

# Music Play With Purpose

Presented by: Jim Gill

Twenty-seven years ago I created a weekly program in music play for an agency providing programs and support for families with young children with special needs. Initially the agency professionals and families attending all looked at the program as an opportunity to gather for simple fun. After a number of weeks, however, everyone began pointing out the **abilities** that the special needs children were demonstrating through this play. It wasn't long before some of the therapists were singing my songs in their sessions. Parents also noted that singing the songs with their children at home was a joyous way to continue to work, more or less, therapeutically on their own.

In other words, it was play....but **play with purpose**.

I spent twenty years leading this "play" programming and continue to be influenced by what I observed.....while playing.

My graduate studies in child development helped me to understand **why** play is the ideal context for young children to learn and for adults to guide that learning. Many years of singing and book making with children has convinced me that we need to consider early literacy in the context of play as well. Concepts that we know are important to early literacy such as auditory acuity and phonemic and phonological awareness are best developed through active engagement in word play and rhyming games. Young children become more engaged in these early literacy "building blocks" when the word play is combined with an opportunity for physical movement and active play.

I hope that you will leave this workshop inspired to share a new repertoire of songs and games with children in the classroom. Even more, I hope that you will recognize the power of play to inspire, in children, agility in thought and a love of learning.

## Biography

Jim Gill is a musician and author with unique credentials among children's artists. Jim is a child development specialist, completing his graduate studies in child development at the Erikson Institute of Chicago with a special emphasis on the study of play. For this reason, each of Jim's recordings and books is created as an opportunity for playful interactions between a child and a caring adult.

Jim has released six award-winning CDs of music play for young children that are favorites in family rooms, classrooms and playrooms. Jim is also the author of two children's books. His latest, **A Soup Opera**, is a sing-along opera inspired by concerts that Jim performs with symphony orchestras. The book received an **American Library Association** award in 2010. More information about his work, music and books is available online at [www.jimgill.com](http://www.jimgill.com).