

The Song Box



A Practical Tool for Parents and Educators
to Teach Language Skills Through Music

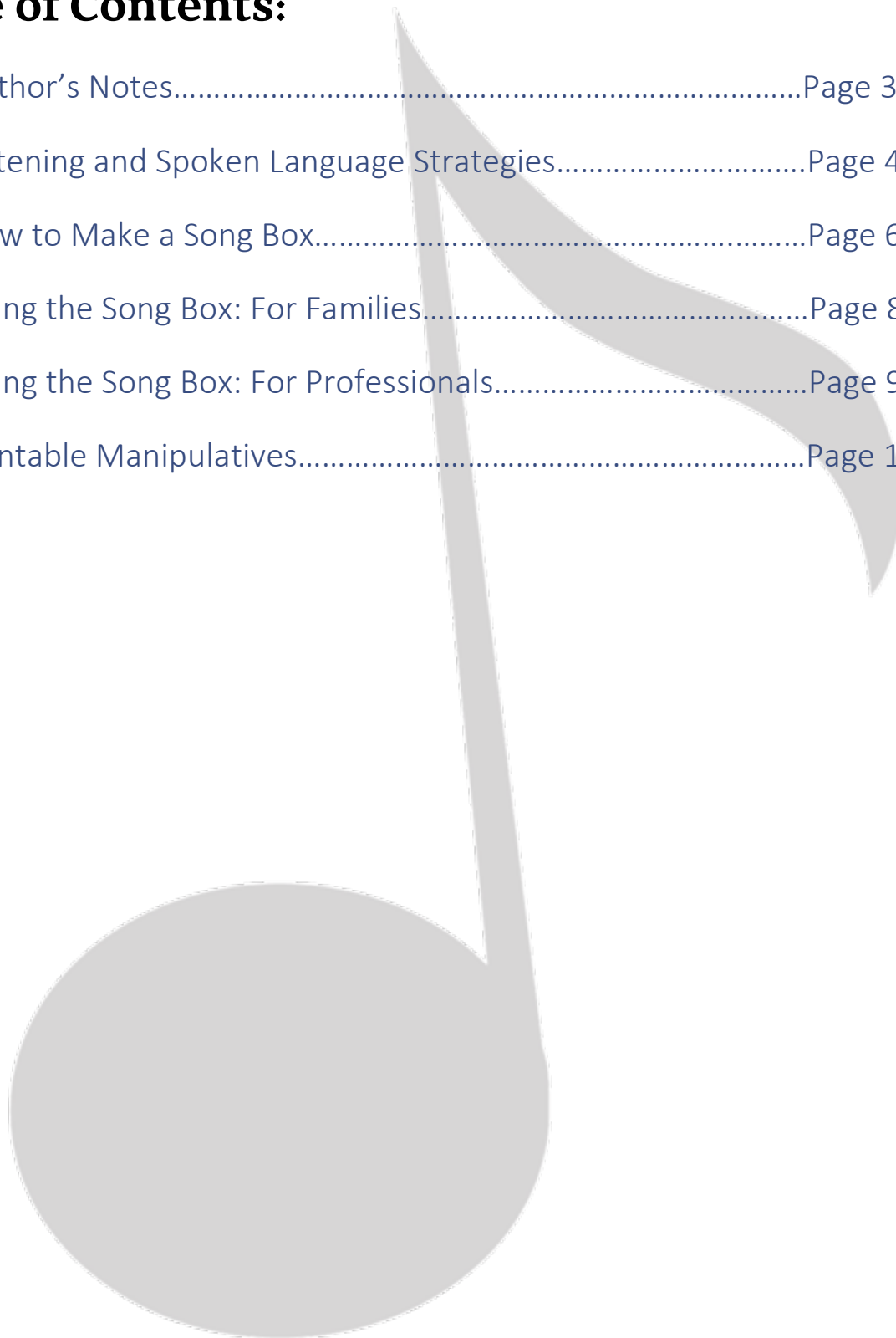
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About the Author:

Julie has 15 years of experience working with young children in a variety of educational settings. She obtained her associate degree in Early Childhood Education through the Community College of Philadelphia and then continued to Temple University to complete her bachelor's degree in Communication Sciences and Disorders. After gaining experience in a private Audiology clinic, she decided to combine her talents working with children and families and her interest in audiologic testing and hearing technology to pursue a graduate degree in Deaf Education at Utah State University. She is currently a preschool Teacher of the Deaf living and working in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

Note to the reader:

I'm so glad you have chosen to use this resource to support your child's speech and language development. I choose this project because I wanted to share a simple way for you to practice your child's individual speech and language goals through music.

