

Voice Lessons with Children of Ages 0-5 : Is it Appropriate? Is It Possible? Why and How?

Thinking About Re-defining and Prioritizing Fundamental Vocal Skills

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Background

As it is quite observable, children sing everywhere: in the subway, on the street, in parks and playgrounds, at home, at school, and more. They also sing on many different occasions and settings: at church, temples, during play time, birthday parties, and events such as the preschool holiday or end of year concert. Children learn new songs all the time. Parents and guardians sing to their infants constantly, they may sing ‘before bed’ to their toddlers, or watching Disney movies with their preschoolers. Nowadays, children have more instant access to more repertoire than our generations have ever been. They get to watch and hear many different types of singing through the access of TV’s, phones, computers, tablets and more. Indeed, some of these children are on these platforms, ‘going viral’ on YouTube, TikTok, Instagram, Facebook, Twitter and more. On shows such as America’s Got Talent, children who are 3 or 4 years old are singing adult-appropriate repertoire such as Celine Dion which requires an expanded range, stable breath support, register flexibility and vocal agility. Ellen DeGeneres always invites ‘child prodigies’ to her midday show. Or, simply, take five year olds singing the national anthem for an example: in front of thousands of people!

Just like speaking, singing is also very involved with our lives and communities. It is often learned by observations and imitations. Lots of the early childhood singing experience is seen as natural and expected, in fact children are praised for it when they can do it well. While learning these songs, children’s voices are very often left unsupervised.

Who are these children modeling as they learn to sing and use their voices? Do their parents have healthy voices? What about their babysitters? “Many young vocal students successfully emulate the vocal style of unhealthy vocal techniques (hard glottal attacks, breathy

vocals, glottal fry phonation...) demonstrated in the pop world.” (LeBorgne, Rosenberg, 2019, p.588). We expect children to sing, however, never really teach them how to do so properly. Kim (2000) talks about how kids get to elementary school and even preschool, learning songs from classroom teachers who are not good vocal models themselves. This can even be damaging to voices: “...many teachers use their own comfortable singing range, which is often too low for children.”(Kim. 2000). Leighton and Lamont (2006) actually talk about how many songs include complex elements and teachers need to be aware that this type of vocal skill needs practice, and “cannot be expected to develop on it’s own” (p.326).

Children also sing on their own, by themselves, for themselves, whether we expect it or not. They *will be* exploring their voices whether we ask them to or not. “Music, including voice, rhythm, and movement is a part of a child's natural psychology and self-discovery from birth.” (Harding,2016). “The chronological life of our singing voices begins with the first cry as a newborn baby, and continues throughout our entire lives, as an infant, a child, an adolescent...” (Brunssen, 2018, p.23). So why can’t we make vocal guidance more attainable early on? Edwin (2002) makes a truly reasonable and therefore convincing argument:

“When do children start to sing? We know from numerous clinical studies (Lewis, Kagan, Locke, Stoel-Gammon, and others) that respiration and phonation begin at birth. Intonation (cooing, squealing, laughing) normally develops within the first 4 months of life. Articulation begins at around 4 months, with consonant-vowel alternations called babble following at 7 to 10 months. The first words with intentional accent and variation of pitch appear at 10 to 13 months. Before a child is 2 years old, two-word combinations are being used. It is important to note that after 7 or 8 months of age a child will stop using the sounds he does not

hear on a regular basis and will use only those he hears most frequently. Analyzing such data, it is apparent that the necessary elements for singing—respiration, phonation, resonance, and articulation— are in place at a very early age. Does it not follow then that the opportunity to teach children to sing can also occur at a very early age?” (Edwin,2002)

Furthermore, even general musical skills such as rhythm and dynamics is taught through singing very often. Classroom teachers teach songs all day! Correspondingly, Wingare (2002) makes a compelling point:

“Singing is at the core of music education for all children. Unfortunately, many educators and singing teachers believe that formal voice training should begin after puberty and that young children should just sing songs. This approach has prevailed in schools for most of the 20th century. Some teachers now believe that voice training, with respect for the child’s developing vocal mechanism, can and should be taught during early childhood”. (Wingate, 2002).

Developing the vocal mechanism itself doesn’t just happen by learning songs. Aural and memorization skills aren’t the same as vocal skills. Unfortunately, embedded deeply in our practices, “Children may learn songs, but may not learn how to sing” (Kenney, 2010). Even the most common “singing” activities don’t necessarily hit the target. Flowers and Dunne-Sousa (1990) argue that “echo singing is a common activity in preschool” but also they are not directly correlated to good vocal technique or singing in tune.

