

**FAVORITE SONGS
AND MUSIC ACTIVITIES FOR
ELEMENTARY TEACHERS
AND THEIR STUDENTS**



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**Sponsored by the FINE ARTS division of the
Utah State Office of Education**

**Featuring practical music lessons correlated to the
Utah State Music Core Curriculum standards and
Integrated across the elementary education curriculum**

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So why music?

All children need to have music as a part of their education, not because children need to become accomplished musicians (though certainly a worthwhile objective), but to encourage the development of sensitivity, creativity, and discipline, while at the same time bringing joy into their everyday classroom experiences. Music contributes to the education of the **whole child** beyond the basic need for literacy and numeracy. As a whole brain activity it is unique in the core of educational curricula uniting cognitive musical elements formed on both sides of the brain. It provides opportunity for self expression, divergent thinking, and problem solving. It also enhances the development of positive self esteem and engages students in opportunities to work cooperatively in group interaction. In short, music attends to the need to include humanity as an essential part of our children's education.

So where do I begin?

Begin with the idea that elementary music is an on going process of **discovery, creativity, and skill development**. We engage children in music instruction primarily for the learning and enrichment of the students, in preference to the entertainment of an audience. With this understanding as our directive we can relax and enjoy the musical journey with our students.

Children need to experience music in a variety of applications and activities. The **Utah State Music Core** suggests four "standards" of elementary music instruction:

SINGING a variety of appropriate song literature
PLAYING successfully simple musical instruments
LISTENING for understanding as well as enjoyment
CREATING within the context of their experience

The teaching of elementary music is based on song literature as the primary component for delivering instruction. Because it is "literature" in every sense of the word, the initial teaching of each song may begin with a focus on some aspect of the literature the children are about to sing. Whether you direct attention to the story line, objects of interest or activities mentioned in the song, or motivational ideas within the lyrics, introduce each song by getting the children involved in what the song is actually about.

Let the children hear the song before they are called upon to sing the song. With each hearing include questions that will direct their listening toward recognition of musical elements (beat, melody, repeated rhythm or rhyme patterns) within the music. This develops their listening as a tool toward understanding music as well as improving their pitch and rhythm accuracy.

Have the children join in singing a portion of the song (a phrase or the refrain) and sing it each time it occurs in the song. Include additional phrases or verses as they become more familiar with the music. Accumulate small portions until the whole song has been mastered. It is not necessary to start at the beginning of the song. Start with whatever part encourages success.

Each time the song is sung direct the children's listening to insecure parts to strengthen their understanding of the music and reinforce their skill and confidence of singing.

Engage children in singing games and simple folk songs that "actively" develop their singing and listening skills. Activity is a natural captivator. By adding body percussion patterns (clap, pat, snap etc.) to repeated music patterns you can reinforce the children's development of beat competency, rhythmic accuracy, and awareness of music form or organization..

Use simple unpitched percussion instruments to add textural sounds and accompaniment interest with repeated ostinato patterns. For older or more skillful children, create instrumental melody or accompaniment harmony with the use of recorders, Orff instruments, ukeleles, auto harps, and guitars. Have the students create ideas or arrangements (individually or in small groups) for putting all these musical elements together in a group ensemble to share with the class.

Additionally, since children love to move, have them move or even "dance" (if they are comfortable with the concept) to feel the beat or musical phrase, to express themselves, to make appropriate contact with others, and to enjoy the inspirational pleasures of music.

Enhance student instruction in literacy and numeracy by having them read and write about music or by writing music lyrics and notation. Have them count, group, and sequence musical beats, phrases, and patterns. Encourage them to find innovative ways to integrate music into all their other classroom learning including cultural diversity and relevant expression in all the arts.

And one easily overlooked and surprisingly simple culmination, after each activity or creative musical exploration, have them secure their learning with an easy self evaluation using simple rubrics for each task, or by using the **USOE Music Targets**. The more accomplished students are in self evaluating, the more secure they are in their learning and in their ability to apply what is known to what is yet to be learned. **Remember, this is an enjoyable journey of discovery.**

So what conceptual elements complete the learning process?

Music is a fascinating combination of musical elements or conceptual understandings which impact the execution and expression of music by adding variety and interest to the singing, playing of instruments, listening, and creating in which children are engaged as they participate in music exploration or performance. A list of music concepts appropriate for elementary classroom music instruction should include:

RHYTHM The grouping of sounds and silences of varying duration controlled by a steady beat.

MELODY A sequence of linear tones that suggests congruence in pitch and rhythm patterns.

