

“Clapping”

Ages 3 and Up

- ✓ Fine Motor Control
- ✓ Beat Awareness
- ✓ Hand-Eye Coordination

Aim:

- To strengthen fine motor control when clapping in different ways, as shown by the teacher/leader.
- To demonstrate hand-eye coordination by following the clapping variations shown by the teacher/leader.
- To develop an awareness of a “beat” by clapping in time with others.

Benefits to Child:

Clapping seems simple until you try it in a variety of ways, such as changing your hand positions or clapping against other things, other hands. Children will gain fine motor control and hand-eye coordination by clapping using their hands in different ways, as well as with different speeds and strengths. Beat awareness, as well as listening skills, are developed when clapping in unison and in-sync with the leader’s direction.

Music:

- Choose a variety of music to demonstrate different beats or, you can do this activity without music if you choose.

Materials:

- None needed.

Activity Description:

Begin this activity by asking children if they like to clap their hands and if they can name times when we usually clap our hands. Allow for lots of responses, including, we clap: at performances, to get someone’s attention, to scare away a bird or animal, when we are excited, etc.

Ask the children to clap when you signal them, and to stop when you signal again. Once they all stop, point out that most people clap by hitting the palms of their hands together loudly. **(If someone in the group has a disability or a prosthetic device, make your remarks suitable to the make-up of the group.)**

Tell the children that you are going to guide them through a series of different ways to clap. Talk to them about what a beat is, and how you want them to try to follow the beat you demonstrate, or the beat of the music if you use music for any part of the activity.

Guide the children in clapping in all of the following ways:

1. **VERY SOFTLY** - Be sure to emphasize the quietness of the clapping noise.
2. **VERY LOUDLY** - See how loud they can clap without hurting their hands.
3. **CLAP SLOWLY** – Emphasize following the beat, which is slow and deliberate.
4. **CLAP FAST** – Help children follow your beat by working up to a quicker one once you get started. Make a mental note of any children who have trouble following the beat so that you can work with them separately on this skill at another time.
5. **CLAP WIDE** – Hold hands very far apart and clap. Help children notice that the beat slows down when your hands are farther apart, and it may therefore be easier to follow.
6. **HANDS CLOSE TOGETHER** – Help children notice that the beat can speed up when hands are closer together.
7. **USE BACKS OF HANDS** – Clap the back of one hand against the back of the other hand. Notice the different sound, awkwardness, and difficulty doing this without stretching our arms out in front of our bodies.
8. **USE THE BACK OF A HAND AGAINST THE PALM OF THE OTHER** – Notice the difference in sound when the palm hits the back of the hand, rather than the other palm. Talk about the difference in force used, which makes the sound different.
9. **USING A RHYTHMIC PATTERN** – Clap two times slowly, then three times quickly and repeat. Make a mental note of children who have difficulty with this and adjust to make it easier.
10. Clap hands above the head, behind the back, under bent knees or, over to each side of the body.



Variation(s):

Allow children to take turns directing the group in a clap sequence. Ask the children to come up with other parts of the body on which they could clap (e.g, the thigh). Create a clapping pattern and ask the children to decide how fast, slow, loud, or soft they want to clap.