Yet, whether or not “voice lessons” in the applied studio are appropriate for really young children has been a long running debate in the music education and among the vocal pedagogy field. LeBorgne and Rosenberg (2019), comment:

“The appropriate age for a child to begin vocal training remains controversial in the singing community. Historically, voice teachers have debated the minimum age to begin private vocal training. Some teachers believe that no child is too young to begin training, while others believe that training should not begin until after puberty” (LeBorgne, Rosenberg, 2019).

Early literature which looked into early childhood (ages 0-5- which is very few) has mostly discovered which strategies help children sing in tune. “Most attention has been focused on how to assess children’s singing” (Leighton, Lamont). Assessment of singing ability/singing accuracy often meant pitch matching and being in tune, but not really flexibility, agility, range expansion, or healthy and effortless singing/healthy vocal technique. Welch (1979) did a thorough review of some of the earlier literature with his “Poor Pitch Singing: A Review of the Literature” article, which you could refer to for more examples.

Pitch matching and intonation are skills that children could and should use while singing, but they are mostly aural skills and regarding audiation, not necessarily vocal skills. It is strange that there is almost no literature out there about really young children’s vocal technique (breathing, flexibility, onsets, agility, registers/range, dynamics, alignment). If children are expected to reflect aural skills and what we audiate through our singing, they must learn how to work with their voices, understand it better. Voice is a mysterious instrument, we can’t see it or touch it (not in our daily lives), so we must at least try to give children enough vocabulary to work with. If they are never taught to explore or even have any vocabulary to describe what is happening with their voices, children can’t sing it out loud either. Imagine- if you’ve never been taught how to pronounce a super hard word and explore where that sits on your voice, tongue, mouth, shape of jaw, you most likely won’t be able to say it correctly or accurately for a while.

There are many great techniques used with children that involves singing. But none of these necessarily teach them *how* to sing. For instance use of movement and gesture helps with the vocal quality when children are singing (Liao, Davidson, 2007). Being **in pitch** is important, however, if children do not know how to reflect what they hear, and if the muscles aren't built yet to do so, it is unfair to assess that and call them unmusical. Welch (1979) who has done a great amount of work in children and singing, also concludes that poor vocal function leads to poor pitch discrimination, and that it is a matter of inadequate vocal control instead. (p.56) "Greenberg¹ believes that it is not until age 5 or later that a typical child will be able to reach the higher tones with much accuracy, due to an inability to control the physical mechanisms needed to produce these tones". (Kim,2000). Even some of the most up to date research claims that "singing requires two fundamental skills: the ability to reproduce a heard pitch accurately and being able to sing a pitch in relation to those that precede and follow it, which results in 'singing in tune'. (Greenhalgh, 2018). Well, this is **inaccurate**. Singing requires these first: breathing (our power source, good/well-functioning vocal fold closure and muscle flexibility, as well as good manipulation of the sound through our formants (mouth, jaw, tongue...)). In my experience of teaching for the last 4-5 years, most singers sing on pitch if they know how to reflect what they audiate, if they know how to control how their voice functions. Thus, we can say that singing is more than just being on pitch and having an expanded vocal range. Being on the pitch is just a result of developed singing. Fundamental skills to sing require breathing, our vocal tract, and resonators, which all children are born with, to begin with. "If a child does not have use of the singing voice, he or she cannot use that instrument to express music ability or perception.

¹ Greenberg, M. 1979. *Your children need music*. Englewood, NJ: Prentice-Hall.

Therefore, the results of studies involving singing as a measurement technique for musical abilities may be in quest. (Rutkowski,1996).

There are barely any research/studies out there on actual voice technique (flexibility, register discovery, agility, expression, timbre, tone, acoustics) about children 0-5 ages.

If all this is true, why then, are we still debating if we can teach voice to children? First, let us clarify what we mean by “voice lessons”. I believe that it is important to screen the parent's intentions when they ask for voice lessons for their child, and it is important to be on the same page as to what to expect, but children **can and should be taught** fundamental singing skills. Traditionally, with children after puberty or with adults, there is a pretty standard rote to voice lessons. A teacher probably will do vocal warm ups and technique for 20-30 minutes, then repertoire for 20-30 minutes as well, and nowadays improvisation and creativity is also finding its way into our curriculums.

