

VIRGINIA
INFANT & TODDLER SPECIALIST
NETWORK

“Achieving Excellence in Early Care”
www.va-itsnetwork.org



Rescue Me from Baby Shark – Why High Quality Music is Important for Young Children

Author: Mary Anderson



As educators and caregivers of young children, you know that children love music. Without even thinking about it, you could probably list five to ten songs that you use in your classroom on a weekly basis to engage your students in various classroom activities and routines. And that is wonderful!

But sometimes the music we choose for young children can be overstimulating to their developing nervous systems. Have you ever played a song to help “get the wiggles out”, but then observed your children struggling to calm down afterwards? Or put on music during an activity, and the energy level in the room starts to get chaotic and loud? Or maybe you are just annoyed and tired of singing and hearing the same songs over and over and over again.

Using high-quality, developmentally appropriate music in your classroom not only supports desired classroom outcomes, but is also one of the most powerful tools we have to support the brain development, general health and wellbeing, early language and literacy skills, and social-emotional development of our young students. It helps to build a strong classroom community while fostering joy, play, and connection.

The founder of the early childhood music program **My Music Starts Here** and the producer and host of “**Songs and Stories**” on Virginia PBS, Mary Anderson, will be leading our April webinar. Join us on April 13th at 1PM to fill your teacher toolbox with songs, fingerplays, and musical activities that will have both you and your students joyfully singing, moving, and connecting.

Resource Spotlight



Looking for ways to play with little ones? **Pathways** has developed an online **Baby Games Calendar**. Activities, milestones, and games can be searched using the child's date of birth.

Upcoming Professional Development Opportunities



Celebrating
PLAYFUL BABIES & TOTS
2023

Please join us at one of four exciting professional development institutes that will focus on the importance of play and how caregivers can increase positive interactions by incorporating play and joyful learning into daily routines and activities for infants and toddlers.

March 25 - Norfolk

April 22 - Charlottesville

May 6 - Dulles

Click [here](#) to register online now!



BABIES, TOTS & PLAY

Directors Institute



March 24th- Norfolk
April 21st- Charlottesville
May 5th- Dulles

These exciting professional development institutes will help early care administrators and family day home owners support providers in creating playful and encouraging educational environments while also developing positive interactions and relationships, which are critical to infant and toddler brain growth and enhanced program quality.



Click [here](#) to register online now!



Enhancing Emergent Literacy for Infants and Toddlers

1-2-3 READ! early literacy training is an interactive, practical training designed for teachers, caregivers, and directors who work with infants and toddlers, birth to 36 months, in a group setting.

March 25 - Charlottesville
April 29 - Richmond

April 29- Norfolk

VQB5 participant is \$15.00
Non-VQB5 participant is \$25.00
(Includes all training and materials)

The training is from 8:30 am to 4:00 pm.

Click [here](#) to register online now!

2023
vaaeyc
Annual Conference

March 9-11
Richmond, VA



Did you know...?

Research suggests the amount of back-and-forth conversation that young children experience is linked to:

- brain development
- language skills
- social and emotional development

LENA
GROW™



Early language exposure, in particular interactive talk, is one of the strongest predictors of brain development. The amount of language interaction a child experiences affects brain processing speed, brain structure and function, IQ and language abilities years later, as well as vocabulary development.

The Virginia Infant and Toddler Specialist Network (VA ITSN) partners with LENA Grow to provide a free, innovative and effective professional development program for teachers.

The LENA Grow program is designed to:

- Provide coaching to teachers based on data gathered using LENA devices (talk

- pedometers).
- Increase conversational interaction/turns between infants, toddlers and teachers.
- Improve the knowledge and skill level of care givers and educators.
- Be flexible! Virtual or in-person coaching options. Select a 5 or 10-week session.



Are you interested in learning more about how you can build a baby's brain just by talking with them? Contact the VA ITSN LENA Grow Program Coordinator at crystalsd@cdr.org



Did you know...?

The VA ITSN strives to achieve excellence in early care by increasing the knowledge and skills of those who care for infants and toddlers in family day homes and centers.

We provide coaching, resources, and support for center based programs and family day homes to address infant and toddler challenging behaviors and individual needs of classrooms, teachers, and programs.

Additionally, we provide individualized training and technical assistance services.

Please visit our [website](#) to find the infant and toddler behavior consultant, specialist, or regional office closest to you. For more information, call 757-378-3177 or email us at info@va-itsnetwork.org.



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