

Play: Listen and Move

Invite students to discover how their bodies help them understand music as they listen, move, and respond before bringing their discoveries to the piano. Queue up the [Dalcroze PIK Spring 2026 playlist](#), clear a safe space for movement, and gather scarves and rhythm sticks.

Activity 1: Rhythm Colors (Videos 1 & 2 – Red and Blue)

- Explain that different note lengths can be shown with different movements.
- Quarter notes: say “Red” and knock or tap. Half notes: say “Blue” and wave a scarf.
- Play Video 1. Students move and say the colors as they listen.
- Pause and let students take turns leading while the teacher improvises short red/blue patterns. [Use example music](#), if desired.
- Play along with Video 2, matching movement and voice to the music.
- Take It Further: Invite students to invent new movements for quarter and half notes (marching, snapping, tapping lap). Repeat the activity using their ideas.

Activity 2: Walk, Skip, Spin (Video 3 – Walk, Skip, and Spin)

- Explain that pitch can move by steps, skips, or stay the same.
 - If the melody moves by step → Walk steadily.
 - If it skips → Skip.
 - If it repeats → Spin in place.
- Play Video 3. Students respond with the matching movement.
- Repeat the activity to build listening accuracy.
- Take It Further: Ask the teacher to play the same rhythm using both steps and skips. Students listen carefully and respond. Discuss how they could still hear the interval differences.

Activity 3: Meter Magic (Video 4 – Changing Meters)

- Explain how meter organizes beats into groups.
- Students step a steady beat. Tap rhythm sticks on every strong beat (i.e., downbeat).
- Play Video 4. The teacher calls out “two,” “three,” or “four” to signal the meter. Students respond and copy the students in the video.
- Play with live music provided by the teacher or advanced student. [Use the example music](#), if desired. Students adjust their strong beats as the grouping changes. Repeat and allow students to call the meter changes.

Connect to the Piano

- Guide students to connect movement back to the keyboard. Ask: How might stepping, skipping, or spinning help you play rhythm or melody more clearly at the piano? How could moving first help before learning a new piece?
- Invite students to try playing a short piano phrase after moving, noticing whether rhythm or phrasing feels more natural.

For further exploration of how movement, embodied learning, and whole-body awareness support rhythmic understanding and musical flow, read Lesley McAllister’s article, [“The Body and the Beat: Developing Rhythm through Mindful Movement,”](#) in *Piano Magazine* (Autumn 2023; Vol. 15, No. 3).

This resource is created for use with *Piano Inspires Kids*. Visit kids.pianoinspires.com for more information and activity ideas.