Usually standing up, and focusing for 45 minutes to an hour, it is a super fun, but challenging thing to do. When we talk about “voice lessons for children” in this paper, we are not talking about the “traditional way”. Of course we can not expect a two year old to sing a *classical aria* with vibrato throughout. Children do have limitations, and developmental stages/conditions that should be fully examined before giving lessons. There are things they can and can't do, and we must work around that. Just because young children are growing up rapidly doesn't mean they can not explore their instrument that they are born with. That being said, **no child should be forced to sing or make music**, but we can surely be encouraging and accepting when they want to. For children who are 0-5, this could be done through vocal explorations, vocal play and vocal parenting throughout the first years of their lives. Whatever we may call it

we can “help young children develop listening and vocal habits leading to beautiful singing”(Kenney, 2010) and healthy singing. “It is likely that singing competency will be nurtured through exposure to frequent opportunities for vocal play with a nurturing environment that encourages vocal explorations and healthy imitations” (McPherson, 2016; Mang, 2003, Welch, 2005, Young, 2002) add references too.

“Children can not take voice lessons”-

Let’s reconsider:

“Younger children might love to sing, but a focused lesson solely on vocal technique can be extremely difficult on young, undeveloped voices.” (Cheneau, Williams, 2016).

This makes a lot of sense, but also voice lessons *at any age* should never be solely on vocal technique, that would be tedious and old-schooled. Even adults should be approached with creativity and choices. Either way, we can have **formal “informal” lessons** or *vocal guidance* and help them develop musical and vocal skills through becoming a bit more aware of the sounds they make, even if it’s just 20 minutes a week.

There are too many blogs and websites which are not-peer-reviewed who say children can or can’t be taking lessons which uprising voice teachers and excited parents click on. For instance, one of the first that come up on Google says: “Many parents ask for voice lessons for students as young as 3 or 4 years old, but formal vocal training is not usually successful or appropriate for students this young” Cheneau, Williams (2016). Some people can even take it to the very extreme, as Baldy speaks on it: “Musicians and teachers are often fearful of doing vocal work with children’s voices, and I have come across some who believe that children should not

have any vocal instruction until eighteen- a position I believe to be both illogical and irresponsible” (Baldy, 2010, pg. 84)

Many other experts in the field who say children *can not* take voice lessons are concerned that since children’s laryngeal systems are unstable, and the folds are changing vastly in short periods of time, it does not make sense to work on the voice. However, with this argument, we can not do anything with our bodies until we are at least 9. We shouldn’t eat because our teeth will fall out and our jaw structure will grow. “At no other time in one’s life is there more change in vocal instrument than during infancy, childhood and adolescence” (Brunssen, 2018, p.43), and this instability scares even voice teachers, yet alone regular classroom teachers who lead singing activities throughout the day. Some others, believe that children are more prone to vocal injury since not all of the layers of the vocal folds are fully developed. Again, just like other bones and muscles in our bodies, we are not fully grown into our potential, but this doesn’t mean we shouldn’t crawl before we walk. Any child could fall and hurt themselves, but if we are there to guide them walk, at least, they can be more cautious instead of looking for cures later on. We can aim to prevent these vocal injuries and vocal overuse during the day instead of curing it. “Dysphonia in children is linked to personality and behavior” (Green, 1989; Bless and Heisey 2000). This could imply how important a healthy voice is, more than people realize. Skelton (2007) points out that "During voice transformation, with the rapid growth of cartilages, muscles, ligaments, and other tissues, the larynx is particularly susceptible to misuse and abuse." Following that idea, us not wanting to teach voice to children “such a dichotomy is all the more surprising when one realizes that there is little scientific confirmation of a child's vocal vulnerability. Additionally, others are simply concerned about children having limited range,

and ‘no head voice’. Children do have a limited range, because some of the muscles aren’t built to stretch out the vocal folds as much and their larynxes are still small. Their voices are changing and developing. Most muscles we use in singing for flexibility among registers (i.e head, mix, chest, etc) are underdeveloped. Rutkowski (1985) also categorizes: “...whereas the adult voice has three registers, the child voice has only two registers, which consist of the thick or chest voice and thin or head voice”. For instance, for the head voice which predominantly uses the thyroarytenoid muscle needs to thin out and stretch the folds to produce higher pitches, but since it is practically undeveloped, it could be very challenging. However, this is exactly why we must help them develop both their head and chest voice in a safe, informed environment. Developing the “head voice” doesn’t necessarily mean children hitting crazy high notes. We could practice a lighter mechanism within appropriate/not-so challenging ranges as well. “The teacher is the model for appropriate vocal timbre (light and free) within the appropriate range” (Rutkowski, Runfola, 2007)

