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Scott, Sheila. (2015) Music-Based Activities to promote Understanding and Acquisition of language for Children with Autism Spectrum Disorder

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TODO:

- Turn these paragraphs into individual PDFs
- Add article citation

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Activity 1: Birds and Bees

In this activity students demonstrate their ability to perceive and reproduce melodic contours created by the flight patterns of birds and bees. When first implementing this activity, the leader (usually the teacher) stands at one side of the classroom holding a toy bird or bee. The leader flies the bird or bee across the room and the children produce vocal sounds (e.g. hum or bzzz) to show the contour of the flight path. Once children are familiar with this activity, a child can be chosen to fly the bird or bee. Two-part singing is created when two children construct flight paths simultaneously and their peers decide which of the contours to follow with their voices.

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Activity 2: In a Hot Air Balloon

This activity provides another way for children to demonstrate melodic contour with their voices. The teacher draws a picture of an out-of-doors perspective on a white board. This could be a cityscape with tall buildings and roads or a rural view with fields and trees. On one corner a hot air balloon is drawn. A contoured line is drawn from the balloon and across the picture. The children use their voices to create sounds that show the contour of the balloon's flight path. Alternately, the teacher could create a hot air balloon with a basket, some strings, and balloons and then fly the balloons across the illustration.

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Activity 3: Picture Books Guiding Vocal Production

Many children's books contain words that suggest vocal sounds. Using the book *Cock-a-doodle-doo, creak, pop-pop, moo*, students add vocal sounds to narratives such as *Cluck, cluck, cluck. Hens are fed* (np) or *Sparrows sing, Chirp, chip, chip, chip* (np). Depending on each student's background, sometimes the vocal accompaniments resemble the words spoken by the teacher; sometimes the vocal sounds cannot be distinguished as those in the text. Students who are unable to vocalize may participate by adding sounds with non-pitched percussion instruments by representing clucks with woodblocks and chips with triangles, for example.

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Activity 4: Songs with Simple Repeated Texts

Teachers may encourage students with limited verbal skills to vocalize with portions of songs. The song "Bingo" is an ideal vehicle for this process as it contains the repeated motive B-I-N-G-O. Students are encouraged to take part in the singing in whatever way best suits each individual. Some students may be able to sing the words with the teacher and peers; some students may choose to add vocal sounds only for the vowel and consonant sounds contained for the repeated pattern of B-I-N-G-O. Sometimes these vocalizations resemble the expected vowels and consonants; other times the students create personal verbalizations that do not resemble the vowels and consonants in the song. Imprecise vocalizations are encouraged as, with practice, these verbalizations may become more accurate over time.

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Activity 5: Kazoos

The teacher may begin by modeling the song “Bingo,” singing most of the lyrics, but playing a kazoo for the B-I-N-G-O motive. Students are then given kazoos. The teacher sings the lyrics and, either alone or along with the teacher, the students play this motive with their kazoos. Following this practice, the teacher encourages the students to sing the B-I-N-G-O portion of the song.