

# WHY SINGING?

**SINGING IS ESSENTIAL TO LANGUAGE, INTELLIGENCE, BEAUTY, HAPPINESS**

Singing is essential to the development of human language and intelligence. Songs such as those found in children's nursery rhymes and singing games provide the containers through which vocabulary, syntax, and rhythms of language flow. We learn conversational models, how to tell a story, how time passes and how to make observations. We learn how things add up, multiply and repeat, giving us the fundamentals necessary for mathematics and logic. We learn how to create beauty and harmony with others. Through music we express our sense of wonder. Singing helps us "make sense" of the world we live in!

Participatory singing has been declining for many years in modern American society. Vocal music programs have been defunded. Professional singers fill the airwaves, giving people the subtle message that their own voices just don't measure up. How often have you heard people put down others' (or their own) voices with euphemisms such as "can't carry a tune in a bucket?" It's no wonder that teachers and children lack confidence, experience, and information about their singing voices.

Yet the voice is central to all human learning and expression. In Vo-CE workshops, Judy Fjell teaches that *the voice must not only be taken care of, IT MUST BE CHERISHED.* She empowers everyone to sing in expressive and healthful ways. She leads children and teachers in singing games, singalongs, and dances. The games, the lyrics, the strategies involved are delightful and the singers are physically transformed by the sympathetic vibrations brought to the entire body during singing.

**Voice-Centered Education helps students**

- 1) develop their voices, ideas, & expression
  - 2) manage their own learning paces
  - 3) manage their own behaviors
  - 4) develop real skills in
- LANGUAGE, READING, WRITING  
MATH, MUSIC, AND LOGIC**

Judy Fjell answers questions about  
**Voice-Centered Education**

## WHY SINGING GAMES?



Japanese children  
reading the songs  
they've been  
singing!

### 1. SINGING GAMES TEACH CHILDREN TO LISTEN AND FOCUS

In this day and age many of the world's children are bombarded by media and other sources of entertainment. Computers, televisions, games, movies and toys fill up the space that have in other days and times been free for children's verbalizations and imaginations.

When any external stimulus presents itself, humans are wired to respond by focusing. But in the media-filled environment of modern society, children would be completely overstimulated (and many of them are!) if they truly paid attention. As a result, children have become experts at filtering out sound. Why? Because they must do this to survive the constant stimulation! Their natural inclinations today are probably no different from children a hundred years ago, but their external environment has undergone dramatic changes.

It is important for educators to help children learn to focus and listen. This benefits them in all learning situations. Judy uses Songworks singing games, as developed by Music EdVentures (musicadventures.org). This approach is very effective in teaching children to listen to their peers, to their teachers, and to their own inner voices and imaginations.

### 2. SINGING GAMES ENGAGE CHILDREN WITHIN AND BEYOND THE CLASSROOM

Singing engages children in language, reading, writing, math, music, and logic in a way that nothing else does. While playing singing games, children develop a physical intelligence which helps them understand and use abstract concepts. The games also present children with many styles of learning.

The singing of folksongs and song games directly affects language development. While playing and singing, children discover for themselves how language can be modified to create new meanings.

During a song game, children repeat phrases many, many times. When the songs are "stuck in their heads," those repetitions are unconsciously carving neuromuscular pathways. Even when they're asleep, their mouths and brains are getting much-needed language practice. Singing accelerates language learning by exercising all the components overtime.

### 3. SINGING GAMES BUILD SELF-ESTEEM & SOCIAL SKILLS

Singing games effectively promote self-esteem and social skills. In a structured yet creative environment, children learn to interact safely with one another, take turns, ask questions, respect their peers, and manage their own behaviors. These games work with the "can't-sit-still" child, the shy child, and the child who likes structure!

**What can we do to help children learn? One answer is right under our noses.**

**When students are engaged and motivated,  
teachers spend more time teaching, less time policing  
students spend more time learning, less time resisting  
Vo-CE provides a joyful, effective teaching-learning model**

**VO-CE**  
pronounced VO-chay

## ABOUT JUDY FJELL

Judy Fjell holds degrees in Art, Asian Studies, and Elementary Education. During the past thirty-five years she has been a teacher, performing singer-songwriter, workshop leader, choral arranger, and most recently, a musical minister. She has empowered thousands of adults and children not only to sing, but to become motivated learners and musical leaders.

She has recorded over a dozen CDs, including two for children. Her concert and workshop tours take her to cities and small towns from Montana to Japan. She has developed educational materials for guitar, sight-singing through solfeggio, and song games and dances.

See [www.judyfjell.com](http://www.judyfjell.com) for more information and links to additional resources.



Teachers and children playing games in California workshops



To schedule a Vo-CE workshop  
or artist-in-residence with Judy Fjell,  
contact her directly:

Judy Fjell PO Box 1515 Big Timber, MT 59011  
(406)932-6468 [judyfjell@mac.com](mailto:judyfjell@mac.com) [www.judyfjell.com](http://www.judyfjell.com)

### • TEACHER WORKSHOPS & INSERVICES

Judy presents dynamic all-day or half-day inservices in which she introduces singing games, songs, and dances. Her Voice-Centered Education workshops are based on years of experience with all ages using the Music EdVentures SongWorks approach. She also presents valuable information about care and health of the voice. All teachers are at risk for vocal damage, and many children experience chronic hoarseness and other vocal difficulties which limit language and singing.

### • ARTIST-IN-RESIDENCES

Judy enjoys working directly with students and teachers in schools. When she introduces the singing games and singalong songs, she sets excellent examples of vocal modelling and brings even the "can't-sit-still" kids to focus. Her energy and enthusiasm give the Voice-Centered approach a jump start so that teachers can use it in the classroom right away!

### • DANCES & SINGALONGS

Judy has led pre-school through adult learners in many workshop and retreat settings over the past twenty years. She works easily with multi-age groups. All in attendance benefit from the singing games, voice education, dancing, and singalongs.

### • BENEFITS

Voice-Centered Education may be one of the best gifts you ever gave yourself as a teacher. Not only do the singing games effectively teach skills, they also make it easy to plan daily lessons. The music creates an environment in which the students want to learn. You, the teacher, will have more time and energy than you ever thought possible and your voice will feel better than ever!

## Vo-CE EMPOWERS LEARNERS!

Visit some of the resources Judy uses in Vo-CE workshops:

[www.musicedventures.org](http://www.musicedventures.org)

[www.voicecarenetwork.org](http://www.voicecarenetwork.org)

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Carol Lynn, Administrator

406 Iris Place Davis, CA 95616 (530)757-2948

[www.judyfjell.com](http://www.judyfjell.com)

## What can we do to help children learn?

*One answer is right under our noses.*

# VO-CE



*pronounced VO-chay*

## Voice-Centered Education Workshops with Judy Fjell



Judy and students flapping their wings at a PTA sponsored Vo-CE summer class in Montana

## SINGING GAMES VOICE EMPOWERMENT DANCE & MOVEMENT SINGALONGS

**a joyful, effective  
teaching-learning model**

"Thanks, Judy, for the 2004 summer class. I am able not only to "get through" this year of difficult kids, but thanks to the singing games, they are thriving, and SO AM I!" Kindergarten Teacher