

Music and Movement By Melanie Gregory

In our early weeks at Bright Star, we have observed children showing great interest in the music curriculum area. Music has now become a regular, daily occurrence during our activities with the children.

Rhythm is a crucial part of music and movement. It can stimulate energy, helping children to express themselves through movement. Music is an excellent outlet for children to express their feelings and convey their moods to us. Apart from the cognitive and emotional well-being and development that music brings to children, there are also a wide range of physical benefits for children. This ranges from spatial awareness, to hand-eye coordination when using musical instruments, and even to muscular development when moving through dance.

Music is also an outlet for holistic growth as it is a good opportunity to teach children the importance of respecting and taking care of their resources, for example, our musical instruments. Another core aspect of learning that can be taken from music and movement is literacy development. Different forms of music can help ease children into transition and in helping them develop their pronunciation and language skills. It also helps give them a sense of confidence and empowerment to try

new things and challenge themselves in their learning.

Some of the trending songs at the moment here at Bright Star have been "Singing in the rain", "Going on a bear hunt", "Pukeko Stomp", and "E tu kahikatea". All the teachers at Bright Star also share a passion for music, with preferences from classical, hip-hop and rock 'n' roll!



Tuakana - Teina By Linda Tam

The tuakana-teina relationship is an integral part of traditional Māori society. In a tuakana-teina relationship, an older or more experienced tuakana (older sibling) helps and guides a younger or less experienced teina (younger sibling).

Tuakana-teina relationships blossom at Bright Star. We can see this when a child who has been at Bright Star for a while helps a new arrival to settle in by showing her around, and helping her to participate in Centre activities. We can also see peer tutoring in every curriculum area. In the block corner, the children's constructions are becoming more and more complex, and this is because they have been able to learn from each other.

We have many siblings attending Bright Star together. They can easily see and regularly visit each other throughout the day. We also encourage the older children to look after the younger ones, such as by passing the drinks onto the babies, and teaching younger children to sing new songs.

The tuakana-teina relationship empowers children's learning in many ways, such as sharing, caring, teamwork and leadership.



Sandpit Play By Linda Tam

In the outdoor playground by the grassy hill, under the pine tree - that is where our sandpit is. Every fine morning, our teachers set up the sandpit attractively: line the spades up, scatter some paua shells on the sand, place some utensils on the wooden table and place the digger in a prominent place. During the day, the children will spend hours busily digging, baking, creating and burying in the sandpit.

Sand play is fun, interesting and relaxing for little children. It benefits children's learning in a variety of ways. It develops chil-

dren's sense of touch through exploring the texture of the sand. Sand play also develops the arm, wrist, and hand muscles, as well as hand-eye coordination. Its open-ended nature promotes children's creative and imaginative play. While playing with sand, children also explore their mathematical concepts of volume, weight and measurement. Children's social skills - such as sharing, turn taking, and

team work - are promoted when they engage in a social dramatic play in the sand together.



The Interest in Space Rockets By Amy Slevin

There has been a very strong interest over the past two months in rockets from the children. I first noticed this interest when Ally was building an amazing construction in the block area. I asked Ally what she was building and she said, "A rocket." After that, Ally's rocket constructions have become more complex and the other children have also become interested. Wanting to further this interest, I went to the library and collected some books about space rockets. I brought them into the centre and

showed the children, which generated more discussion. Our student teacher at the time helped us widen the children's knowledge about rockets. She brought in two more books about rockets that the children were very excited about. Songs were also sung about rockets, which the children enjoyed.

With teachers providing support and a range of resources, the momentum for finding out more about space rockets from the children really began to pick up. On a number of occasions I have noticed

some of the children discuss space rockets and would sing the say, "10, 9, 8, 7, 6, 5, 4, 3, 2, 1. Blast off!" Furthermore, as the children's constructions became more complex they began to describe the different parts of a space rocket to me, which showed a development in their thinking and working theories about space rockets.

The children have also begun to learn about space and the planets. As a team we will continue to support this interest.

How is the children's interest in literacy progressing? By Amy Slevin

The interest in Literacy is still strong, with a number of children still showing an interest in wanting to write their names and learn about traditional children's stories, like Billy Goats Gruff, The Three Little Pigs and Jack and The Bean Stalk.

I introduced the children to the story of Jack and the Bean Stalk on the white board. The children really enjoyed the story and have wanted to use the white board as

one medium to retell their version of the story. Wanting to extend this interest further I asked the children if they wanted to act The Jack and the Bean Stalk out, which they were very receptive to. Before we acted it out I wanted to introduce the children to what the important components of putting on a play are. I talked about the Narrator, the characters and the props.

