Jennifer Daniels  
**Interactive Literacy and Music Workshop, emphasis on kids with sensory issues and on the Autism Spectrum**

**Study Guide**

Teachers, Librarians, and Parents,

Thank you for opening up the world to our kids who have special sensory issues, communication obstacles, and learning challenges. Thank you for your persistence even when you don’t get the smile, the eye contact, the hug, the sense of accomplishment from your children. Your work is meaningful and life-giving.

Sometimes, as you already know, many of the kids with special needs bloom when they interact with picture books, music and movement. There are many fun, free songs and activities available to you at [www.thelearninggroove.com](http://www.thelearninggroove.com). Feel free to share this site with others, and to use it between school and home for more integrated learning.

We’re going to think about how to teach control of the Central Nervous System, how to prevent or shorten meltdowns, and how to bridge the hemispheres of the brain to make more connections, and more communication. The ultimate goal is to help each child reach their full potential.

Take care of yourself too!  
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**Guidelines and Ideas for using music, stories and organized movement**

**Audience Participation:**
- Simple, simple, simple
- Clearly defined parts
- Obvious Timing
- If it's not incredibly obvious when and what to do, it has been taught or explained in a quick, simple, fun way
- Explain things visually whenever possible
- Emphasize taking turns by touching the next person or handing them something

**Techniques for Working with Children on the Autism Spectrum:**
- Modeling – Demonstrate the energy and the activities you want from children.
- Engagement/Interaction – The key to success. Have an activity for every song.
- Loving attitude – Children can tell if you are for them or not. They learn from people they trust, so patience, respect and bonding are key. (Also, you’ll be teaching them that they are valuable. Who knows? They might get used to it and learn to partner with people who respect them and treat them well!)
- Don’t take it personally when you do not get eye contact, kind words, or any reaction at all.
- Find out what motivates your children and reward them for appropriate behavior.
- Joyful and playful approach – Fun is an important teaching tool.
- No negativity – There are no bad answers, just steps to learning.
- Structure – Have clear starts, stops, breaks and expectations.
- Stimulation – Whereas children who are typically developing bloom in drama and big expressions, kids with sensory issues can be overwhelmed. Be clear, concrete, calm.
• OBSERVE your children - Watch them and listen to their cadence and their choice of subject/words. They are communicating! Let’s try to interpret it correctly.
• Remember that kids with special needs also have special gifts and interests. Look for them!

Benefits of Music and Movement in the Classroom:
• Engages students’ attention
• Kids learn language better through music and movement
• Encourages positive learning behavior, such as attentiveness and following instructions
• Supports transitions and classroom management (works better than yelling)
• Benefits long-term learning, because songs “stick in your head”
• Creates structure
• Builds classroom community
• Develops musical skills (which help to develop math and science reasoning)
• Develops motor coordination
• Gives a positive outlet to all that physical energy
• Develops control of the Central Nervous System
• Often great for special needs students
• It's free, easy and saves you energy
• It's fun!

When to Use Stories, Songs and Movement in School:
• Transitions
• Hello/ Goodbye Songs
• To help teach specific lessons, such as how to respond in a social situation
• To gather attention
• To break monotony of sit-down lessons and stimulate their minds and attention
• To build community and a sense of togetherness
• To settle kids down (lullabies, controlled breathing, stretching, etc.)
• To prevent meltdowns

Types Of Songs To Use With Children:
• Small Body Movement & Fingerplays -best for classroom (Itsy Bitsy Spider, 5 Little Monkeys, This Little Piggy, Wheels On The Bus)
• Large Body Movement - circle dance, direction dance, line dance (Hokey Pokey, Head Shoulders, S Twist, Mother Gooney Bird)
• Echo (The Beat Bus, Hey Little Monkey, Funga Alafia, Down By The Bay, I Like)
• Rhythm & Tonal Patterns (Funga Alafia, Beep Beep, The Beat Bus))
• Call & Response (Beep Beep, Wade In The Water, Chocolate Pie)
• Repetition (Alice The Camel, Five Little Monkeys, Little Bunny Foo Foo, Inch Worm)
• Dynamics (My Hat Has Three Corners, John Jacob Jingleheimer Schmidt)
• Suggestion Songs (Old MacDonald, I Like, Put A Chicken On Your Head, Riding In A Buggy)
• Cumulative Songs (Allouette, Old MacDonald, I Had a Little Rooster)
• Zip Songs
• Songs Where You Divide The Group Into Parts (Chiri Bim, Ain't No Bugs On Me)
• Story Songs (Pete The Cat, Great Big Plop, Going On A Bear Hunt, Little Bunny Foo Foo)
• Songs With Props (egg shakers, rhythm sticks, stretchy band, parachute, puppets…)