To sum this idea up, children’s larynxes and vocal folds are rapidly changing until puberty. It is also true that the vocal folds aren’t fully developed yet and they do not have the protective cushions, which may make them prone to injury. However, babies cry and scream all day, so do toddlers. Preschoolers and children in first grade scream-speak with friends for hours. “Epithelium (which is the outer layer/cover of the folds) can be damaged due to speaking or singing too high/loud or too long”. (Brunssen, pg. 108). Yet, somehow it could be damaging to a child’s voice to encourage healthier singing for 30 minutes a week. Assumptions and non-fact based associations of dysphonia and singing should be re-debated. Wouldn’t it be better to encourage softer and lighter singing, as well as supervise them as they sing their hearts out to

Frozen? Why, are we really refusing to guide them through healthier speaking and singing habits earlier on?

Some of these concerns come from genuine care for the child, and they are rightfully so. I believe, the main concern is lying around somewhere else. We can work around children's limitations, however, "many of these students have very unrealistic expectations about what voice lessons should accomplish-for example, they want to sound like adults; few voice teachers have been trained to teach this age group, which has developmental limitations; and it is difficult to find appropriate materials and lesson activities for the unchanged voice". (Pomfret,2012)

Thus, nobody is to be blamed or underestimated. However, I believe the responsibility should be on us instead of reducing their education. We need to re-think whether or not children can not take singing lessons, or we are not informed enough to teach it. We as teachers, should be informed about voice pediatrics, capabilities, limitations, developmental stages at all times if we will work with really young children.

"Within the current pop culture, children and parents are inundated with unrealistic expectations of what young girls and boys should sound like without a full understanding of the demands placed on this type of performing and the potential injury risk associated with it." (Leborgne, Rosenberg,2019). Thus, it is crucial to communicate with parents/ guardians when it comes to working with really young voices, before we do so. Not every voice teacher has to, will want to, or is suited to work with children. Skelton (2007) concluded my thoughts beautifully: "I have found it an art by itself to teach children singing. It requires the most careful gentle

treatment, much more so than the cultivation of the voices of adults demands; and therefore only the best teachers should be trusted with the cultivation of children's voices.²” (Skelton, 2007)

“Fortunately, attitudes are changing,” Kenneth Phillips.

Reasons above are all understandable as to why many people did not want to teach children voice, but not the arguments just aren't strong enough to prove it would not be beneficial to guide children on their “vocal technique”. Kenneth Phillips (2014), who has done a great amount of work on children and singing brings up:

“Fortunately, attitudes are changing. The American Academy of Teachers of Singing in 2002 issued a position paper endorsing systematic voice instruction for children. While they once recommended that children not engage in formal voice studies, their position now states, No scientific, pedagogical, or psychological evidence indicates that child voice pedagogy is inherently harmful to children's bodies, minds, or spirits. The Academy now recognizes that there are benefits to teaching children to sing. In fact, well-trained singers of any age are less likely than untrained singers to hurt their vocal instruments or to allow the” (Phillips,2014)

We **can** teach in the very early years of childhood. Below, I have gathered a survey of literature and quotes from resources in the last two decades that support this argument:

- “...The language of ‘not ready’ is a personal bias not based in fact. What are they not ready for exactly? Not ready to discover and explore their voices? Kids love to sing.” (Nikki Loney, founder of “The Full Voice” on Brunssen,2018).
- “Adult type voice lessons that attempt to train the child voice to ‘sound like an adult’ are out of the question for children. The child's voice has not matured and is not strong

² Madame Emma Seiler, quoted in G. Edward Stubbs, Practical Hints on the Training of Choir Boys, introduction by Rev. J. S. B. Hodges (London: Novello, Ewer & Co., 1897), 12.

enough to perform at the adult level. **However**, I do recommend *developmentally appropriate singing lessons* for children, because singing is great exercise for the voice and early training provides a foundation for future vocal skill building and introduces the child to musical learning” (Wingate, 2002)

- “A voice teacher can teach very young singers, as long as their physical abilities and limitations are taken into account and respected. A trial lesson or evaluation is in order, during which it must be made clear to the family and to the student that the young voice should be protected, and that the goal of instruction is not to make the child sound like an adult. This is a concept that most families will understand, but likely will have not considered”. (Pomfret,2012)
- “Singing is a skill- a learned behavior. The earlier a child receives vocal instruction, the better. Singing instruction probably begins before birth... If the home environment includes singing, the fetus may be experiencing it’s first singing lessons”. (Kenney, 2010)
- “Things we learn in childhood can stay with us forever” (Baldy, 2010, pg. 84) - We can learn how to take care of our voices from a younger age.
- “Limited vocal range” is something that seems to be a common reason why voice teachers don’t find it appropriate to teach really young children. “Vocal range seems to be related to a child’s ability to sing” (Wilson, 1970/1971 ; Flowers, Dunne-Sousa, YEAR).

