending playful lyrics with engaging melodies. Berkner's work encourages creativity, imagination, and fun for young listeners.



Dan Zanes and Friends create lively, family-friendly music blending folk, rock, and global influences. Known for their interactive and inclusive performances, their songs celebrate community, joy, and togetherness, making them a favorite among children and parents alike!



Raffi is a beloved children's musician known for his gentle voice and catchy, educational songs. With classics like "Baby Beluga", "Down by the Bay", and "Bananaphone", he has entertained and inspired generations of kids. His music promotes kindness, environmental awareness, and joy, making him a favorite among families worldwide.



Lisa Loeb is a Grammy-winning singer-songwriter known for her warm, engaging music for both children and adults. With catchy melodies and thoughtful lyrics, her children's albums, like Catch the Moon and Feel What You Feel, blend storytelling with playful tunes. Beyond music, she's also an author and voice actor, bringing creativity to every project she touches.

Activities Kids Will Love

Pasta Necklaces

Get the kids involved in painting pasta for threading, for crafts, or as a sensory tub filler. It's a simple and fun process art activity for all ages!

Materials

- Pasta of any size and shape - we used tubes because we wanted it for threading
- Water color paints
- Paint brushes
- Water to wash your brush
- Art smocks/ Aprons and something to cover your work surface
- String



Instructions

- Paint the pasta. You need to be a little light on the paint so the pasta doesn't get too soggy, but even soggy pasta will harden again if you allow it dry in a warm spot.
- Spread the pasta out and leave it to dry in a warm spot overnight. If you are in a hurry you can put it on a tray in an oven that you have turned off to speed up the drying process.
- Tie a piece of pasta to the end of the string so nothing falls off while the child is threading and you are ready to make a magical painted pasta threading!

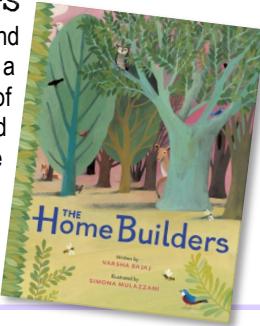
To view the full activity and additional crafts, visit www.picklebums.com.



Imagination Library Books to Love

The Home Builders

The Home Builders written by Varsha Bajaj and beautifully illustrated by Simona Mulazzani, is a vibrant picture book that celebrates a variety of woodland creatures as they build homes and prepare for their young. The book highlights the diverse ways animals create safe, nurturing spaces. A tribute to the wonders of nature, it beautifully conveys how Earth is a shared home to us all!



Community Events

Juneau Public Library - Weekly Story Time

Valley Library Storytime: Tuesdays at 11:00am

Douglas Library Storytime: Tuesdays at 3:30pm

Available to children of all ages. Contact m.j.grande@juneau.org or 907-586-0435 at the [Juneau Public Library](#) for more information.

CBJ Parks & Rec Treadwell Arena - Family Skate

Family skate is open to families of all ages and abilities every Sunday in March at 11:45am (plus additional days, check [here](#)). Skate rentals are available and included in admission fees.

CBJ Parks & Rec - Preschool Open Gym at Mount Jumbo

Visit Mt. Jumbo Gym in Douglas for Preschool Open Gym from Monday through Friday between 9:30am-11:30am. Warm and dry space with lots of toys for children ages 6 months to 6 years. \$5 per child/visit.

Marie Drake Planetarium - Shows

Attend the Orion and the Pleiades for Young Children Show and watch it on the planetarium's digital projector and 30ft dome on March 2nd, at 1:30pm and 2:30pm. To sign up and view additional free shows, visit [here](#).

Baby Raven Reads - Family Event

All families with children up to age 5 are invited to join Baby Raven Reads for storytelling, songs, and other cultural and literacy activities on March 1st at 11:00am at the Downtown Juneau Public Library.

Juneau Audubon Society - Free Family Movie

Juneau Audubon Society presents *Migration* (PG) on March 13th at 6:00pm and March 15th at 4:00pm at the Gold Town Theater. For more information visit [here](#).

