

Songs Without words

If your family is currently in class, singing and dancing with the FIDDLE Song Collection, your child can probably identify her favorite song in a few seconds, for example by hearing the saxophone intro to “A Ram Sam Sam.” If you sing the tune to “Marching and Drumming” or one of your child’s favorite songs, you might see her respond musically in her own way—she might get up and march if she’s three, or smile if she’s a toddler, or go into a “torso rock” if she’s a one-year-old, or kick her feet if she’s an infant. People of all ages take pleasure in recognizing and responding to melodies, especially when it’s just the tune and not the words. In Music Together, we include songs without words in each collection because they allow children to focus on melody without language. Sometimes a song without words is sung on one or two syllables children can easily sing, such as “doo” or “da.” Part of the joy of “Walking Song,” for example, is the bouncy walking rhythm and the easy-going tune sung on “ba” and “doo.” At home, it’s fun to play with these songs often, singing them on the sounds your child likes or is learning. Some songs without words are sung on “vocables,” which are syllables or vocal sounds used to sing melodies. Traditional songs like “A Ram Sam Sam” with its “guli guli” and “Sweet Potato” with its “hokey dinkum” include a combination of nonsense sounds that are completely at one with the melody. “Playin’ in the Kitchen” is the play-along in the DRUM Song Collection this winter; so get out the pots and pans, sing on syllables, and make some rhythm that cooks!

— Lynne Ransom, D.M.A. CMYC Education Director