

Pass the Beat

Beat Competence & Left to Right Directionality

Turn taking, left to right directionality, and beat competence can be targeted simultaneously by passing a 4 beat pattern around the circle. This can be done with body percussion (e.g., clapping hands, tapping legs) or with rhythm instruments.

The sequence could go something like this:

- A warm-up activity in which children have been given matching instruments and everyone taps a steady beat in time with the teacher's singing.
- Introduce "Pass the Beat" by having each child count "1 - 2 - 3" out loud while simultaneously tapping a pair of rhythm sticks. This is followed by one beat of silence before the next child's turn. | ♪ ♪ ♪ ♪ |
- After children become comfortable, the "1 - 2 - 3" structure is repeated but without saying the numbers out loud.
- Incorporate rhythmic variety using rests, eighth notes, and syncopation.
- Patterns of movement can also be passed around the circle. For example, with rhythm sticks: "tap floor," "tap floor," "tap together"
"tap shoes," "tap knees," "cross arms to tap floor"

Variation: A similar structure can also be used for a greeting activity. By using the sequence of "slap knees," "slap knees," "palms up," followed by a rest, have the children take turns saying their names on the "palms up" motion. A verbal cue of "down, down, up" is helpful in establishing the rhythm. This could be expanded to having kids share their favorite colors, favorite foods, or last names. The possibilities are endless!