


Theme 11. Exploring New Musical Contexts

Sensory-friendly performances and **children's concerts** are offered in many communities. Check for events at your local symphony, opera, ballet/dance company, children's theater, or library.

Here are some tips and ideas for engaging with new musical experiences:

- Before attending a new event, **prepare and read a "Social Story"** many times leading up to the event. Social stories provide short descriptions and specific information about what to expect during the activity. Use photographs if possible or other pictures in your story. You can also include what coping strategies your child might use if they need a break.
- Bring **behavioral supports** to a new event. For example, if your child is used to sitting on a mat at music class, try bringing a mat (or even a towel) for them to sit on at the new musical activity. You can bring picture cards that your child associates with certain activities, such as listening, sitting, singing, or dancing to use during the event.
- **Practice at home** beforehand to review what you will do when attending the event. For example, you might practice sitting quietly while listening to musical recordings, or practice asking for a break to pause the activity.
- **Start with small events**, stay for only short time periods, or take breaks before your child gets frustrated to build up positive experiences over time. Some venues have quiet "calming rooms" or "sensory rooms" available for taking a break at busy events.
- **Praise positive behavior** to help reinforce preferred behavior when in a new setting. You might even use a musical thank you jingle!



Serenade Examples:
Sing your social story by setting it to a familiar tune such as "Here We Go Off to Music Class"