

PlayIdea The Beat Goes On

Children love music and they love to march. Combine the two and you have a great activity that encourages gross-motor development and listening!



Ages 3 to 8

1, 2, 3, March! You may be thinking that the children can already walk and march, so why do we practice these things? Continuous practice and instruction are required if a child's performance level and movement skills are to increase; in other words, so they get better at each skill and can move on to more difficult skills. When children feel good about their movement abilities, they are more likely to make physical activity part of their lives!

Objective

This activity helps to build listening skills and a sense of rhythm while encouraging basic gross-motor development.

Equipment

Item # 10-531 **Rhythm Sticks**
Music CD of Marches

Directions

1. Find your favorite CD of marches. Choose one of the songs from the CD and get ready to play.
2. Start the music, then lead the children in a parade through and around your space; don't hesitate to move around, over, and under "obstacles."
3. After a while, let a child lead. If necessary, encourage the basic moves of marching such as swinging arms and lifting the knees high. Really get marching! Let each child have a turn leading.
4. Invite children to move:
 - Slowly
 - Quickly
 - Very lightly
 - Very strongly
 - In straight pathways
 - In curving pathways
 - In zigzagging pathways

Options

- Take two rhythm sticks for yourself, and give two to each child in the class (one for each hand). Using the same setup for your space as in the previous activity, invite the children to march around the space while everyone hits their rhythm sticks together. Encourage children to hit the sticks together on the beat, but keep in mind that some age groups will be too young to get it just right! Sometimes counting helps!
- Change it up a little. Walk like you are:
 - Big and strong
 - Really mad
 - Really sad
 - Tired
 - Proud
 - Scared
- Encourage the children to imitate you as they follow.
- For even more fun, have the children take turns leading while walking/acting like their favorite animal!
- For more of a challenge, practice walking, marching, and running backward. Be sure to encourage the children to look over their shoulders while moving in this direction.