The impact of music to speech and language development is far reaching. Research has shown that music benefits language and literacy across the curriculum in areas such as vocabulary development, phonemic awareness, syntax, semantics, and auditory perception. When children listen to music, they are taking in information about rhythm and tempo, volume, pitch and voice quality. All of which are vital in understanding speech and language patterns.

The song box is a great way to work on auditory development, receptive and expressive language skills for babies and young children. Whether an educator in the classroom or at home with your own child, I hope the Song Box brings joy to the children you use it with!

Incorporate Listening and Spoken Language Strategies

Create a Listening Environment: Be aware of background noise and distractions in your classroom or home. Create a quiet listening environment to make it easier for your child to hear and listen to the songs you are singing together.

What it looks like: Turn TV off and put other toys away! Pick a comfortable place to enjoy singing with your child.

Serve and Return: Capitalize on the child's communication attempts and use language to participate in back-and-forth conversations with the child.

What it looks like: Child pulls a bus toy out of the Song Box and holds it up. Caregiver says, "What did you find?" or "I see a bus. Do you want to sing the Wheels on the Bus?"

Wait Time: After asking the child a question, pause and provide sufficient time for the child to process the auditory information and provide a response.

What it looks like: Caregiver asks, "What song did you choose?"
Pause and wait for the child to provide a response.

Auditory Closure: Begin a song or rhyme, then pause and wait for the child to "fill in the blank".

What it looks like: Caregiver sings, "The horn on the bus goes...". Child sings, "beep, beep, beep"

Auditory Sandwich: Provide auditory information before visual to focus on gaining meaning through audition first. Then add in tactical information (facial expression, gesturing, show a toy, etc.)

What it Looks Like: Caregiver chooses an item from the Song Box, hide it and say, “I choose the school bus.” Then show the toy item and say, “Here’s the school bus. Let’s sing Wheels on the Bus!”

Auditory Bombardment: Provide multiple opportunities for your child to hear and understand new vocabulary.

What it Looks Like: Caregiver says, “You picked the school bus. It’s a yellow school bus. Can you push the school bus?”

Expansion: Expand upon your child’s utterances by adding more description or detail.

What it looks like: Child says, “school bus.” Caregiver says, “Yes, you picked the yellow school bus.”

*This is not an exhaustive list! Keeping your child’s individual goals in mind, think about other ways you may be able to incorporate Acoustic highlighting, Motherese, Self-Talk, Whispering and more!

How to Make a Song Box

The Song Box is meant to be versatile and adaptable. Get creative and involve your child to decorate the box with crayons, stickers or paint. Classroom teachers may have access to a variety of manipulatives to represent different songs. At home, I would encourage caregivers to use what you have on hand. There is no need to go out and buy additional materials. An alternative is to take a few extra steps to print and laminate the pictures at the end of this resource. I hope you will be able to take this idea and make it your own!

Option 1:

Materials: a box/container, small objects/toys

Grab any small box or container you have at home such as a tissue box, shoe box or other container with a lid. Gather a few small objects or toys and think about songs you can use the toys to represent. Store the items in the box and take turns with your child, choosing objects and singing the associated song. Here are some ideas of songs and manipulatives to use:

- Stuffed animal/monkey toy – Five Little Monkeys
- Boat Bath Toy – Row, Row, Row, your boat
- Muffin from a play kitchen set - Do you know the muffin man?
- Rubber Ducky: 5 Little Ducks
- Halloween Spider ring – Itsy Bitsy Spider



Option 2:

Materials: a box, printed pdf, laminator, scissors and Velcro or tape.

