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## **New Survey Finds Many Families Out of Tune on Music Education**

*Primrose Schools® Shows Parents How to Turn Up the Music to Support Learning*

**ATLANTA (Oct. 3, 2011)** – More than half of U.S. children and adults have never received music education, though a majority (68 percent) thinks it's important, says a new IBOPE Zogby poll\* commissioned by Primrose Schools, *The Leader in Educational Child Care®*. Over 70 percent of adults recognize that music education enhances children's music appreciation, cognitive development and creativity. However, over the past 15 years, many school music programs have been cut to reduce budgets and to spend more time on math and reading instruction.

"The results show a disconnect between what people know and believe about music and what they're actually doing about it," says Dr. Mary Zurn, vice president of education at Primrose Schools. "Although many parents and teachers are aware of the benefits and value of a solid music education, and research tells us it's more important than ever to start at a young age, music is rarely part of the daily schedule in most elementary schools."

Early, consistent exposure to music has been found to support musical ability, language development, motor coordination, social skills and learning. Poll results further support the link between music and academic achievement: 65 percent of adults with college degrees participated in music education, compared to 37 percent of adults without college degrees.

"Music is an essential part of a well-rounded early childhood education that lays the foundation for future success. That's why Primrose has partnered with the international music education company, The Music Class®, to take music instruction to an even higher level. Our new Rhythm and Notes® with music from The Music Class program bridges in-school and at-home music activities with take-home CDs designed for different age groups. The partnership has made it possible for us to immerse Primrose students in music at school and at home. This program has been enthusiastically received because it gives parents an easy and fun way to be involved in their child's musical development at home," says Dr. Zurn.

Poll results reveal that music is already an important part of family life: 86 percent of families enjoy listening to music, and 80 percent of children are most frequently exposed to music at home. However, only a quarter of parents report using music to enhance learning.

"Children who grow up in an enriched music environment are better able to understand and enjoy music for the rest of their lives." says Rob Sayer, founder and director of The Music Class. "Children's brains are hard-wired for music – even babies can process rhythm! Our goal is for teachers and parents to build on the natural love of music children have through playful, active engagement. Adapting songs to go with everyday routines, creating musical conversations, and exploring a wide range of fun physical movements to songs brings music to life in ways that are fun for children and parents. Interacting with music on a daily basis also stimulates a child's brain in non-musical ways. In the long run, musical stimulation can result in more connections between the right and left sides of the brains. There's growing evidence that musical training increases brain plasticity which can be described as flexibility in brain function that enhances many aspects of brain activity."

For more fun, easy ways to add a brain boost to family music activities, Dr. Zurn and Sayer recommend the following:

**Dance!** Children naturally respond to music with movement, which is a natural way to learn about rhythm. Encourage your child to help choreograph a dance by incorporating their suggestions like jumping, leaping, sliding or galloping to the music. Provide a nurturing touch by holding, lifting and bouncing your child to the rhythm of the music to make dancing together a time of emotional bonding and also to stimulate neural pathways.

**Sing!** Music and language are so intertwined that singing songs is a natural way for babies and toddlers to build memory skills and learn new vocabulary. Repetition and rhyming are particularly helpful for heightening children's awareness of the sounds of language. Singing familiar songs gives children a chance to practice sequencing words and phrases and can be done almost anywhere. Find out what songs your child is learning at school or child care and watch his face light up when you sing along. Try carrying on a conversation by singing – children love it. Also, be sure to take advantage of your drive time to stimulate those noggin's, given that more than 75 percent of children are most frequently exposed to music in the car. Music can make short and long car trips much more enjoyable!

**Listen!** Play music from your country of origin or your region of the United States. Then play music from other cultures or parts of the country. Help your child identify similarities and differences. Twenty-four percent of adults say music is an important part of their cultural heritage, and there's no better way to begin teaching your child about their own culture and that of others. Primrose's newly enhanced Rhythm and Notes curriculum with music from The Music Class features music from around the world that helps children develop an awareness and appreciation for other cultures.

**Play!** It's easy to gather simple instruments like pots and pans that children can use to keep time with music or count beats. If you record their productions, they will love hearing it over and over! Plus, those instrumental sessions can improve hand-eye coordination and spatial reasoning.

For more ideas to help your child learn through music and other parenting tips, visit [www.DrZandFriends.com](http://www.DrZandFriends.com).

*\* The survey was conducted from August 25 to 29 with a representative sample of 2,366 U.S. adults, including 582 parents of children under age 17. The margin of error is +/- 2.2 percentage points.*

#### **About Primrose Schools**

Founded in 1982, Primrose Schools is the nation's leader in providing consistent, accredited early childhood education and child care services in more than 220 schools in 16 states. Primrose School's foundation is based on a dedicated and passionate group of early childhood professionals providing high quality education with a balance of learning, character development and play.

Primrose School's Balanced Learning® Curriculum blends teacher-directed and child-initiated activities and is consistently delivered in all Primrose Schools nationwide. This exclusive curriculum is standards-based and enables teachers to help children build a foundation of knowledge and skills that will enable them to move successfully from one level of development to the next. Primrose is the first preschool organization in the country to achieve the gold standard in educational accreditation from AdvancED and to require all of its schools to become SACS CASI or NCA CASI accredited. For more information, visit [www.primroseschools.com](http://www.primroseschools.com).

#### **About The Music Class**

Founded in 1998, The Music Class Inc. is an international music education company developed by Rob Sayer. The Music Class programs are designed to unleash the musical potential of young children. With over 1700 students enrolled in our weekly parent/child classes in metro Atlanta, our Atlanta teaching center is the largest early childhood music education center in the country. The Music Class curriculum and materials are used in over 150 cities in North America and a growing number of countries abroad. Our CDs have earned honors including The National Parenting Center's Seal of Approval and The National Parenting Publications NAPPA Gold Award. For more information, visit [www.themusicclass.com](http://www.themusicclass.com) or email [rob@themusicclass.com](mailto:rob@themusicclass.com).

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