

Leader's Guide

Introduction

The goal of THINKING IN MUSIC is to develop cognitive and physical skills that will lead to strategies promoting learning and engagement. Specifically, these activities help young children:

- develop strategies to improve focusing, conceptualizing, and categorizing
- develop mental skills which will aid academics, sports, and daily life
- develop a foundation for further learning in music and other arts

Children who participate in these activities:

- build strategies that increase the ability to focus and maintain focus more effectively
- develop cognitive skills that increase understanding and utilization of knowledge
- develop greater confidence in themselves and gain skills in interacting with others
- are more engaged and less likely to be disruptive
- have fun

THINKING IN MUSIC provides opportunities to develop and practice cognitive and motor skills that can aid learning both in the arts and in other areas such as reading, writing, and mathematics.

Incorporating THINKING IN MUSIC into Your Program

The activities for young children in this book involve an introductory level of musical skill. By reading the Leader Training information you should feel comfortable implementing the activities with no prior musical training. Teachers with prior musical training will find these activities add to their teaching repertoire. We encourage you to supplement THINKING IN MUSIC with other musical activities and experiences that relate to the skills developed here. This will enrich the children's understanding and broaden the impact of THINKING IN MUSIC.

Getting started – for the program director

It is best to identify an internal champion for THINKING IN MUSIC implementation – either yourself or someone on your staff. This champion will be the “go to” person who helps with training and instrument preparation, answers any questions that come up, acts as a general resource, and helps build excitement. Though not required, it is best if this person has some musical background.

In addition to the internal champion, you should decide if every teacher will use THINKING IN MUSIC immediately, or if you wish to start with only a few teachers. Either way, we know excitement will grow and soon everyone will want to be involved.

The key to success will be to support the teachers from the beginning by providing: an overview of the program, more Leader Training as requested, opportunities for practice, ongoing support, and a feedback loop to check on progress early and often – several times during the first month and monthly thereafter.

Introduction, training, and support

People like to feel included, so you may wish to launch the program at an Introductory Meeting for everyone who might be involved initially or in the future. At this time, you can describe the program goals, distribute the Activities for Young Children and discuss other recommended equipment. The “internal champion” should demonstrate a few activities and give an overview of the book and Leader Training. You should also discuss and agree on how you wish to implement the program.

Training is included in the following sections:

- How to Use This Book
- Leader Training Part 1 – Learning about Beat Rhythm
- Leader Training Part 2 – Learning about Pitch and Melody

All THINKING IN MUSIC Leaders will need about an hour and a half or so to go through these sections to be prepared. To ensure program success, Leaders must be comfortable with Rhythm, Pitch and Melody; know how these are used in the activities; and how the Activities should be used with the children.

It is recommended that you have a short Pre-Launch Review Session, held after Leaders have had a chance to review the Training sections on their own and before starting the program. Have everyone take turns leading one or more of the activities, with the others playing the role of students. This is an opportunity to clear up any questions or concerns, make sure instruments are marked properly and “take inventory” so that everyone has what they need to get started.

It is important that THINKING IN MUSIC Leaders have the support they need for success, including any required equipment or materials. A list of recommended equipment can be found in *Appendix A*.

The internal champion should check back with THINKING IN MUSIC Leaders early and often to address any questions or concerns and be sure everyone has what they need.

Your feedback is valued and always appreciated. We would love to know what you think: what works, what doesn't, and any suggestions you may have. Please let us know your thoughts at www.thinkinginmusic.org.

Getting started – for teachers

We have included a Leader Lesson Planning Outline and Form in *Appendix G*. Feel free to use it or incorporate this information into your own weekly lesson plan book.

After each activity, be sure to note where you finished and add notes to help your planning for the next day/week.

Each week, select that week's daily Activities based on last week's progress and observations. Make daily changes as needed, continuing unfinished activities or starting new ones based on the children's progress and interest.

- Collect the materials you will need.
- Read and practice the activities in advance.
- Review the Leader's Guide and Leader Trainings as needed.
- Make sure to prepare the board for daily vocabulary words and instructions.

