

Rainbow Ring Activity Ideas

♪ **Introduction** - This activity booklet has been put together due to the several requests that we receive for other Rainbow Ring/Tactile Ring activities. Many teachers and music educators have shared their ideas and this booklet is the result of their invaluable experience and skills. I plan for this booklet to be available on my website so that it may be accessed by anyone wishing to broaden their Rainbow Ring activity repertoire. Should you have any other suggestions other than what is written in this booklet, please email your ideas/suggestions and I will try to include them in the next version of this booklet. I would like to extend a huge thank you to Heather Birnie (New Zealand) for coming up with her version of the Rainbow Ring and for bringing to life my idea for the Tactile Ring that has proved to be so popular with our early childhood students - especially those with special needs. Enjoy!

Leonie Cecich

Director

www.kidsmusic.com.au

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- ♪ **Rainbow Ring** - a large 'scrunchie' that is made of the same type of material but has different colours. The material needs to be a variety that can cope with being stretched as well as being washed if necessary. The elastic inside is called shock cord (available from hardware stores). Sizes vary but are they usually around 4-12 metres in diameter.

- ♪ **Tactile Ring** - is a Rainbow Ring that has different materials and, therefore, different textures. Great for getting children who are tactile defensive (don't like touching new or different textures) to experience new textures in a fun way. An excellent resource for children with special needs, especially those who are visually and/or hearing impaired.

- ♪ **Suitable size ring for your group** - the general rule is that the size of the ring is suitable for double the amount of students. For example, 6 metre ring is suitable for 12 children, 8 metres is suitable for 16 children, 10 metres for 20 children, 12 metres for 24 children. A 4 metre ring is generally used with very small groups eg. early intervention/special education where there is around 4-5 students. Important note for the 4m ring is that when running/walking fast people tend to get dizzy as the diameter of the ring is so small. As a rule, 8m is suitable for child care, (up to 4 years); 10m is suitable for kindy and preschool aged children (around 4-5 years); the 12 metre ring is a very large, heavy ring and is only suitable for large groups (over 6 years of age). It is important to note that a very large area is needed for the 12 metre ring.

- ♪ **The Rainbow Ring/Tactile Ring is perfect for...**
 - teaching children to sit in a circle. It gives them a 'visual' of what a circle looks like. Children have trouble forming a circle with their peers until they are around 8 years of age.
 - maintaining eye contact with the teacher and peers
 - teaching concepts eg. in/out, left/right, over/under, up/down, slow/fast
 - modelling a physical boundary for younger children eg. chn can sit inside the circle, outside the circle, inside the figure eight shape, in a long rectangle etc.
 - learning and practising rhymes, chants and songs
 - grasping and, therefore, strengthening hand muscles for pre-writing skills, scissor skills, monkey bar or swing activities.

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- ♪ **Fling the Ring** - ONLY DO THIS ACTIVITY WITH CHILDREN OVER SIX YEARS OF AGE. Pregnant ladies should also NOT be involved in this activity. Stand in a big circle and 'fling' the ring into the centre. Children are always curious to see the 'cause and effect' response when they let go. Make sure that children are listening and that you have eye contact with them. Explain that you will count slowly '1...2...3...FLING!' Children are to let go on the word 'fling'. Explain that if the children have really good 'listening skills' and 'follow instructions' that the ring should land in the centre of the circle! Get children to hold the ring with their pointer fingers only as younger children often have trouble uncurling their hands from a grasping position in time to fling and may be hit by the ring instead. Try to have a few adults evenly spaced around the circle. Get the adults to step slightly forward so that they can protect a child that doesn't let go in time. Older children really enjoy this activity and love the challenge to work as a team and improve their 'landing in the centre of the circle' challenge!
- ♪ **Physical boundary** - children can sit around the outside of the ring, or inside the ring. Great for getting children to sit inside the circle for group/mat time or even story time. Make the ring into a figure eight on the floor and get children to sit in the different halves. Or have two different activities/actions happening in the two halves at the same time - a bit like musical statues!
- ♪ **Reciting times tables** - sitting in a circle, pass the ring around one direction for a times table (eg. x1) and then the opposite direction for another times table (eg. x2) etc. Teacher recites table and then children echo. Try to jazz up the 'chant' with a funky rhythm or add an expressive 'yeah' at the end of each line eg. 'once one is one YEAH!'
- ♪ **Acting out stories** - Eg. Hairy McClary from Donaldson's Dairy by Lynley Dodd. Use the ring to imitate each dog - moving it in different ways for individual characteristics.
- ♪ **Trains** - Children are lined up in a long line, put the ring over them and get children to hold onto both sides to make one long train. Weave around the room. Change direction to create a new leader. See train songs listed below
- ♪ **Circle Dances** - instead of holding hands eg. Hokey Pokey

