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Research Article

Song composition for early childhood music teaching activities

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Abstract

This study composes and evaluates songs specifically designed for early childhood music activities. The composition process integrates insights from a thorough analysis of relevant literature, theoretical perspectives on early childhood development, and the Early Childhood Education Curriculum established by the Ministry of Education (2017). To assess the quality of the composed songs, the research team consults a panel of five experts, including three specialists in early childhood education and two music education specialists from the Yamaha Music Institute. The team selects these experts based on their professional qualifications and extensive experience in early childhood pedagogy and music instruction. Using a five-point Likert scale, the study evaluates six key criteria: (1) appropriateness of lyrics, (2) melodic and rhythmic appeal, (3) suitability of vocal range, (4) appropriateness of instrumentation, (5) contribution to child development, and (6) practical applicability in music activities. Researchers conduct a content analysis to interpret the data and present the results descriptively. The findings reveal that the composed songs align with the Early Childhood Education Curriculum and fall into four thematic units: (1) rhythm, featuring *"Magical Rhythm"* and *"The Value of Notes"*; (2) singing, including *"Let's Sing Together"* and *"Singing Do-Re-Mi with Joy";* (3) movement, with *"The Elephant's Gentle Walk"* and *"The Frog's Joyful Leap";* and (4) playing musical instruments, incorporating *"Drumming: Tuk-Tuk-Tum-Tum"* and *"Strumming the Guitar: Plak-Plak-Poong-Poong."* The compositions integrate simple rhythms, age-appropriate vocabulary, and accessible vocal ranges to facilitate learning, while repetitive elements enhance engagement and retention among young learners. Expert evaluations yield an overall mean score of 4.23 with a standard deviation of 0.56, confirming the songs' suitability for early childhood music activities.

Keywords

early childhood music, music teaching activities, song composition

Introduction

Music actively shapes young children's holistic development by enhancing their cognitive, emotional, and motor skills, all of which support early learning. Gordon (2012) emphasizes that well-designed songs actively enhance early childhood listening skills, movement, and creativity. Barrett (2016) highlights how music-based learning fosters children's musical perception and language skills, strengthening their ability to recognize and retain vocabulary. However, Young (2008) notes that many songs used in early childhood music activities lack a foundation in music education principles or child development theories. As a result, these songs often fail to effectively support children's musical learning and developmental progress.

To maximize the educational benefits of songs in early childhood settings, composers should base their work on fundamental music education principles. The Kodály Method, for example, prioritizes singing as the primary medium of instruction and incorporates simple rhythmic structures to support children's musical development (Houlahan & Tacka, 2015). Similarly, the Orff Schulwerk approach integrates singing, movement, and percussion instruments to promote experiential learning and holistic musical engagement (Goodkin, 2018). Trehub and Trainor (1998) emphasize that effective early childhood songs should feature simple, easily understandable structures and use repetition techniques to enhance memory retention and encourage active participation in musical activities.

Despite extensive research on music's role in early childhood development, studies on the composition and evaluation of high-quality, developmentally appropriate songs remain limited, particularly in Thailand and Southeast Asia. Few studies apply music education methodologies to the creation of songs tailored to young learners within culturally relevant contexts. To address this gap, this study composes songs specifically designed for early childhood music teaching activities, integrating established music education principles and child development theories to effectively support children's learning needs. Additionally, the study evaluates these compositions by gathering expert insights on key musical elements, including lyrical appropriateness, melody, rhythm, and practical applicability in educational settings. The findings will serve as a valuable resource for music educators, composers, and early childhood practitioners, guiding the development of high-quality songs that effectively promote musical learning and overall development in early childhood education.

Compositional Aspects

Composing songs for early childhood music teaching activities demands thoughtful consideration of musical elements that align with children's cognitive, emotional, and physical growth. A well-crafted children's song emphasizes clarity, repetition, and ease of use, fostering active engagement and participation in young learners. (Hewitt, 2004). Overly complex melodies, rhythms, or lyrics can hinder children's ability to internalize musical patterns and fully enjoy the learning experience.

Bergonzi (2011) emphasizes the importance of composing uncomplicated songs with vocabulary appropriate for children's developmental stages. The melody should remain simple, singable, and within an accessible vocal range, often utilizing a pentatonic scale or stepwise motion to accommodate young voices. Additionally, the rhythm should be clear and steady, allowing children to follow along easily and develop a sense of pulse. Jellison (2015) asserts that incorporating well-structured songs into early childhood music activities enhances listening and singing abilities while also fostering rhythmic movement and peer collaboration.

Lyrical content also plays a crucial role in engaging young learners. Hewitt (2004) highlights the necessity of selecting relatable and age-appropriate lyrics, incorporating familiar themes such as animals, everyday objects, or simple narratives that help children connect with the music. The repetition of lyrics and melodies aids in memory retention and encourages active participation. Furthermore, integrating movement into songs enhances early childhood music teaching activities. Wood (2013) emphasizes that songs should promote physical activity, such as dancing, jumping, or clapping, to support the simultaneous development of motor skills and auditory perception. Therefore, the rhythm and phrasing of a song should allow for natural movement responses, reinforcing kinesthetic learning.

