Music and literacy go hand in hand. As teachers and parents of children, we hear their songs all around us—they chant, they rhyme, they evoke song to narrate the current and the past. Imbued with cultural and social experiences, their songs reflect their family, friends, and communities. Given music’s constant presence in children’s lives, it is not surprising that it is also inextricably linked to learning.

**Music and Literacy Link**

* Music instruction improves verbal memory. Verbal memory is essential for reading printed words and comprehension. As reading progresses to sentences and longer texts, verbal memory allows children to retain material as it is being read. This helps with syntactic and semantic analysis needed for comprehension.
* Music enhances brain development. Instrumental practice enhances coordination, concentration and memory and also brings about the improvement of eyesight and hearing. Dr. Wilson of UCLA has done research that shows the involvement in music connects and develops the motor systems of the brain in a way that cannot be done by any other activity.
* Music helps to build listening skills. Listening is the first language mode that children acquire, and it provides a foundation for all aspects of language and literacy development. Musical activities help build listening skills that help increase learning in the classroom. It also helps brain functioning to hear the different sounds in letters, diphthongs, chunks and words. This is helpful in reading development.
* Music helps vocabulary development. Researchers have suggested that song lyrics provide a source for new vocabulary. Student learn vocabulary from reading and listening to oral stories. For younger children, songs and rhymes are essential for learning new words.
* Music improves phonological and phonemic awareness. To become successful readers children need to understand that words are made up of discrete sounds and that they can be used to build words. Integrating songs and rhymes into phonological awareness instruction is effective in building skills. This helps to build an understanding of the sounds within words.

**Use Music at home**

* Read Alouds and Listen- Alouds- use music to teach literacy by drawing children to what they love, listening to music. Point out the similarities between reading and listening to music. Try a “Listen-Aloud” and model your thinking similar to a read aloud. Share active listening experiences with your children.
* Visualization- Have your children close their eyes and describe what they imagine as they are listening to music. Explain how they can visualize during reading, too. Visualization is key to comprehension. Draw and paint pictures that illustrate the song lyrics.
* Rhyme Time- Listen to songs, read stories and poems to find rhymes. Create a list of rhyming words. This will help children listen for similar sounds. Use the list to then write poetry and lyrics!

Information adapted from following sources: <http://www.abcmusicandme.com-> *The Impact of Music on Language and Learning.* <http://montessoriacad.org/images/uploads/music.pdf> *How can Music Dramatically Effect Your Child’s Development”*