GENERAL SONG ADAPTATIONS TO SUPPORT LANGUAGE
Musselwhite, 2002

Choice Boards

In an approach termed **singing to read** (Musselwhite, 1992a), song verses are visually depicted in a left to right format, with students manipulating the symbols/graphics. Many songs (e.g., "Something to Give") are set up in a "slot-filler" format, with a basic sentence frame into which word(s) are inserted. Typically, the sentence frame ("Some poeple have" + "the gift of" + "empty slot") is placed on the front, with the choices (THEIR TIME, THEIR MIND, THEIR LOVE) placed on the back. The student picks a symbol from the back, places it in the slot on the front, then sings the song while the facilitator cues as necessary. Alternatively, the front side can depict the verses, while the refrain is on the back. The song strip can also be used to depict a symbol sentence that can be matched on a communication device for voice output.

front

back

Using Choice Boards

Use choice boards to:

- Select Songs (Old MacDonald vs. Baby Bumblebee)
- Choose Song verses (babies / wipers / boys / on the bus)
- Fill in Slots in Songs ("Goodnight moon / light / bunny)
- Model Left-to-Right and Symbol Placement
- Retell Books via Singing ("Goodnight moon")
- Beginning Writing Through Song Construction (Change text: "Goodnight blocks, goodnight socks, goodnight rocks, I'll see you when I wake.") See illustration.

Finding / Making Choice Boards

Buy It: www.creative-comm.com has a great one!
Make It: use foam-core art board (buy from WalMart) - cut 3 " x 20" - make 20 from one sheet!

Pocket Charts

Most of the "Songs For Learning" present two or three slots for students to fill. This activity, termed "song construction" is a great emergent writing activity. Use of a pocket chart can visually depict changes from line to line. Many additional strategies for using this approach are provided in McCracken & McCracken (1986) and Musselwhite & King-DeBaun (1997). For eexample, the song *Katie Wore the Striped Socks* presents three slots to be filled: the first is the child's name, filled by a word card, or by a symbolized depiction of a boy or a girl; the second slot presents a descriptor (STRIPED / POLKA DOTTED / PLAID), and the third slot offers a choice of clothing items (SHIRT / SOCKS / SCARF). A pocket chart can be used to depict the song, starting with the actual words from a page of the book, and progressing to several lines of song construction. A choice board or velcro-sensitive board can be used with the pocket chart to present choices to students.

Pocket Chart with Song

Shape/object song board.

Song Boards

Some songs are especially appropriate for use of "song boards," in which all or most of the symbols for a song are presented at one time. Song boards can also depict a song clearly and innovatively. For example, the song "Wheels On The Bus" can be presented in the form of a bus, with agents (e.g., DRIVERS, CHILDREN, BABIES) and actions (e.g., MOVE ON BACK, UP AND DOWN, WAA WAA WAA) placed on squares representing bus windows. Goossens', Crain, & Elder (1992) depict highly creative song displays that visually support learning of traditional songs. These displays also promote student participation through strategies such as including Velcroed symbols that can be pulled off the display and incorporating moving parts.

Ready Made Song Boards

Carol Goossens' had created a set of 8 22" x 22" colored songboards. Every one includes detachable or moveable parts to heighten student interest. The boards fold for easy storage. The set includes: symbols depicting repeated lines (E-I-E-I-O), a Macintosh disk with song overlays, and an audiotape of the eight songs. Sample songs are:

- Miss Polly's Dolly
- Baby Bumble Bee
- Five Little Ducks
- Mr. Alligator

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Goossens' Song Board Features

BUNNY FOO FOO (above)
Bunny Foo Foo is a wonderful Kid-Pleaser! This one has removeable 'mice' symbols. The bunny is on a popsicle stick - on the back is . . . the goon!! Note that the fairy is attached to fishing line. When you sing "DOWN came the Good Fairy" . . . guess what . . . she really comes DOWN! What a great way to make that spatial concept more concrete!

ITSY BITSY SPIDER (left)
Itsy Bitsy Spider is another kid-pleaser. The use of fishing line helps students with concept development:
The rain comes DOWN
The spider goes UP and DOWN
The sun comes OUT

As Pati King-DeBaun says, "language made visible!"

Props

Props can be great fun, and help students who are 'concrete learners.' In our book, "Emergent Literacy Success" we give tons of ideas for using props to support literacy. Here's one: Attach a velcro bracelet (use Tempo Display Loop Fabric) to the student's wrist - props can easily be placed on & removed. For example, Kari has a small plastic cow prop, and Ellie has a plastic pig. When they sing Old MacDonald's Farm, Ms. Lucas asks the children to 'raise your arm when you hear your animal' helping them to focus on language comprehension! (See how to make & use a Props Bracelet in R.E.A.D. project planbook by Musselwhite & Hanser).