ForeWord Reviews

FAMILY & RELATIONSHIPS

Nurturing Your Child with Music: How Sound Awareness Creates Happy Smart and Confident Children

John M. Ortiz
Beyond Words Publishing
978-1-58270-021-2
(Nov 29, 1999)

The author, a psychologist and founder of the Institute of Applied Psychomusicology, purports that music in a child's life can solve most every woe.

From low self-esteem to tubby kids who play too many video games, music can get children back on track. Or, if started early enough, music can prevent many of these problems all together. With various "menus," Ortiz explains how injecting song into a child's life will make bedtime easier, teach children to be better listeners, calm down hyperactive children and give children a taste of history.

The menus consist of collections that can be made by taping parts of the various compilations Ortiz mentions. For instance, to teach a child to be more aware of sounds in general, he lists albums for toddlers and preschoolers that range from “Bump in the Night” by Jim Comings to “The Teddy Bears’ Picnic” by Jerry Garcia and David Grisman. The list of recommendations to help preschoolers and school-age children be more aware of sound is just as thorough and includes old-time fairy tales such as “Jack and the Beanstalk” to modern-day recordings including “The Lion King” and a “Rugrats” record. Bedtime examples range from a simple metronome if a child is restless or has ”too many thoughts” to thirty-minute tapes of “soothing” music (including Bob Carlisle’s “Butterfly Kisses” and “Barney’s Sleepytime Songs”) for toddlers who are beyond the point where rocking in a parent’s lap puts them out for the night. Older children will like having control over what to listen to and may fall asleep to a favorite radio show. Ortiz lists the amount of sleep children of different ages should get and stresses the importance of bedtime routines and time to “wind down,” as well as reading before bed.

The chapters are designed to stand on their own so if a child won’t do his chores, skip right to chapter eleven, “With a Little Help from My Kids,” for music to inspire tooth-brushing and putting toys away (use made-up lyrics or use the ones provided) and motivate the child to help around the house. Don’t despair about listening to another “Chipmunks” volume. Ortiz emphasizes that the menus are just suggestions. If parents like a particular type of music, they should go ahead and play it for the children, too. Different types of music suit different needs, so if karaoke to Jimmy Buffett’s ”Margaritaville” gets a child off the couch, then play it.

Jodee Taylor