Method

The Creation of Songs for Early Childhood Education

The researcher conducted a comprehensive study by collecting and reviewing relevant literature, including theories on early childhood development, the organization of music activities for young children, and related research studies. The song composition process incorporated concepts that support the physical, emotional, social, and cognitive development of early childhood learners. Additionally, the researcher analyzed the early childhood education curriculum, referencing data from the Office of Academic Affairs and Educational Standards under the Office of the Basic Education Commission, Ministry of Education (2017). Following these guidelines, the researcher composed songs in alignment with the Early Childhood

Education Curriculum, organizing them into four thematic units:

Unit 1: Rhythm – Includes the songs *"Magical Rhythm"* and *"The Value of Notes."*

Unit 2: Singing – Features the songs *"Let's Sing Together"* and *"Singing Do-Re-Mi with Joy."*

Unit 3: Movement – Comprises the songs *"The Elephant's Gentle Walk"* and *"The Frog's Joyful Leap."*

Unit 4: Playing Musical Instruments – Incorporates the songs *"Drumming: Tuk-Tuk-Tum-Tum"* and *"Strumming the Guitar: Plak-Plak-Poong-Poong."*

Research Methodology: Expert Evaluation of Composed Songs

This study employed a purposive sampling method to select expert evaluators for assessing the composed songs. The research team assembled a panel of experts, consisting of three specialists in early childhood education and two specialists in children's music education from the Yamaha Music Institution. The team selected these experts based on their professional expertise and extensive experience in early childhood education and music pedagogy. The evaluators assessed the composed songs using a set of predetermined criteria, focusing on the following aspects:

Appropriateness of Lyrics – Evaluating whether the lyrics align with children's developmental stages and comprehension levels.

Melodic and Rhythmic Appeal – Assessing the attractiveness, memorability, and engagement of the melody and rhythm.

Vocal Range Suitability – Determining whether the vocal range accommodates children's vocal abilities, ensuring ease of singing and vocal health.

Instrument Suitability – Examining the appropriateness of the instruments used, considering accessibility, sound quality, and alignment with early childhood music education practices.

Contribution to Child Development – Measuring the extent to which the song supports children's physical, cognitive, emotional, and social growth.

Practical Applicability – Assessing the feasibility of implementing the songs in actual early childhood music education settings.

Result and Discussion

Principles of Song Composition for Early Childhood Music Teaching Activities

Composing songs for early childhood education requires careful consideration of various musical and developmental factors to ensure they effectively support children's growth across multiple domains. The following principles guided the composition of songs in this study:

Simplicity and Memorability

Simple and easily memorable melodies enhance children's ability to learn and recall music by incorporating basic notes and natural rhythmic patterns. Overly complex melodies can hinder their capacity to internalize and remember musical structures, reducing engagement. Moreno-Morilla et al. (2021) emphasize that simple melodies with natural rhythms facilitate children's learning and memory retention, aligning with the principle that music should have a clear and accessible structure to support the learning process. Additionally, intricate melodies may decrease children's interest and limit their participation in musical activities. Well-structured music supports emotional perception and communication through sound, helping children understand and express emotions more effectively. This study recommends incorporating simple and natural melodies into children's musical activities to optimize learning, retention, and emotional development.

Clear and Engaging Rhythms

Songs should feature distinct and lively rhythms, allowing children to move naturally in response to the music. Rhythmic clarity supports the development of motor skills and coordination. Wuttipanyarattanakun (2012) notes that music activities enhance children's movement abilities, such as jumping, dancing, and moving in rhythm, which are essential for physical development. Integrating playful yet structured rhythmic elements encourages active participation in musical learning, making rhythm a fundamental aspect of early childhood education.

Encouraging Participation Through Actions

Lyrics should invite children to engage in physical activities such as clapping, jumping, dancing, or playing instruments. This participatory approach fosters interactive learning and sustains engagement. Roeksamut (2018) states that music activities provide opportunities for children to collaborate with peers, enhancing social skills, teamwork, and cooperation. Therefore, incorporating lyrics that prompt movement and group participation strengthens social interaction in early childhood settings while promoting both physical and cognitive development.

Educational Content to Support Learning

Songs should not only entertain but also introduce fundamental musical concepts such as rhythm, melody, and note values. Themes related to animals, everyday experiences, or familiar objects help children connect with the music more effectively. Phatthalung (2023) highlights that music fosters children's creativity by allowing them to explore and combine different sounds, enhancing their decision-making and problem-solving abilities. Integrating educational content into song lyrics and melodies enables children to develop musical understanding while engaging in creative expression, reinforcing both musical and cognitive growth.

Natural and Enjoyable Learning Experiences

Music should create an engaging learning environment, encouraging exploration through play. Enjoyable musical experiences boost motivation and participation, making learning more effective. Curbelo-González et al. (2024) emphasize that early childhood music education should integrate singing, movement, and body expression. Their study found that 91.3% of teachers used music and movement, 90.1% emphasized body expression, and 72.5% incorporated active listening. However, some teachers lacked musical expertise, and limited instrument availability led to alternative teaching methods. The study recommends better integration of music into curricula and improved teacher training. Similarly, Syla (2024) stresses the importance of adequate instruments, equipment, and teacher preparation to enhance music education. Ensuring accessible, well-supported music programs can significantly enrich children's early learning experiences.

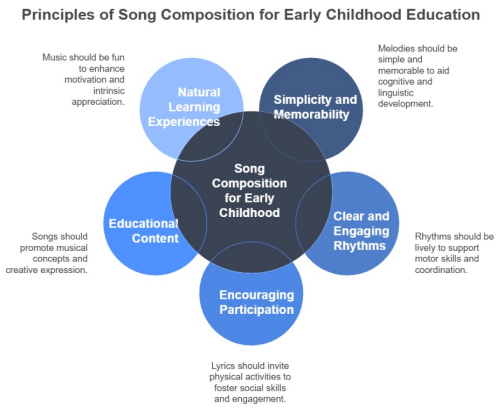

Figure 1. Principles of Song Composition for Early Childhood Education
Source: Suthasinee Theerapan (2025)

Analysis of the Structure of Songs for Early Childhood

Song Structure

The songs composed for early childhood music teaching activities in this study primarily follow the Ternary Form (ABA or AABA), a three-part structure consisting of

an initial section (A), a contrasting middle section (B), and a return to the initial section (A). Commonly known as "Song Form," this structure provides balance and coherence while clearly distinguishing different sections of the song.

Section A introduces the main theme, which may incorporate storytelling elements, movement descriptions, or representations of musical concepts. This section establishes the foundation of the song, ensuring it is both engaging and easy for young children to remember.

