

INTEGRATING CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL NEEDS INTO THE EARLY CHILDHOOD PROGRAM

**Inclusive opportunities for each individual to shine
in their ‘special moment’**

Students, who are marginalised in some way, usually have some social difficulties that sabotage their efforts of connection. This session demonstrates provision and facilitation of those connections while also actively developing self-esteem. Special moments are created for each individual as the understanding is fostered that each of us is worthwhile, each of us is successful, yet each of us is one part of a larger group. Success in that group setting is ensured, as are ‘safe’ opportunities for self-expression and enjoyment!

CREATE A SPECIAL SPACE FOR EACH STUDENT TO PARTICIPATE.

INVITE EACH INDIVIDUAL INTO THE COMMUNITY

**DEMONSTRATE THAT THEY DO HAVE A PLACE AND THAT THEY ARE
ESTEEMED**

In creating a special space for each student, we must ask the question: ‘what does this student have to contribute that I can frame as a meaningful and important self-expression?’ ‘What is this student presenting that I can validate, simplify and celebrate?’ (Brake, 2008)

It explores the potentials of three different ‘special space opportunities’. They are

1. A space to *move*
2. A space to make a *vocal sound*
3. A space to *play* a non melodic instrument

Students need to be involved in songs that are engaging and facilitate repetition, predictability and a sense of safety.

A SPACE TO MOVE



My Friend Fuzzy Susie Davies Splitter & Phil Splitter

Verse

My friend Fuz - zy sleeps all day but when right - time comes he loves
 to play he waits till ev - 'ry - one is fast a - sleep then
 out of his box Fuz - zy darts peep He shakes his head And licks his lips
 he blinks his eyes and wig - gles his hips taps his nose
 and gives a side - ways glance then Fuz - zy pops up out - 'cas it's
 time to dance. And he dan - ces and dan - ces all a - round and he dan - ces and dan - ces all a -
 round and he dan - ces and dan - ces all a - round and he dan - ces and dan - ces till the
 ear - ly morn but now he's tired and he has a big yawn (yawn) he stretch - es his arms up -
 to the sky then he pops down Ooh and blows a kiss good -
 bye (kiss)

Chorus

Freely Slowly

Fuzzy peeps out of the box and performs a number of actions while he is peeping –until the moment when he finally pops right out! The song itself indicates ideas from which children can gain inspiration and embrace many skills for healthy development including being the centre of attention, fun, self expression, getting up off the floor to crouching position, waiting... licking lips –tongue muscle development, tapping nose (–where is your nose?) yawning, stretching –arms above head (–for muscle strength and tone), blowing a kiss (pre-speech activity), listening for cues, free improvised movement, and movement directed by prompts



STIMULATING THE IMAGINATION THROUGH PLAY...

Get in the Groove Susie Davies-Splitter and Phil Splitter

Hey ev - 'ry - ho - dy let's get in the groove let's do some dan - cing our bod ies will move
 move an - y - way you want we don't real - ly mind you can move it real - ly fast or you can take your time now
 some - one's go - ing to show us their moves let's look at you get in the groove
 (leader improvises through movements) Min... well thank you
 that was great it's time for you to choose some - one else
 to get in the groove

A SPACE TO MOVE

This activity invites students to move. Most students can contribute something to this activity –it might be as minute as a blink, but there will be something! Through making a contribution to the group activity the individual becomes a member of the community, an initiator of ideas and a leader!

A SPACE TO PLAY A NON MELODIC INSTRUMENT

Let's Make A Racket Savie Davies-Spinner and Phil Spinner

Now it's time to make a racket - if you can't make one of your own you can play it on my old howl course on play it now and you can play it play - and let's clap and you can play oh play and let's clap

These songs is designed to ensure safety:

The songs provides a firm structure – are consistent and predictable.

Each space for contribution is clearly defined.

The structure of the songs engender feelings of safety.

If a risk is taken, the student knows what the prescribed time is –it won't last forever!

The song structure offers predictability and safety while the song itself also engages students through its beat. Ensure that instruments are exciting and motivating. Group awareness, turn-taking, self-expression, initiation of ideas, engagement, fun, and developing a positive self-esteem are all integral components of this activity. It is not possible to perform this incorrectly. Whatever the student offers through their playing of their chosen instrument is accepted as a valid contribution and is respected and given appropriate attention.

It is hoped that students realise that they are successful in a school setting and that what they have to offer is valued and respected. (Brake, 2008)

Who wants to Play

Who wants to play the (instrument) Who wants to play the (instrument) Some one who's look-ing who will choose? I choose you! Let's all clap while you play - Let's all clap while you play - Can you fin-ish when we count to three? Rea-dy ev-'ry - one? One, two, three!

