

NEWSLETTER

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LET'S SING TOGETHER!

Parents are great vocalists at the beginning of parenthood. They can't stop singing and crooning to their newborn. Later they sing nursery rhymes and little songs like "Itsy Bitsy Spider" to their toddler. School kids come home singing songs and often the parents join in. After all most of us remember the words to "America the Beautiful."

But then the singing stops in many homes. Pity. Music is good for kids and families. Singing together makes everybody feel good. Singing exercises the brain as well as the lungs. And singing is fun!

In our house the bedtime ritual consisted, predictably, of a story or two told or read at each child's bedside. But this was preceded by a pre-bedtime ritual: the singing. We had an illustrated book of children's songs and one of folk songs (there are lots of these in the book stores). Both children sat on my lap in the rocking chair and we sang songs together. The music was there but, even if you can't read music you can sing "My Darling Clementine" from memory. And you can teach it to your kids.

Indulge me in a personal anecdote. One night when Rachel was about four and Jeb two, I was rushing to get dressed to go to the opera. I sat the children in the chair by themselves and gave them a book of songs. Jeb said, "I want to sing Clementine." The kids leafed through the pages looking for the familiar picture, but couldn't find it. "I know," said Rachel, "I'll look it up in the Index." She went to the back of the book where the Index was and burst into tears wailing, "I can't read yet!"

Good example of how children learn from their parents. She knew what and where an index was and how it was used. When she learned to read she already knew how to use an index.

So make YOUR home a pleasant place filled with song!