



Relaxation Technique: Music

While there isn't much research out there about music and children and mood, **who among us hasn't used music to alter our own mood?** I bet you could list the following with very little hesitation...

What is a song you would listen to if you wanted to:

1. Cheer up
2. Really feel the blues
3. Motivate during exercise
4. Invoke a memory--to remember a person or experience
5. Relax

And you probably know instinctively that there is a connection between mood and music; if you want your child to calm down, would you play hard rock or lullaby music?

What one person thinks is relaxing may not seem relaxing to another person. As you and your child experiment with music and mood, keep in mind that your child may have different reactions than you expect to certain music. For example, perhaps "New Age" music is calming to some, whereas it just annoys others. For some people jazz is hard-to-listen-to, highly complicated music; for others, it's simply relaxing, background music.

If you want to learn a little about your child and his or her relation to music and mood, try playing different types of relaxing music as background music during a part of the day that tends to be stressful for your child. For example:

1. Before bedtime, when you need your child to start winding down.
2. In the morning, when your child needs to get ready for school.
3. When they come home from school.

Each time you experiment, try a different type of music. Does one type of music work better for your child than others? Is there one type of music that works at one time rather than another? Try experimenting with the following three types of "relaxing" music:

- Classical/instrumental (keep it simple)
- Music sold specifically as "relaxation music"
- Whale songs

The goal isn't so much to find one type of music that always works (that might never happen) but rather to teach your child that music can be used as a relaxation tool and that they can request music that they find relaxing.

For more tips, or if you need more information or would like to talk to someone:

In Washington State: Call the Family Help Line at 1-800-932-HOPE

Outside of Washington State: contact your local Circle of Parents agency at www.circleofparents.org