However, On head voice, many resources say:

- “Early childhood teachers may consider children limited vocal range when they plan singing activities, for instance. Such an approach may underrepresented children’s

potential, however. Consider children's greater pitch-matching ability in their making sounds or singing songs during free play, for example (Kim, 2000).

- “Many children become trapped in their lower voices at an early age and never learn to sing on the inner edges of their vocal folds (i.e the upper voice). Therefore, it is recommended that young children be led to discover and sing in the upper voice for a time without attempting to combine it with the lower register. The upper voice will then become stronger, and can be worked down to” (Phillips,2014,p.71)

Rutkowski (1985) guessed it correctly: “These trends seem to suggest that more emphasis will be placed upon the child's voice in the future, a concern for the practical application of research findings regarding the child voice is growing, and the gap between research and practice is narrowing”.Rutkowski, J. (1985)

What are some practical things we can take away from this knowledge above?

I must mention that I am a new, uprising teacher and researcher in the contemporary singing world, and therefore these are only genuine suggestions which I have collected and believe to be beneficial. As discussed below, more research and proof is needed.

First of all, we must keep in mind that children aren't like adults. They are not smaller versions of us either. We should be aware of physiological and psychological/ developmental stages of these really young children as their larynxes grow and folds thicken. For instance, their lungs are literally small and intercostal muscles aren't developed yet, so although you could do some breathing exercises with them in a playful manner, don't expect them to hold a note for too long. Breathing is 'more work' for children, they have less lung volume. This is just an example. Other things considered could be: larynxes are positioned high, etc.

Secondly, “teaching techniques in lessons should be child-centered and use concrete and playful demonstrations. The children should perceive singing lessons as play and not work”. (Wingate, 2002). Also, “the standard components of singing- posture, breath management, phonation, resonance, articulation and interpretation-need to be addressed in a patient, creative and playful manner”. (Edwin, 2002)

For instance, to explore vocal timbre Greenhalgh (2018):

“encourage voice play to give the children experience the full capabilities of their voices and help them to gain control (slides, sirens, etc.). Use different voice timbres: speaking, singing, whispering, higher, lower, spikey, robot(monotone), giant, fairy, growly, posh, tired, smiley and so on.” (Greenhalgh, 2018, p. 28).

Basically, teachers could “experiment with vocal timbre and dynamics through games. Do soft singing as well as loud. Instead of working on ‘i’ and ‘u’ vowels, say pink and blue in different ways”. (Leborgne, Rosenberg, 2019)

Furthermore, “The type of song literature used with young children is an important consideration for vocal success. Songs generally should be short and contain much repetition of melodic and rhythmic patterns.” (Phillips, 2014, p. 71) . That being said, expose children to different music from around the world. It will give students the chance to become familiar with other languages, rhythms, scales, and more importantly different ways of vocal use across genres. “Exercising different vocal functions” (Brunssen, 2018, pg. 560). “Children lap up all types of culture if they are given a chance” (Baldy, 2010)

Since children get bored easily and also have shorter attention span periods, Wingate suggests: “The lesson’s length is 30 minutes long and may include 1–3 children in a small group setting or may be a private lesson 15–30 minutes in length. Wingate, 2002)

“While the Academy now endorses "singing lessons" for children, it also points out that such lessons must be age-appropriate and healthful; that is, children should not be expected to endure long periods of vocaliza- tion”. (Phillips,2014)

Once language skills are more developed, teachers could start working with consonants- which would help with vocal agility. We could use songs both with and without words, or with and without consonants, too.

Wingate’s article about Singing Lessons for Children is a great start for teachers who want to work with really young children! He suggests things such as encouraging kids to feel the folds vibrate by gently touching the larynx or encouraging exercises that will explore singing vs speaking sounds. *Unlike other articles written on singing songs*, he actually explores timbre, resonance, phonation and breathing with children.