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- ♪ **Spelling** - sitting in a circle, the teacher calls out the word (eg. words from the set spelling list for that fortnight) and everyone spells the word while passing the ring around the circle. Eg. 'cat c...a...t...'; children can then copy. Try spelling each word twice so that everyone 'gets it'. Having a 'cueing word' so that everyone starts at the same time eg. 'cat c...a...t... go!' Keep slow and steady (or fast and funky when ready!)
- ♪ **Guess the colour** - sing to a 'soh me' melody 'pass it round, pass it round, pass it round and stop! What colour have you got?' Call out the colour/texture and then start the chant again.
- ♪ **Boat** - Use it as a boat - use two different speeds of music - one floating and the other bouncy. All sit in the boat for the floating one (can use scarves or streamers) then all out and dance for the fast music, all back in when the music changes to slow and sit and wait till it changes again.
- ♪ **Teddy Bears/Dolls** - bears/dolls do the activities eg. bears jump over the ring (laid out on the floor), bears walk/fly/swim/spin around ring etc. Sit in the circle and have a cuddle at the end of the song.
- ♪ **Concepts** - use it for 'in' and 'out' songs. E.g. elastic is bendable, 'inable' and 'outable'. Elastic is bendable see what it can do. In, in, in, in, out, out out out - use catchy tunes. Then 'upable' and 'downable' Any up/down, in/out, left/right songs. Change words to known songs eg. We're going up, we're going up etc
- ♪ **Pass-the-Parcel type game** - when the music stops the child holding the chosen colour has a turn at something eg. make up an action and everyone else copies
- ♪ **Sharing Feelings** - how does this colour make you feel? Texture make you feel? What does it feel like? (as opposed to how you feel ie soft, silky, smooth etc)

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- ♪ **Walking as a group** - great for very young children and children with special needs. Walk together in a line, holding onto the ring. Good for walking around centre/school grounds together to reinforce boundaries - for those who are 'runners'. Also good training for a fire drill ie. all walking and staying together as a group.

- ♪ **Elastics** - Two people to have the ring around their ankles. Legs apart. Form a rectangle. Try different jumping patterns. In, out, one leg in, other leg in. Arms in/out/up etc. Great for following instructions. Try chants, nursery rhymes to help with timing.

- ♪ **Nursery Rhymes** - recite any nursery rhyme, poem or song to help keep the beat/rhythm, learn the words and to keep little hands busy. Hold ring with thumbs and do actions with fingers See song book list below for nursery rhyme resources

- ♪ **Wheels on the Bus** (to maintain circle) doing actions using the ring as you go around the circle, both ways, or pedal inwards. People stand up and down (just hands go up and down or whole body), wipers on the bus go swish... hold a small loop of ring together and swish on angle side to side, horn goes beep, push both hands forward, kids on bus go crazy crazy crazy, hold onto ring and do a Mexican wave type crazy move using whole body.

- ♪ **Here We Go Round Mulberry Bush** - standing up in a big circle. Walk around. All fall down at the end and then get up and go the other direction for the second verse.

- ♪ **Electric 'air guitar'** - children hold up approx half a metre of ring to their left (in the air and on an angle - like the neck of a guitar). Sing songs playing guitar including Twinkle Twinkle little star, my Dad plays the electric guitar etc. Do a 'slide' up and down the neck.

- ♪ **Row, Row, Row Your Boat** - in a circle. Act out the words with body. Legs apart to give an upper body torso workout. Turn around facing the opposite direction and sing again! Wave arms in the air for a scream in the 'crocodile' verse. Try 'rock, rock, rock your boat' and rock sideways.

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Specific Songs for Rainbow/Tactile Rings -

Song Title	Album	Composer	Website
To the Side	You Gotta Get Up 2	Leonie Cecich	www.kidsnmusic.com.au
Until the Music Stops	You Gotta Get Up 3	Leonie Cecich	www.kidsnmusic.com.au
Move It	Move It	Susie Davies-Splitter & Phil Splitter	www.welcometomusic.net
See Me Go In	Wriggle and Jiggle	Kids Music Company	www.kidsmusic.com.au
Rainbow Rave	Your Stage	Susie Davies-Splitter & Phil Splitter	www.welcometomusic.net
Magic Ring	Your Stage	Susie Davies-Splitter & Phil Splitter	www.welcometomusic.net
Stretchy Cord	Break Out	Kids Music Company	www.kidsmusic.com.au
Walk in a circle	You've Got to Clap	Kids Music Company	www.kidsmusic.com.au

Train Songs that can be adapted for Rainbow/Tactile Rings -

Train Song Title	Album	Composer	Website
Clickety Clack	You Gotta Get Up 1	Leonie Cecich	www.kidsnmusic.com.au
The Melbourne Train	Bop in the Bath	Susie Davies-Splitter & Phil Splitter	www.welcometomusic.net
Groove Train	Funkey Monkey	Susie Davies-Splitter & Phil Splitter	www.welcometomusic.net

Books that have songs/nursery rhymes that can be adapted for the ring

Book Title	Description	Website
The Useful Book	Great nursery rhymes, songs, poems and ideas from the ABC Play School series.	www.shop.abc.net.au
The New Useful Book	More great nursery rhymes, songs, poems and ideas from the ABC Play School series.	www.shop.abc.net.au
Merrily Merrily	A great little book with more songs and rhymes for the very young.	www.mothersdirect.com.au
Kidz-Fiz-Biz Multicultural	Songs in different languages and from other countries by Marlene Rattigan	www.kidzfizbiz.com