



Tuesday Tools: Preparing Environments for Music Play

Hello Rock and Roll community! I hope you're all enjoying the warmer weather along with the relaxing of some of this past year's COVID regulations in the classroom setting.

As we continue our discussion on the prepared environment this month, let's take a moment to ask ourselves some important questions: what are we preparing the environment for? What is the desired outcome? How do we know if a child's interaction with a material is "successful?"

As a music-centered school, our goal at Rock and Roll is to foster a sense of music play. Children should have access to instruments and materials that allow themselves to express their *creative flow* through sound, both by themselves and working together as a group. For our purposes today, we'll call a child's creative flow with sound 'music play.'

This framework of music play takes the pressure off both students and teachers to have to justify a child's classroom work as something that has a predictable, measurable outcome. Rather, the act of playing in and of itself gives children the tools and hands-on experience they need to begin creating and expanding their own creative vocabulary.

Given the right materials in the right environment, children instinctively know how they want and need to interact with creative tools like musical instruments. It's our job as educators to fill our classrooms with materials that elicit a strong reaction and response from students, who in turn respond in their own unique way.

Teachers familiar with the Reggio Emilia approach may know this setup as a 'provocation,' the introduction of a new material or object to warrant a unique, open-ended outcome. Say for example, we put a drum out on a shelf. The drum could be a drum for hitting, or accompaniment to a song, or the sounds of rain on the roof, or the footsteps of a giant, or a witch's cauldron bubbling and brewing.

Our responsibility as educators, aside from ensuring the safety of the children and the environment, is to step back and let the children play. Or even sometimes to play alongside them, not as an instructor, but as an equal who's looking to explore, listen, and imagine.

Now that wooden materials are allowed back into the classrooms, take time to reestablish dedicated music spaces in your rooms with your co-teachers and program specialist. Survey the musical instruments you stored away last year and come up with a plan to reintroduce them onto your shelves. Consider introducing instruments that tie into our current cultural unit, or that you've noticed children drawing or talking about during play.

We're finally able to bring back our beloved music materials and get our classrooms rocking and rolling again. I hope you and your team can start to take stock of what you already have and begin to plan ways to reintroduce instruments and encourage music play across age levels in your classroom environment.

Have a great week, Rock and Roll Community, and I'll see you for the next Tuesday Training Tools.