A SPACE TO MAKE A VOCAL SOUND

If a particular student has only one sound that they can produce, then it must be given a meaningful framework for performance. The student's sound must be amplified and celebrated. A framework needs to be devised to give meaning to the sound, to motivate the student to produce it and to ensure that the student can be heard. If we have but one sound then it is extremely important that our only sound is validated and applauded!

'Mouth sounds'

This song features:

- **Student's name:** In an endeavour to engage the student and alert them to the fact that their turn is coming, this song enables the student's name to be emphasised. A gap is left in the lyrics for you to fill in the student's name.
- **Sounds with intent:** Apparent random sounds may be shaped into sounds that are *consciously* prepared and made with intent within this framework.

MEMBERSHIP, PARTICIPATION AND FUN WITHIN THE MUSICAL COMMUNITY

‘The Rainbow Rave’

There’s a crazy new dance that’s going around
People are doing it all over town
You can do it with many, you can do it with a few
Are you ready to dance here’s what we’re gonna do

Chorus 1:

We’re gonna twist, just like this
We’re gonna jiggle, into the middle
We’re gonna fly, way up high
Let’s jump on back, just like that
Now pass the ring hand to hand you know how to behave
C’mon now let’s do the Rainbow rave

Chorus 2:

Let’s circle right, move in tight
Let’s circle left, hmm, what’s next?
Swim like a fish, just like this
Let’s jump on back, just like that
Now pass the ring hand to hand you
know how to behave
C’mon now let’s do the Rainbow rave

Just hold on there! –and you are visibly a member of a community!

The rainbow ring has the potential to be an extremely powerful aid to inclusion. Added to its impact is its visual effect -individuals not only *feel* part of the group, but they can *see* that they are! The visual effect is a great reinforcer for the emotional! Consider students who are challenged to participate due to blindness. They only need to hold on to the ring to learn a dance proficiently with the remainder of the class. They feel as the ring moves around, up or down, and speed and direction. “The arts have increasingly been regarded as an important vehicle for promoting inclusion and enhancing the levels and quality of participation of vulnerable groups, including disabled people” (Allan, citing Goodlad, Hamilton & Taylor, 2005, p.31).

The usual amount of noncontingent positive experiences that a person with a disability enjoys in their life is significantly less than those of their peer group that do not have a disability (Willis & La Vigna, 1996, p.12).

Team work

Everyone is an accepted and operational team member

‘Team Machine’

Verse

We’re a team machine and we’re very keen to work together well
We might have just met but what the heck, we’re a machine as you can tell
It’s all about being part of the team and what that really stands for
When you put it together it all makes sense because
‘together everyone achieves more’

Chorus

Slide together, groove together arms up in the air
Turn around and stamp the ground, now everyone say ‘Yeah’
Now shake your partner’s hand and give them a high five
Inside line step to the left, now run to the end of the line
Last time: Now that’s how we are a machine and that’s the end of the line

A life skill

Operating as a team member is a vital life skill. Students who are marginalised are usually the last to be invited to be a member of a team. This situation provides opportunity for the savvy educator to explicitly teach a group about team work and team skills.

Social isolation

Occasionally a student will just seem to not be 'liked' or accepted by the majority of the class. She is usually the last student chosen for group activities and is often ostracised during break times. In a similar manner, a student with limited understanding of social skills may also be on the outer. Another student may be well liked, but have great difficulty connecting socially and so be challenged in similar ways.

Team Machine provides a foundation for addressing these issues.

It features

- keeping individuals physically busy and minimising eye contact
- brief physical contact (emphasising *connection* for those who are socially not so aware), and
- quick regular changing of work partners (facilitating a brief interaction as a team member with a large number of team members).

The structure of the song keeps the students 'safe'. After listening to the music the pattern quickly establishes that each interaction is indeed only brief. (Brake, 2008)

Above all, the individual is discovering that despite the challenges and possible limitations of a disability, life can still be exciting, fun and worthwhile!

References:

Brake, M. Davies-Splitter, S & Splitter, P. (2008) *Your Stage*. Welcome to Music.

Goodlad, R., Hamilton, C. & Taylor, P. (2002). Not just a Treat: Issues in evaluating arts programmes to secure social inclusion. *Proceedings of the UK Evaluation Society Conference, London, 12-13 December 2002*. Glasgow: University of Glasgow, Centre for Cultural Policy Research.

Willis, T.J. & LaVigna, G.W. (1996). Motivational Analysis. *The LABA Newsletter - Positive Practices*. II (1).

'Your Stage' Book and CD

- *Your Stage* is an especially designed program for inclusion
- *Your Stage* provides opportunities for each individual to shine in their special moment
- *Your Stage* is based in music –providing energy, structure, and repetition
- *Your Stage* is consumer friendly, and does not require the facilitator to have musical expertise.

Activity and design by Mary Brake. Music and lyrics by Susie Davies-Splitter and Phil Splitter (Welcome to Music)

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