Also in general classrooms, “...effective games and activities that encourage individual and small-group singing in a nonthreatening classroom setting is necessary “ (Rutkowski, 1996)

Results/Conclusion

So, if we can teach really young voices, at what age can they start?

“The child’s age and developmental abilities help the teacher predict a starting point and boundaries for learning”. (Wingate, 2002).

- **We can give really young children (0-5) ‘voice lessons’. It can start as early as infancy.** “Just as children listen to language first then speak, they must also listen to singing

first, then sing” (Rutkowski, Runfola, 2007). Good, resourceful musical exposure is a part of our job as teachers too. Once language skills are more developed, we could incorporate that, and dive into vocal exploration through sounds and words!

- **Lessons should be “informal”, free-structured and customized.** We must be “Vocal parenting” (Edwin,2002) and treat lessons as voice lessons can be categorized as “serious play.”(Edwin,2002). For instance, from infancy up until 2 year olds: musical babbles and conversations are appropriate. “Such vocal explorations should be encouraged and responded to by adults”. (Phillips,2014,p.70) . “Infants living in home environments that do not include singing and expressive speaking may... come to kindergarten unable to sing accurately. These children are often labeled nonsingers and may never learn to sing if not given singing instruction in kindergarten or grade 1”. (Kenney,2010). Thus, early intervention regarding how to use our voices and sing, and exposing them to it is important! The earlier the better! Remember , encouragement and exposing are not the same as forcing it on a child.
- “musical and expressive skills learned at a young age will remain with the individual throughout puberty and into adult life. Similarly, many of the technical skills learned at a young age can remain consistent even after laryngeal mutation.” (Skelton,2007)
- “Without proper instruction in the process of singing, children develop bad habits that become ingrained for life” (Phillips,2014,p.72) , so we must guide try and prevent those bad habits instead of curing them, earlier on.

Last but not least, “Individual singing has consistently been shown to result in more accurate singing and to improve singing achievement (Gaiser, 1961; Goetze, 1985; Jersild & Bienstock, 1931, 1934; Richner, 1976; Smale, 1987; Updegraff, Heliger, & Learn ; Rutkowski, J. (1996). So private settings could be great!

Discussion and Implications

- **Choose appropriate songs to sing, but if they are singing the other stuff anyway, be of guidance!**
- **More specific activities, more practical solutions to these arguments needed.**
- We shall be careful about parents motivations when agreeing to teach these children. The children should want to be there, not forced. If a child, four year old, says she wants singing lessons, we shouldn't refuse guidance and/or break that enthusiasm.
 - **Further research** should investigate studies comparing children who have had ‘professional’ vocal guidance, vocal exploration and vocal play and it's benefits or disadvantages over the years. Does it prevent or cure vocal injuries? Do voices develop healthier or quicker? Are they able to sing more efficiently, comfortably, compared to children without vocal parenting?
 - Should explore: which specific activities/vocal warm ups are actually age-and-developmentally-appropriate, and provide teachers with logical explanations as to why.

- We need newer studies looking into whether or not early interventions can be beneficial in the long term compared to children who do not have early interventions.
- Teachers should not be afraid of working with the early childhood ages, as long as they are informed well. Not every teacher is a good fit to teach children, we should be honest with ourselves. Teachers must modify, **compromise**, **adapt**, and constantly update themselves with recent research.
- We must redefine how to assess children singing, not just with being in tune, but also a healthy, effortless voice production.
- Our voices are a part of our bodies and we have the right to explore it in a healthy way. You can not literally ‘see the voice’, and children can develop an earlier sense of how to communicate about it.
- Private settings for one-on-one instruction can be extremely nurturing, however, even group lessons can be privileged experience, and schools must pay more attention to vocal health as well. We shall raise awareness. It is not just about singing, but also a healthy voice could help a healthier mindset. It is the way we communicate. Being heard is important.
- We should encourage softer singing, and monitor the misuse/overuse of the voice in children when they do want to sing loudly, instead of discouraging them.
- More conversation in the field is needed. General classroom teachers aren't even often required to know much about child's voices... At least we can help parents become vocal parents as well, voice consultants to homes and schools.

This paper does not suggest to not use echo songs, storytelling, props, movement, gesture, action songs and many other ways children have been enjoying singing, but rather, encouraging parents, teachers, curriculum developers to pay more attention to the vocal healthy and vocal skills themselves during these activities.

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