Section B introduces variations in rhythm, melody, or harmonic structure to sustain interest and encourage active participation. This contrast enhances the song's appeal, capturing the listener's attention and maintaining engagement.

Returning to Section A reinforces thematic consistency, aiding children's memorization and fostering a sense of familiarity. This repetition strengthens cognitive connections, making it easier for young learners to internalize musical patterns and concepts.

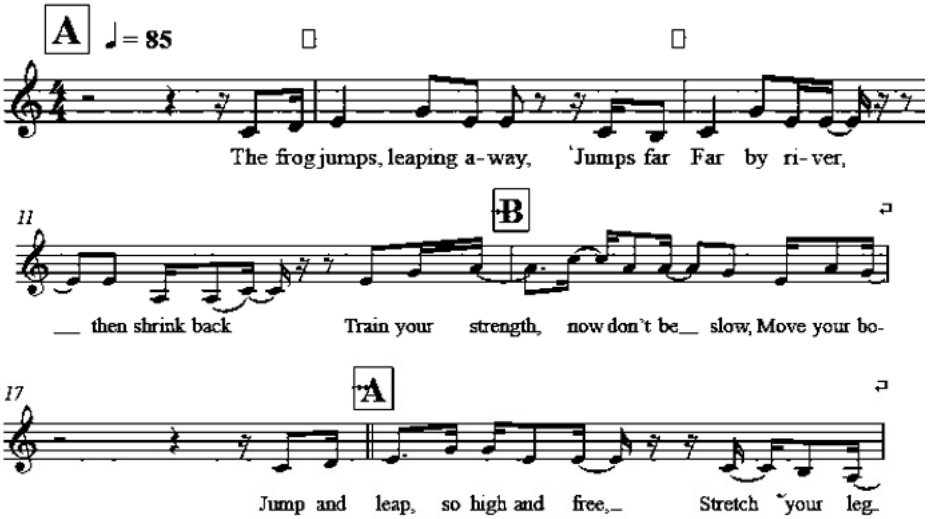

Figure 2. Ternary Form (ABA) in the Song *"The Frog's Joyful Leap"*.
Source: Suthasinee Theerapan (2025)

According to Figure 2, the song *"The Frog's Joyful Leap"* follows the Ternary Form (ABA), demonstrating the distinct roles of each section within the composition.

Section A (Verse) introduces the main theme, describing the frog's characteristics and jumping motion, along with the movements of other animals and the surrounding environment. The melody in this section remains stable and continuous, making it easy for singers to memorize and follow.

Section B (Chorus) enhances excitement and encourages movement among singers and listeners. This section incorporates variations in rhythm and lyrics to promote interaction, prompting actions such as jumping or moving in sync with the beat.

When Section A (Reprise) returns, the song restores its original melody, reinforcing structural balance and creating a sense of unity. By repeating the main theme at the end, the composition strengthens the connection between the singer, the listener, and the musical content, ensuring greater engagement and retention.

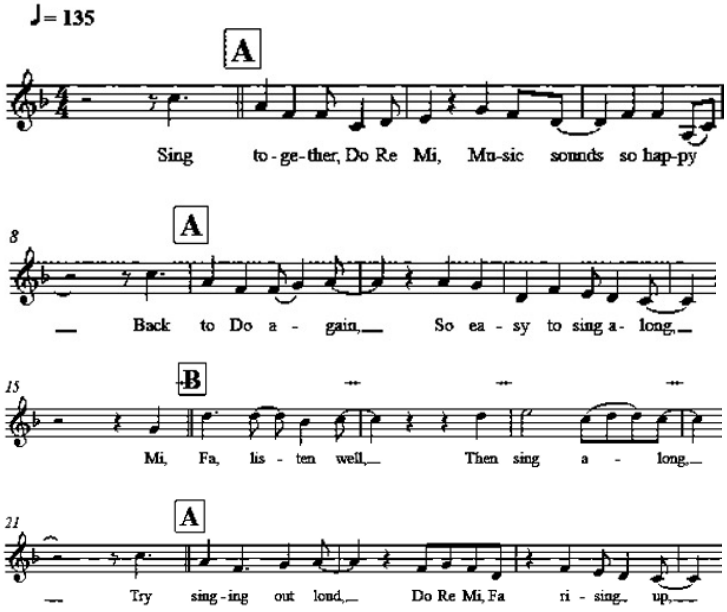

Figure 3. Ternary Form (AABA) in the Song *"Singing Do-Re-Mi with Joy"*.
Source: Suthasinee Theerapan (2025)

According to Figure 3, the song *"Sing Do-Re-Mi with Joy"* follows the Ternary Form (AABA), illustrating the distinct roles of each section in enhancing musical learning.

Section A introduces the main theme, presenting musical notes and vocal patterns through a simple and memorable melody. This structure makes it easy for children to follow and sing along, reinforcing fundamental musical concepts.

Section B introduces contrast by incorporating variations in pitch and lively vocal expressions. These elements add excitement, making the song more engaging and encouraging active participation from young singers.

When Section A returns at the end, it reinforces continuity and establishes a sense of unity within the composition. The repetition of the main theme strengthens familiarity, ensuring that learners can easily grasp and retain the musical concepts embedded in the song.

The structural analysis of early childhood songs highlights the effectiveness of Ternary Form (ABA and AABA) in promoting musical engagement and retention. This three-part structure—consisting of an initial section (A), a contrasting middle section (B), and a final section (A) that reinstates the main theme—ensures balance, memorability, and variety within the composition. According to Kuka (2025) emphasizes that the middle section (B) introduces melodic, rhythmic, or pitch variations, creating contrast that sustains children's interest and prevents monotony. This contrast not only enriches the song's diversity but also supports long-term learning by reinforcing cognitive and auditory development. Similarly, Sun and Sondhiratna (2024) highlight that Ternary Form (ABA) provides a structured yet dynamic approach to composition. The first section (A) introduces the main theme, the middle section (B) enhances engagement through variation, and the final section (A) reintroduces familiarity, reinforcing recognition and comprehension. The cyclical nature of this structure strengthens children's ability to internalize musical patterns, making it particularly effective for early childhood music education.

