



## **The Soundtrack of Life**

**By Pam Morris, Early Learning Center director**

You know that one song that gets you all choked up? The one that provokes memories of a special friend or that time you watched the sunset on TOBAY beach on Long Island? Maybe it is more than one song that brings you back to a special time in your life. Music evokes emotions that often can't be duplicated in other ways. I have playlists that I use specifically for morning walks to get me moving and grooving, ones that provide the backdrop for my bouts of karaoke and ones that bring me back to New York.

### **Music and Its Impact**

What music provides for me is a sensory experience where I can lose myself in the melody or the words. The tempo of the song sets the stage for how I am feeling or how I want to feel. Maybe the day isn't going as well as I would like and then the car ride home gives me the opportunity to play those songs that will help turn around my perspective; turn my frown upside down as they say.

### **Learning with Music**

Math and reading are two areas of learning that are enhanced by music. Using the beats and rhythm to really understand patterning is one of the biggest benefits, mathematically for children. A child who struggles with understanding an AAB pattern through letters or numbers will grasp the concept with rhythm sticks, the drums, maracas or even singing. Young children can begin this learning as early as infancy to help set the stage for their academic growth.

According to [brainbalancecenters.com](http://brainbalancecenters.com), "Some research finds that music activates the same areas of the brain that subjects use while solving spatial-temporal reasoning problems. Based on extensive research and knowledge that certain types and frequencies of sound are processed by the two hemispheres of the brain differently, using specific music and sounds may help to stimulate one hemisphere more than the other and possibly create more balance in the brain.



As such, listening to music could improve a student's cognition and ability to learn math skills. As recently as 2012, one study showed that listening to music during a math test could improve performance by 40 percent."

### **Bringing Music into Your Life**

For some people, they couldn't imagine going a day without music. It is part of their daily routine. My daughters wake up to music as their alarm clock. I did, too, when I was in high school. Now, I have that awesome internal clock that doesn't allow me to sleep past a certain time, anyway, so an alarm clock isn't necessary.

Do you use music as a way to lift your spirits? I certainly do. I choose music based on my mood or the mood I want to have. When my children were younger, I used music to engage them while we were driving in the car, whether it was to the grocery store or to Las Vegas to see Grandma and Grandpa. I sang to them on walks and when it was time to go to sleep. How do you incorporate music into your life?

### **That Soundtrack**

And of course, the soundtrack of my life doesn't only include songs. It is the sound of my daughters giggling; the sound of the guinea pigs squealing when I am chopping veggies in the kitchen; the sound of the filter bubbling when one of the intake valves gets knocked askew by the turtle.

These sounds keep me grounded and in the moment, a pleasure I truly treasure. What sounds make up your soundtrack? Which ones help you feel comforted and safe? Hold onto those sounds in your memories. They will, all too soon, fade into the background as your children grow up. And while the screeches and crying might not be pleasant, the "What is this?" "Why?" "When?" "Mine" will evolve into "Can I go out with my friends?" and "Can I have the keys to the car?" and "I'm leaving now, mom. I will be back at Thanksgiving" will come much too soon.

Shabbat Shalom.