Print the pdf at the end of this document, laminate and cut out the pictures. Attach Velcro pieces to the top of the box and to the back of the laminated pictures. Store the pictures inside the box. As the songs are chosen, the pictures can be attached to the Velcro on the box to show what songs have already been sung. This option is great for learning less common songs when manipulatives need to be rotated more often or are not available.



Think about ways you can personalize your song box to make it special for the students. Engage students in decorating the box and make it their own. Use stickers or have students make handprints, etc. This would make a great beginning of the year activity to introduce the song box concept!

Using the song box: For Families

WHO can use the song box?

The Song Box is meant to be shared. I would encourage the whole family to get involved! Practice turn taking with other siblings, grandparents, babysitters, etc. Encourage your child to request a turn, label their song choice and sing along.

WHAT can my child learn?

Music provides information about speech and language patterns such as rhythm, tempo, volume, pitch, and voice quality. Learning new songs supports vocabulary development and practicing those songs over and over promotes auditory memory and recall skills. Children can also learn important academic skills like counting, addition/subtraction, body parts, animal sounds, alphabetics, weather concepts and more!

WHEN should the Song Box be used?

Find a time and frequency that works for your family. The Song Box would be a great addition to a nighttime or morning routine. Cuddle up and sing a few songs to wind down before bed or start the day with songs together. The Song Box can also be a great tool during transition times such as before dinner or while waiting for a parent to come home from work. Think of times that your child needs more engagement or could use an activity to calm down and get ready for the next part of their day.

WHERE can it be used?

The Song Box can of course be used in the comfort of your own home but don't forget, it's portable! Take it to the grandparent's house or bring it on your next road trip. With or without the Song Box, there is always time to practice songs in the car or while running errands with your child.

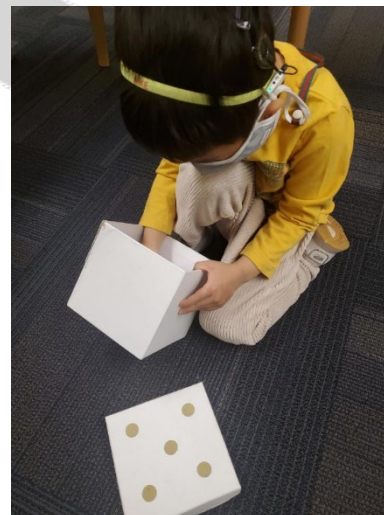
HOW is it used?

With young babies, keep things simple. Choose 2-3 songs you want to focus on and use manipulatives that they can handle and explore. Bathe the child in language and sing the songs frequently. As children get older, practice turn taking and encourage your child to request their turn, label the song and sing along! Add new songs and manipulatives as needed. Adapt the Song Box to your own needs and do what works for your family!