Vocal Range

The analysis of the vocal range in the eight songs indicates that most compositions span approximately one octave, making them well-suited for early childhood singers. The lowest pitch observed is B♭3, providing a comfortable range that allows children to sing without excessive vocal strain, while the highest pitch extends to A4, ensuring ease of vocalization. This finding aligns with Welch (2016), who emphasizes the importance of selecting an appropriate vocal range that supports young children's vocal development. Since children at this stage have not yet fully developed their vocal abilities, their singing should follow structured yet natural melodic patterns. Research suggests that an optimal vocal range for early childhood singers typically falls between D4 and A4, covering approximately five to six notes, which closely aligns with their natural speaking range. By selecting an appropriate vocal range, composers can foster healthy vocalization, confidence in singing, and natural voice production, ensuring that children can sing comfortably while developing fundamental musical skills.

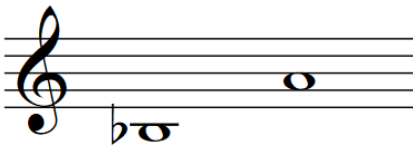

Figure 4. Vocal range in songs for early childhood
Source: Suthasinee Theerapan (2025)

Cadence

The analysis of the eight composed songs reveals that Perfect Cadence (V - I) and Half Cadence (I - V) play crucial roles in structuring rhythmic resolution and phrase endings. Perfect Cadence appears predominantly at the end of each song, creating a sense of completeness and aiding children in memorizing melodies more easily. For instance, in *"Singing Do-Re-Mi with Joy,"* the cadence provides a strong and stable closure. Conversely, Half Cadence is used in transitional sections, such as between Sections A and B, to establish continuity and anticipation for the next phrase. This approach is evident in *"Magical Rhythm,"* where the Half Cadence introduces a sense of musical expectation.

Additionally, songs with a steady rhythmic structure, such as *"The Elephant's Gentle Walk"* and *"Strumming the Guitar: Plak-Plak-Poong-Poong,"* predominantly employ Perfect Cadence to reinforce musical stability. In contrast, songs with varied rhythmic patterns, such as *"Drumming: Tuk-Tuk-Tum-Tum"* and *"The Value of Notes,"* incorporate both Half Cadence and Perfect Cadence to enhance musical engagement and maintain continuity. This structural approach aligns with Trujillo Galea and Juárez Ramos (2024), who describe Perfect Cadence (V - I)—also known as Authentic Cadence—as the harmonic movement from the dominant (V) to the tonic (I) chord. This progression provides a strong, conclusive resolution, signaling a definitive phrase or piece ending and ensuring a clear sense of closure for the listener. For example, in C Major, the progression from G (V) to C (I) establishes a Perfect Cadence, reinforcing finality and stability.

Conversely, Half Cadence (I - V) creates a temporary pause by resolving on the dominant (V) chord, evoking suspension and anticipation for further musical development. This movement introduces harmonic tension, leading the listener to expect a continuation. For example, in C Major, the transition from C (I) to G (V) forms a Half Cadence, contributing to a sense of temporary resolution before progressing to the next section.

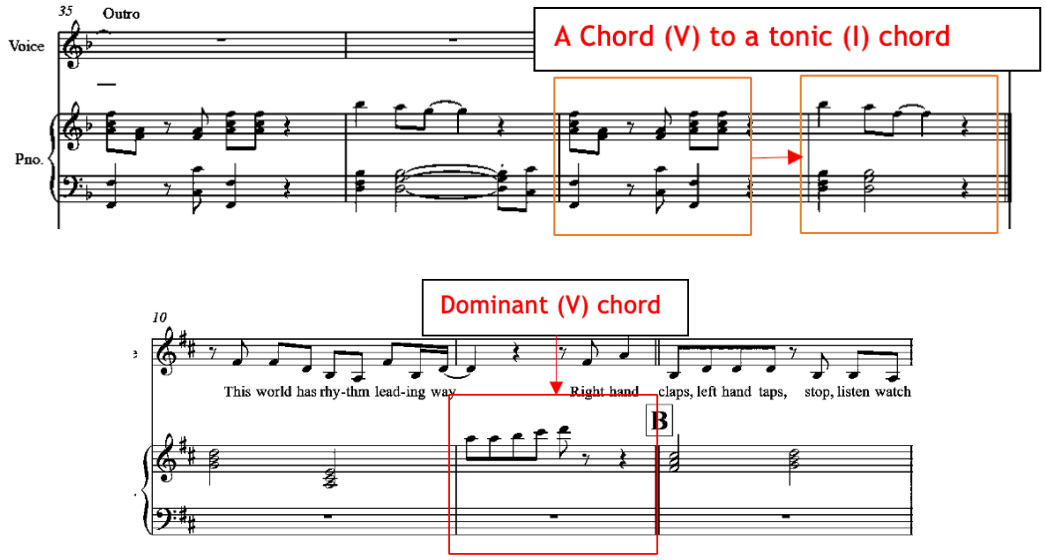

Figure 6. Half cadence in the song *"Magical Rhythm"*.
Source: Suthasinee Theerapan (2025)

Melody

Singable Melodies – Stepwise Motion Facilitates Ease of Singing

All eight songs use Stepwise Motion, where notes move in adjacent steps (e.g., C → D → E), making melodies easier for children to sing. This approach supports vocal control, confidence, and musical skill development. Rueben (2017) found that Stepwise Motion helps children anticipate melodies and improves memorization. This aligns with Cox's (2011) Mimetic Hypothesis, which suggests that stepwise melodies feel intuitive as listeners associate them with physical movement, fostering a natural and emotional connection to music.

