Objective
Develop listening skills essential to learning language.

Equipment
Item #10-531  Rhythm Sticks Activity Set
Item #01-443  Maracas Set
Item #01-441  Jambourine™ Set

Directions
1. Assign a particular movement to each of the three instruments or sounds you’ve chosen, and explain to the children that they should move that way when they hear the sound. For example, when you shake the maracas, they should shake their bodies. When you hit two rhythm sticks together, they should stamp their feet. And when you jingle the Jambourine™, they should move “like a clown.”

2. Repeat this process several times, always playing the instruments in the same order.

3. Eventually vary the order in which you play the instruments so the children won’t know what to expect. If possible, turn your back to them so they won’t see which instrument you pick up, or have them close their eyes.

Options
• Sit in a circle with the children and beat out a simple rhythm with your rhythm sticks (for example, 1-2). Count the beats aloud. The child next to you repeats that rhythm, and the game continues around the circle. When it’s your turn again, start the game with a different rhythm (for example, 1-2-3). Eventually the children can take turns choosing rhythms.

• As you read a rhyme or poem to the children, suggest that they tap their rhythm sticks along to the beat of the rhyme or poem. Can the children hear and feel its rhythm? When they’ve had ample experience with this, ask them to use their whole bodies and move around the room while tapping out the beat of the poem or rhyme.

• Sit in a circle with the children and, with a Jambourine™ or rhythm sticks, tap out the syllables of each child’s first name while saying the name aloud. For example, “Jo-ce-lyn” would have three beats. After tapping out each name, ask the group to mimic you with their own instruments.