Free Family Fun Night at the Turf!

WHEN

- Friday, March 7th from 5:00pm-6:30pm
- Friday, March 21st from 5:00pm-6:30pm



WHERE

- Dimond Park Field House at 2961 Riverside Drive

Sponsored by CBJ Parks & Recreation & SEAAEYC!

Questions for Clem by NAMI

Questions for Clem is a "Dear Abby" style mental health column for parents/guardians and youth (5-18 years) in Juneau and throughout Southeast, AK. Talking about mental health can be challenging, but Clem is all ears and wagging tail. She's here for you to seek anonymous advice on any concerns you might have. No question is too big or too small.



Alerts about this bulletin are emailed to families with children enrolled in the Dolly Parton Imagination Library. Find this bulletin and many other family resources at www.aeyc-sea.org. The Juneau Parent Bulletin is created by **SEAAEYC** in coordination with the **Juneau Partnerships for Families and Children**. **SEAAEYC** | 3200 Hospital Dr. Ste. 204, Juneau, AK | 907-789-1235 | www.aeyc-sea.org | Follow us on:

Pick. Click. Give.

Spread the joy of reading with your 2025 PFD! Support the SEAAEYC Imagination Library through Pick.Click.Give and help us provide free high-quality, age-appropriate books to over 1,200 children in SE Alaska every month, from birth to age five. Visit [Pick.Click.Give](#) to learn more!

Kids in the Kitchen

Homemade Cheese Crackers

Homemade Cheese Crackers are made with only 4 ingredients and tastes even better than store-bought Cheez-its! They are crunchy and buttery with a sharp cheddar cheese flavor. These crackers are perfect for lunch boxes or take them as a to-go snack!



Ingredients

- 1 ounce extra sharp cheddar cheese
- 1/4 cup salted butter softened
- 1 cup all-purpose flour
- 2 tablespoons cold water

Instructions

1. In a large bowl with an electric hand mixer, stand mixer, or food processor beat together the butter and cheese until softened and combined.
2. Add the flour and continue to mix until slightly dry and crumbly. Add water and continue to mix until combined and the dough should come together.
3. Form the dough into 2 balls and wrap each ball in plastic wrap. Let the dough chill in the refrigerator for at least 1 hour.
4. Preheat oven to 350 degrees F and line 2 baking sheets with parchment paper. Lightly flour a surface and roll each dough ball to 1/4 inch thickness. Cut into 1 inch squares and place on prepared baking sheet. Use a small skewer or chopstick to poke a hole in the center of each square. Top with sea salt flakes (optional).
5. Bake for 15-20 minutes or until a golden brown. If you want your cheese crackers to be extra crunchy, continue baking for another 1-2 minutes but be careful not to burn. Remove from the oven and transfer to a cooling rack. Cool completely and enjoy!

For more recipes, visit www.kathrynskitchenblog.com.

Bartlett Beginnings Opportunities

Bartlett Beginnings offers a variety of support and play groups for families with children. Please register on Bartlett's [website](#) or by contacting Sara Gress at 907-796-8975 or sgress@bartlethospital.org. Visit [Bartlett Baby & Toddler Group Facebook Page](#) for new and upcoming group meetings.

- **Baby Parent Time**
Every Thursday 12pm-1:30pm at Bartlett Regional Hospital
- **Toddler Play Group**
Every Monday 11am-12pm at the Gymnastics Academy
- **Dads & Kiddos Play Group**
First Saturday of every month 10am-11:30am
- **Pregnancy & Infant Loss Support Group**
Last Wednesday of every month 6pm-7pm via Zoom
- **"Real Talk" Mothers' Support Group**
Last Wednesday of every month 7pm-8pm via Zoom
- **Balanced Beginnings**
Every Tuesday 12pm-1pm via Zoom
- **Dads and Partners**
Wednesday, March 19th 6-8pm at Bartlett Regional Hospital