Natural Melody – Utilizing Arch Shape and Wave Shape for Ease of Singing

The songs incorporate Arch Shape (ascending and descending curves) and Wave Shape (continuous rises and falls) to align with natural speech patterns, simplifying vocal demands. For example, in *"The Frog's Joyful Leap"* and *"The Elephant's Gentle Walk,"* the melodies mirror animal movements, making them engaging and easy to follow. Wermke et al. (2021) emphasize that melodic contour shapes musical expression and emotional perception, with Arch Shape creating a sense of development and resolution, while Wave Shape enhances movement and variation, keeping music dynamic and engaging.

Repetition – Enhancing Children's Ability to Memorize Songs

Repetition plays a key role in helping children memorize songs and recognize musical structure. In *"Let's Sing Together,"* the repeated main section reinforces learning and engagement. Assadi and Murad (2024) highlight that repetition enhances language acquisition, memory retention, and musical comprehension, particularly when combined with play-based learning tools such as songs, games, and interactive activities.

Rhythm

The analysis of rhythm in all eight composed early childhood songs reveals that they predominantly employ the 4/4 time signature (Common Time) as a fundamental rhythmic framework. This choice enables young children to perceive and move along with the beat easily, fostering their confidence in engaging with music. The steady and clear nature of the 4/4 rhythm supports children's ability to follow along, while quarter notes provide

stability and predictability. Additionally, the incorporation of eighth notes adds liveliness, encouraging physical movement and active participation. Songs such as "The Frog's Joyful Leap" and "Strumming the Guitar: Plak-Plak-Poong-Poong" prominently feature 4/4 time to facilitate easy beat recognition, enhancing children's participation in musical activities while naturally supporting their rhythmic and motor skill development.This finding aligns with Bond and Bond (2010), who emphasize the significance of the 4/4 time signature in early childhood music education. The regularity and simplicity of this time signature enable children to develop effective beat counting and listening skills, while also supporting rhythmic movement through activities such as dancing and musical games. These movements enhance coordination between auditory perception and physical actions, allowing children to internalize rhythm more naturally.

Additionally, Cary (2012) highlights the Kodály and Orff approaches, both of which prioritize 4/4 rhythm in early childhood music education. The Kodály Method integrates Tonic Solfa and folk songs in 4/4 time, helping children develop a strong foundation in rhythmic structure and musical literacy. Meanwhile, the Orff Schulwerk Approach incorporates body movements and percussive instruments (e.g., drums and xylophones) to encourage rhythmic creativity and group collaboration. Both methods recognize 4/4 rhythm as essential in fostering children's musical comprehension, physical coordination, and social development in a natural and engaging manner.

Harmony

The analysis of all eight composed songs reveals that the compositions incorporate simple, clear, and warm harmony to enhance early childhood music. The harmony has been structured using basic chord progressions familiar to young children, such as I–IV–V–I and I–vi–IV–V, creating a sense of comfort, predictability, and engagement. Additionally, the key signatures employed—C Major, G Major, and A Major—have been intentionally selected to complement the harmonic framework and support children's vocal development. These keys provide simplicity by minimizing sharps and flats, making it easier for young learners to recognize pitches and sing with confidence. C Major, consisting solely of natural notes, offers an ideal starting point for beginners, while G Major and A Major introduce slight pitch variations that enhance adaptability without exceeding an accessible vocal range. By combining simple harmonic progressions with these carefully chosen key signatures, the compositions promote musical stability, ease of learning, and vocal confidence, fostering a positive and effective musical experience in early childhood education.

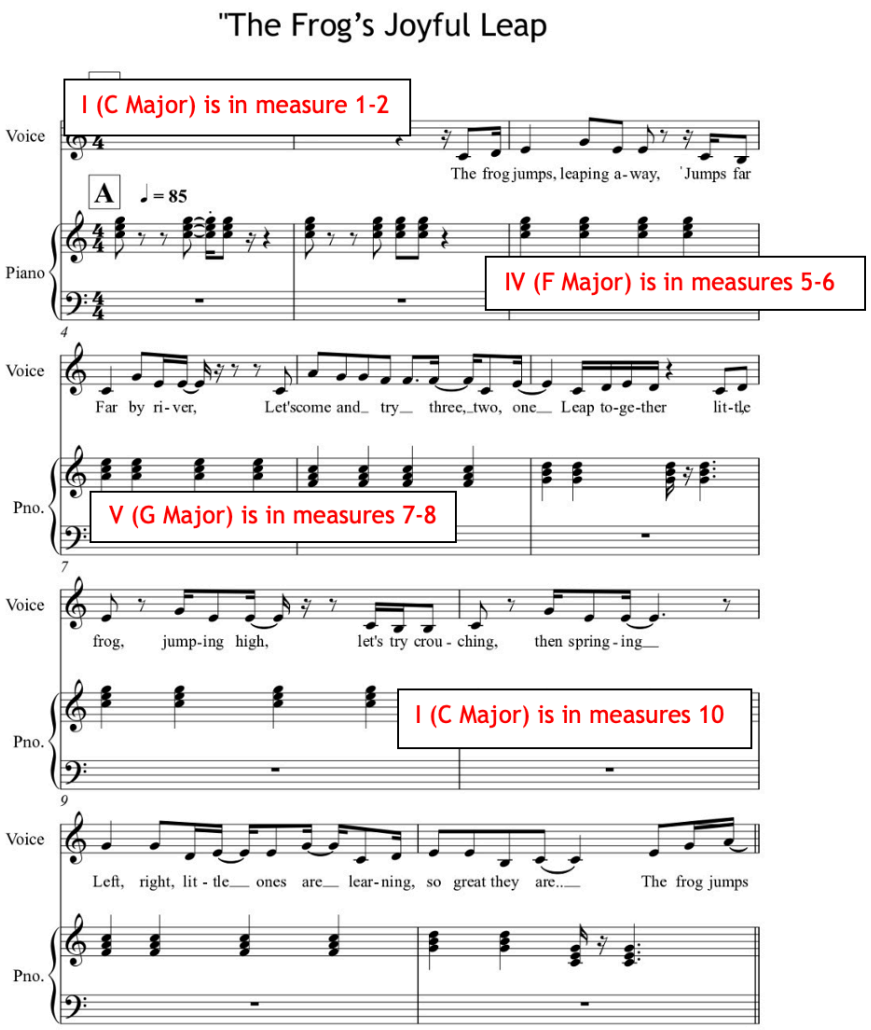

Figure 7. The I - IV - V - I chord structure in the song *"The Frog's Joyful Leap"*.
Source: Suthasinee Theerapan (2025)