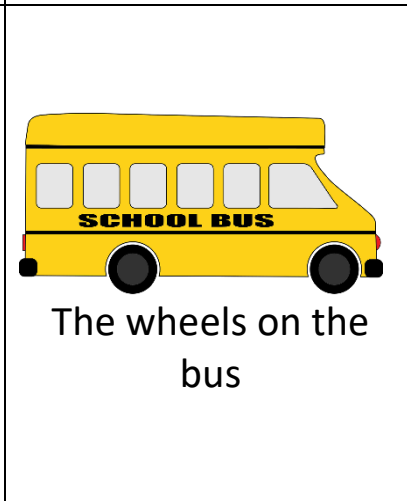
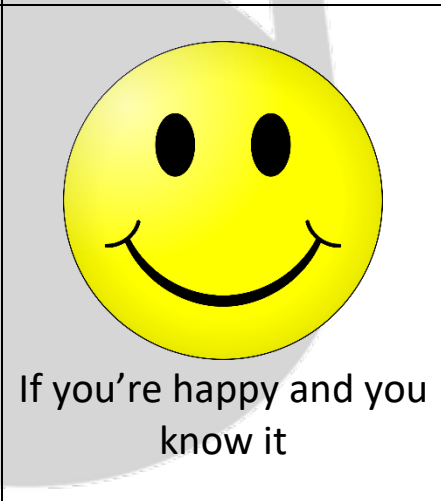
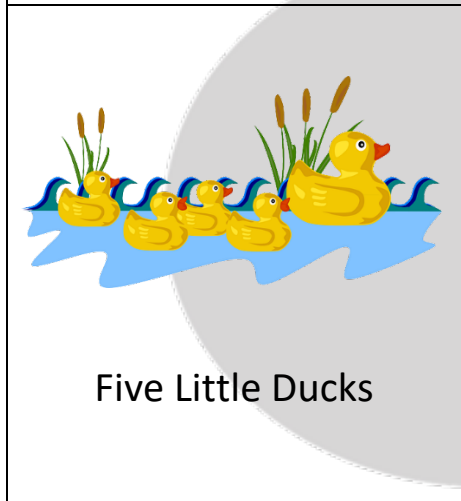
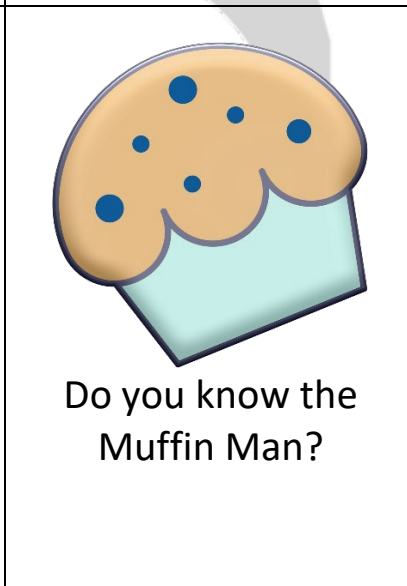
For Professionals:

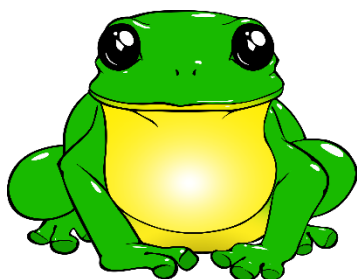
In my classroom, I use the Song Box almost every morning during our morning meeting routine. Students take turns to choose a picture that represents the song they want to sing. Then, we sing it! It's as simple as that. The song box would make an excellent addition to a Speech or Early Intervention session as well. It's a great activity to teach parents to carryover at home as well.

This tool is meant to be tailored to your needs and should be continually updated as students learn new songs. Use the song box to practice familiar songs, teach new songs related to a theme, as part of a music lesson or to ease transitions between activities. Below I have listed a few general goals that can easily be embedded in the Song Box activity, but I would encourage you to think about new ways you could adapt the Song Box to your needs and the goals of the students you serve.



- **Turn Taking:** Practice turn taking one on one or in small groups. Teachers can guide the turn taking or students can pass the box to a friend. Encourage children to request a turn as they are able. Ex: “My turn” or “I want a turn with the song box.”
- **Following multi step directions:** Ask the child to provide children with silly directions before they can choose a song from the song box. For example, “Pat your knees, twirl around and then choose a song from the song box.” Alternatively, embed directions more naturally by asking the child something like, “pick a song and then give it to me.”
- **Positional Phrases:** Target new positional phrases by giving the child a direction indicating where to place the manipulative/toy. For example, “Put the monkey next to the duck.” or “Put the spider behind the bus.”
- **Vocabulary:** By adding new songs, its easy to introduce new vocabulary words. Try incorporating new songs from themes being taught in the classroom for additional practice. Also, think about ways you can reinvent a song by changing a word or phrase. For example: “Do you know the cupcake man?” or “The big giant spider”.
- **Auditory Memory:** Introduce new songs and strengthen auditory memory skills by singing them often! Engage the children by asking them to remember what songs have already been sung - “What songs did we sing already?”





Five Speckled Frogs



Hokey Pokey



Happy Birthday



Rain Rain, Go Away