TEXTURE The use of many or few instruments or voices of varying timbres or ranges

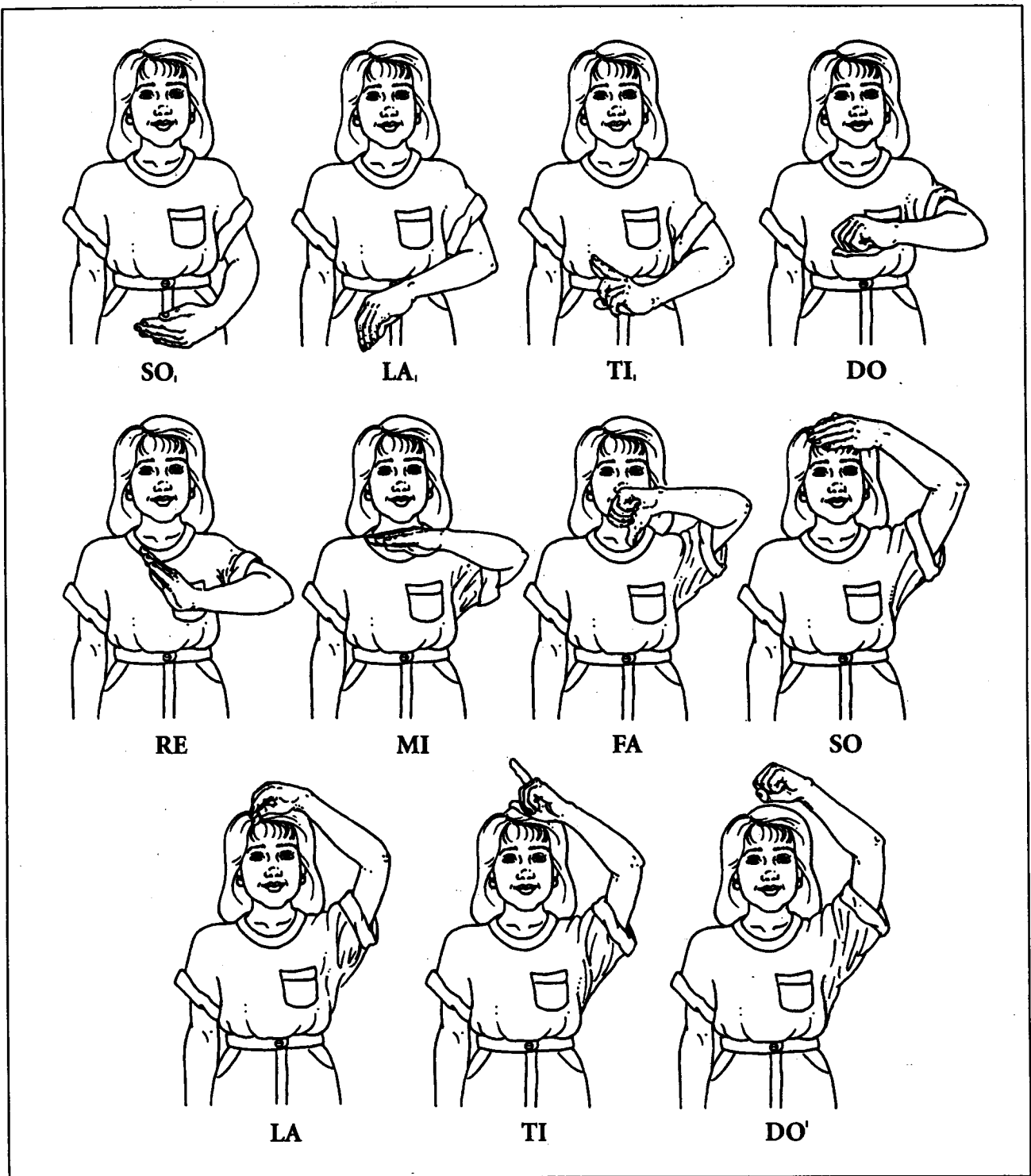
HARMONY The vertical relationship of tones through a succession of chordal patterns.

FORM The overall organization (patterns within patterns) of each individual piece of music.

TONE COLOR The timbre or differentiating tone quality of an instrument or voice.

TEMPO The frequency (fast or slow) of successive beats within the music.

DYNAMICS The degree of loud and soft expression in music.



Curwen Hand Signs

The shapes of the hand indicate information about pitch relationships and provide kinesthetic and visual representation of the pitches. For example, when the index finger of the TI hand sign points up to DO, it shows the tone's tendency to resolve to DO.