The I - IV - V - I Chord Progression (C - F - G - C)

This chord progression provides a simple yet highly effective framework for establishing stability and completeness in music, making it predictable and enjoyable for children. The structured harmonic movement creates a sense of security, strengthens children's confidence in singing, and enhances memorization.

Songs such as *"The Frog's Joyful Leap"* incorporate these basic chord progressions to produce a bright and warm atmosphere, which effectively supports early childhood development. By using familiar and accessible harmonic structures, these compositions help children internalize musical patterns more easily while encouraging active engagement in singing and movement-based activities.

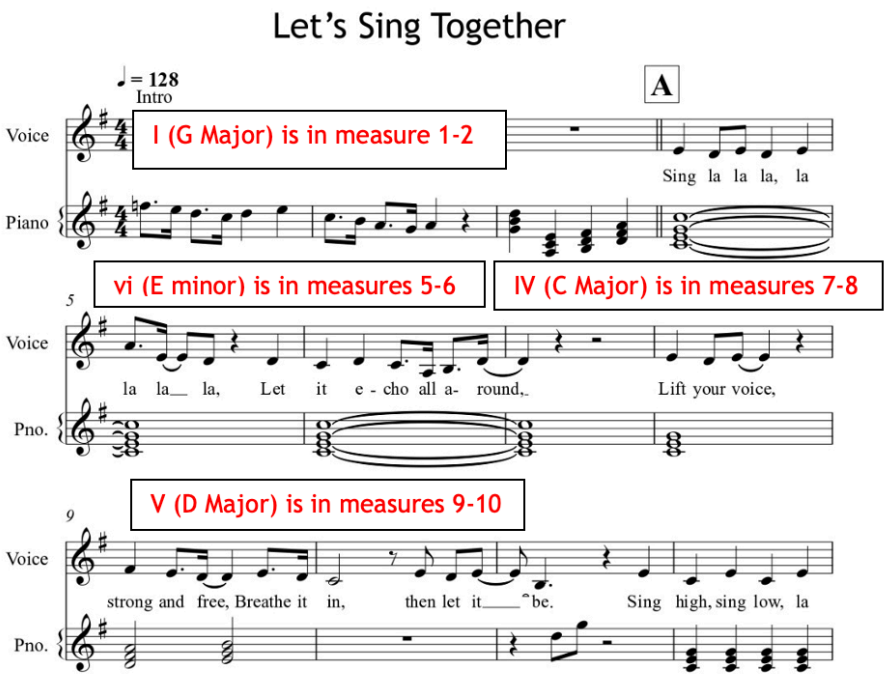

Figure 8. The I - vi - IV - V chord structure in the song *"Let's Sing Together"*.
Source: Suthasinee Theerapan (2025)

The I - vi - IV - V Chord Progression (G - Em - C - D)

This chord progression enhances emotional variety, making it well-suited for early childhood music teaching activities. The I - vi - IV - V progression creates a gentle and soothing atmosphere, stimulating children's imagination and emotional engagement.

Songs such as *"Let's Sing Together"* incorporate this progression to establish a joyful, bright, and welcoming environment, encouraging children to actively participate in singing and musical activities. By blending major and minor chords, this harmonic structure introduces subtle emotional contrasts while maintaining a warm and accessible musical experience for young learners.

Harmony in early childhood music should be simple, warm, and clear, using uncomplicated chord progressions such as I - IV - V - I (C - F - G - C) or I - vi - IV - V (G - Em - C - D) to create a predictable and memorable musical environment that reinforces children's understanding of musical structure and encourages active participation. Additionally, third-interval harmony enhances musical brightness and appeal, keeping children engaged without overwhelming them. Jørgensen (2020) emphasizes that simple harmonic structures help children comprehend musical form, with basic triadic chords such as I - IV - V or I - V - vi - IV providing harmonic stability in children's music. Similarly, Lilja and Creutlein (2019) found that simple harmonic progressions facilitate chord recognition and prediction, supporting aural development and musical awareness. Furthermore, Pereverzeva et al. (2021) highlight that alternating third and fifth intervals add musical depth without unnecessary complexity, while key modulation broadens children's listening experiences and enhances their musical adaptability. Gradual dynamic changes also improve expressiveness and engagement, making songs more captivating. These elements collectively

enhance musical learning motivation, improve auditory perception, and foster creative thinking, aligning with active music teaching approaches that prioritize learner engagement.

Musical Instruments

The selection of appropriate musical instruments plays a crucial role in enhancing early childhood music education. The composed songs incorporate percussion instruments such as drums, egg shakers, and xylophones, which effectively develop rhythmic skills and fine motor coordination by helping children internalize musical rhythm. Additionally, piano and guitar provide harmonic stability for group singing, while instruments like the flute and xylophone, with their bright and pure tones, create a lively and imaginative musical atmosphere that fosters engagement and enjoyment in music learning.

This approach aligns with Andrioti (2024), whose study on Talempong Pacik, a traditional Minangkabau percussion instrument, demonstrated significant improvements in musical development among 5–6-year-old children, with their musical ability scores increasing from 8.4 to 21 after instrumental training. Similarly, Kodály (1954) emphasized the human voice as the primary instrument for music learning but also advocated for simple instruments like xylophones and rhythm instruments to reinforce rhythm and harmonic comprehension. Likewise, Orff (1930) promoted active music-making through accessible instruments such as drums, xylophones, metallophones, and percussion instruments, allowing children to internalize fundamental musical concepts through playing instruments, movement, and singing. These methods collectively support rhythmic awareness, harmonic understanding, and overall musical development in a highly engaging and interactive manner.

Dynamics and Articulation

The control of dynamics and articulation techniques plays a crucial role in designing music for early childhood. Using Mezzo Piano (MP) in the verse section ensures lyrical clarity, helping children focus on the content without distractions. In contrast, incorporating Forte (F) in the chorus section enhances engagement and enthusiasm, encouraging active participation in singing and movement. This approach aligns with Sekehal (2025), who emphasizes that dynamics in music education serve as a tool for developing musical skills and emotional understanding, allowing students to comprehend musical structure and express emotions effectively. Additionally, techniques such as crescendo and decrescendo support expressive performance and help children distinguish different emotional nuances in music.

The use of articulation techniques also enhances musical engagement. Staccato (short, detached notes) fosters excitement and playfulness, making the music more lively and interactive. For example, in *"Let's Sing Together, Ha Ha Ha,"* staccato articulation sharpens rhythmic clarity, making it easier for children to follow while encouraging movement. Conversely, Legato (smooth, connected notes) is used in sections requiring a soft, flowing, and gentle melodic line, creating a warm and friendly atmosphere suited for young learners. Tominaga (2023) highlights that staccato and legato techniques in piano performance significantly enhance musical expression and technical development. While staccato playing sharpens rhythmic perception and boosts performance energy, legato playing strengthens note connectivity and emotional expression. Combining these techniques enhances flexibility in musical interpretation, allowing children to engage with music in a dynamic and expressive manner.

Expert Evaluation Results

Experts conducted a quality assessment of the eight composed early childhood songs, producing the following results:

Table 1. Expert evaluation of the quality of early childhood songs

Item No.	Evaluation Criteria	Mean	SD	Interpretation
1	Appropriateness of Lyrics	4.2	0.44	Appropriate
2	Melodic and Rhythmic Appeal	4.4	0.54	Appropriate
3	Vocal Range Suitability	4.2	0.44	Appropriate
4	Instrument Suitability	4.4	0.54	Appropriate
5	Contribution to Child Development	4	0.70	Appropriate
6	Practical Applicability	4.2	0.83	Appropriate
Overall	**Average Score**	**4.23**	**0.56**	**Appropriate**

SD: Standard Deviation

According to Table 1, experts rated the quality of the composed early childhood songs with an overall mean score of 4.23 and a standard deviation of 0.56, confirming their appropriateness for early childhood music education. Among the six evaluation criteria, Melodic and Rhythmic Appeal and Instrument Suitability received the highest mean score of 4.4, reflecting the songs' effectiveness in engaging children's attention. Appropriateness of Lyrics, Vocal Range Suitability, and Practical Applicability each received a mean score of 4.2, indicating that the songs aligned well with children's developmental needs and learning environments. However, Contribution to Child Development received the lowest mean score of 4.0 with the highest standard deviation of 0.70, suggesting variability in expert opinions regarding how effectively the songs support children's physical, cognitive, emotional, and social development.

Experts praised the songs for their clear rhythmic structure, simple musical forms, and appropriate instrumentation, all of which enhance children's learning experiences. The use of the 4/4 time signature and alternating dynamic levels was noted as particularly effective in facilitating active engagement. These findings align with Gordon (2013), who emphasized that early childhood music should maintain a simple structure to promote auditory development, movement, and participation.

Additional expert feedback highlighted the songs' bright and playful melodies, which create a warm and engaging atmosphere that fosters effective learning. The incorporation of Third Interval Harmony added musical depth without excessive complexity, supporting Feierabend (2006), who found that simple harmonic structures enhance learning and emotional development in children.

However, experts identified some limitations, particularly in repetitive melodic and harmonic patterns, which may reduce engagement over time. They recommended introducing variations in chord progressions or melodic phrasing to enhance musical diversity.

To further improve the songs, experts suggested incorporating a wider range of vocal harmonies, such as alternating third and fifth intervals, to enrich the musical texture. Additionally, modulating key signatures across different songs was proposed to expand children's listening experiences and musical adaptability. Experts also emphasized the importance of gradual dynamic changes to make the songs more expressive and engaging, ensuring their effectiveness in both music education and child development.

Originality and Cultural Distinctiveness of the Composed Songs

The songs composed in this study have been intentionally designed to demonstrate originality and cultural distinctiveness by

integrating foundational music education principles, child development theories, and culturally relevant elements tailored to the context of early childhood education in Thailand and Southeast Asia. Unlike many existing children's songs—often adopted from Western curricula or popularized without pedagogical foundations—these compositions have been developed to align with the linguistic, cultural, and developmental characteristics of the region.

In the Thai early childhood context, it has been observed that songs commonly used emphasize simple rhythms, short and familiar lyrics, and content related to animals or the immediate environment to facilitate comprehension and memorization (Sakalpasak & Halathaingam, 2019) These songs have been employed to accompany movement, singing, games, and simple percussion activities. Contemporary popular songs have also been adopted to increase engagement. Children have been encouraged to create gestures independently or collaboratively with teachers and peers, promoting creativity, confidence, and free expression. However, it has been reported that many early childhood teachers in Thailand lack the skills to compose developmentally appropriate songs for educational purposes, resulting in continued reliance on existing materials that may not fully align with educational or cultural objectives.

To address this gap, the songs composed in this study have been deliberately crafted by embedding local cultural elements, familiar narratives, and linguistic patterns into both lyrics and melodies. This approach aligns with Campbell's (2013) proposition that arts and music education within cross-cultural contexts should promote cultural understanding and artistic expression grounded in local traditions. By integrating culturally resonant themes, the compositions have been designed to enable young learners to internalize cultural values through music that reflects their sociocultural environment, thereby fostering meaningful engagement and identity formation.

Moreover, the originality of the compositions has been reinforced by a commitment to child-centered learning environments that encourage experimentation, creativity, and active participation. Tan (2019) emphasizes that musical creativity in early childhood should be nurtured within environments that support exploration and authentic expression. Accordingly, the composition of these songs has been viewed not only as the creation of suitable musical content but also as the provision of opportunities for children to develop originality, creative thinking, and self-expression through culturally responsive music.

The clear distinctions between these compositions and existing songs—which have often lacked cultural integration and pedagogical alignment—underscore the necessity of this study. Without the development of culturally responsive, pedagogically grounded songs, early childhood music education risks relying on resources disconnected from children's linguistic, cultural, and developmental contexts. Therefore, these compositions contribute significantly by bridging global music education principles with localized pedagogical needs, offering musical resources that foster engagement, cultural identity, and holistic development among young learners in Southeast Asia.

Conclusion

This study composed songs for early childhood music teaching activities that align with children's developmental stages and integrate effectively into music activities. The research team followed a systematic approach, beginning with defining learning objectives and structuring songs in Ternary Form (ABA, AABA) to facilitate melodic memorization. The selected pitch ranges and scales (C Major, G Major, A Major) ensured comfortable vocal execution, while stepwise motion and arch/wave-shaped

melodies created a natural and intuitive flow for singing. The lyrics remained simple and repetitive, supporting language acquisition, while percussion instruments, guitar, and keyboard enhanced engagement and participation. The use of mezzo piano (MP) in verses and forte (F) in choruses established contrast and emotional expression, while staccato and legato articulation added musical variety. The research team tested and refined the songs based on educator and expert feedback to ensure they effectively captured children's attention and supported learning.

Experts evaluated the eight composed songs and assigned an overall mean score of 4.23 (SD = 0.56), confirming their suitability for early childhood music teaching activities. Melodic and Rhythmic Appeal and Instrument Suitability received the highest mean score (4.4), highlighting their effectiveness in fostering engagement and enjoyment. Appropriateness of Lyrics, Vocal Range Suitability, and Practical Applicability scored 4.2, indicating strong alignment with children's developmental needs. However, Contribution to Child Development received a lower score of 4.0 with the highest standard deviation (0.70), reflecting variability in expert opinions regarding its impact on physical, cognitive, emotional, and social development.

Experts praised the songs for their simple structures, clear rhythms, and child-friendly instrumentation, particularly the 4/4 time signature and dynamic contrasts, which encouraged active participation. They also highlighted the playful melodies, warm atmosphere, and Third Interval Harmony, which added musical depth without excessive complexity. However, experts identified limitations, particularly repetitive melodic and harmonic patterns, which could reduce engagement over time. They recommended introducing variations in chord progressions and melodic phrasing to maintain interest and diversity. Additional suggestions included expanding vocal harmonies (e.g., incorporating third and fifth intervals for greater musical richness), modulating key signatures to broaden listening experiences, and enhancing dynamic contrasts to increase expressiveness and engagement.

To integrate these songs effectively into early childhood music activities, educators can implement them in singing, movement, instrumental play, and creative expression. Singing activities like echo singing and call-and-response develop melodic recall and group participation. Movement activities, including marching to a steady beat, staccato-legato movements, and creative dance, enhance coordination and rhythmic awareness. Instrumental activities, such as percussion play-alongs, dynamic exploration, and simple chord accompaniment, strengthen musical understanding. Creative activities like lyric substitution, melodic variation, and sound exploration encourage imaginative expression.

The composed songs demonstrate strong potential for early childhood music teaching activities, particularly in enhancing engagement, memorization, and active participation. However, increasing musical variety, enriching harmonic depth, and incorporating more dynamic contrasts could further optimize their effectiveness. By integrating these songs into structured music-based activities, educators can support children's auditory, motor, cognitive, and social development, ensuring a comprehensive and enriching musical experience.

Recommendations

Recommendations for Further Research

Future research should investigate how structured music education influences cognitive, linguistic, social, and emotional development over time through longitudinal studies that provide deeper insights into its sustained effects. Researchers should compare Kodály, Orff, Dalcroze, and Gordon's Music Learning Theory to evaluate their effectiveness in developing musical abilities,

motor skills, and cognitive functions in young children. Examining music integration with multisensory learning, including movement, visual stimuli, and tactile experiences, could lead to more engaging and effective teaching models. Additionally, studies should explore how digital technology, such as interactive music applications, virtual instruments, and AI-assisted tools, impacts children's musical engagement and skill acquisition. Researchers should also develop standardized assessment tools to measure musical progress, creativity, and cognitive development in early childhood education. Establishing reliable evaluation frameworks would enable educators to track children's growth and refine instructional approaches more effectively.

Recommendations for Applicants

Applicants should integrate movement-based learning by incorporating physical activities, such as marching, clapping, and interactive gestures, into songs to enhance rhythmic perception, coordination, and engagement. Using child-friendly instruments, including xylophones, percussion instruments, and small keyboards, allows children to actively participate in music-making while refining motor skills. Developing adaptive teaching methods through flexible lesson plans enables educators to adjust song structures, tempo, and instrumentation based on children's age, skill level, and learning environment. Encouraging creativity and self-expression by incorporating lyric improvisation, melodic variations, and call-and-response singing fosters confidence and engagement, making the learning experience more interactive and enriching.

Limitations of Study

This study faces limitations in its practical application in early childhood education activities. Researchers need to develop a structured lesson plan or guide to systematically implement the songs in classrooms or early childhood music programs. Additionally, the evaluation of the songs was carried out by a panel of five experts. Although the experts were carefully selected based on their qualifications and professional expertise, the small sample size may limit the generalizability of the findings. Despite these limitations, this study offers valuable insights into composing songs for young children and lays a foundation for future research on practical implementation in teaching and systematic evaluation of their impact on children's development.

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