



GOOD TIMES WITH MUSIC AND RHYTHM

Human Development and Family Studies
Colorado State University Cooperative Extension

Authors

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If you're happy and you
know it,
clap your hands,
(clap, clap)
If you're happy and you
know it,
clap your hands
(clap, clap)
If you're happy and you
know it,
then your face will surely
show it.
If you're happy and you
know it,
clap your hands
(clap, clap)

If you're angry and you
know it,
stomp your feet,
(stomp, stomp)
If you're angry and you
know it,
stomp your feet
(stomp, stomp)
If you're angry and you
know it,
then your face will surely
show it.
If you're angry and you
know it,
stomp your feet.
(stomp, stomp)

Children's Song

Music is like magic to children. A father's lullaby can soothe a baby to sleep, and a mother's enthusiastic chant can inspire a whole family to hike the steepest mountain trail. Music and rhythm, in their many forms, are part of all children's lives. The tick-tock of clocks, the purring of cats, and the rhymes and songs on television accompany them as they grow up. Music is portable. You can take it - or make it - anywhere. Part of growing up is learning to make and listen to music.

Children of all ages express themselves through music. Even at an early age children sway, bounce, or move their hands in response to music they hear. Many preschoolers make up songs and, with no self-consciousness, sing to themselves as they play. Kids in elementary school learn to sing together as a group and possibly learn to play a musical instrument. Older children dance to the music of their favorite rock and roll bands and use music to form friendships and share feelings.

Music is used in plays, on television, and in movies; music and rhythm also are part of worship, government, and military ceremonies, and celebrations. Ethnic beliefs and values often are passed on to new generations during celebrations that are filled with songs, dances, and sounds of musical instruments. Music and rhythm help teach about culture; they also can help teach children.

WHAT ARE MUSIC AND RHYTHM?



MUSIC - a combination of sounds that has rhythm and melody and is pleasing to hear.

RHYTHM - the repetition of a beat or sound in a regular or predictable pattern.

CULTURE - the behaviors learned and practiced by a specific group of people. The way of life determined by the people's morals, values, customs, and attitudes.

WHY ARE MUSIC AND RHYTHM IMPORTANT?

Music and rhythm can help children:

- express their emotions. Children will sing a joyful song or hum a catchy tune when they're happy. In contrast, their dance movements might be jerky and aggressive when they are angry or frustrated.
- release energy and channel it in creative, productive directions.
- gain confidence in themselves as they realize they can use their minds and bodies together. Children learn that, with practice, their bodies will do almost anything they want them to do - even leap across a room or turn cartwheels in time to music.
- learn new words and ideas. Children often create their own songs, melodies, and movements. Or they learn songs that have already been written about spaceships, kangaroos, or friendships.
- learn about themselves and the relationships they have with others. Songs heard in school, in places of worship, and from teachers and parents, teach about life and give hints on living it. The words might teach about hard-to-understand concepts like faith, patriotism, love, and freedom. The rhythms and melodies might teach that we like songs we can dance to, or that we prefer songs that make us want to sit quietly and listen. Shy children might discover that they feel bolder among other people when they are loudly singing or dancing. Misbehaving children might be calmed when soft music is played.

AGES AND STAGES OF MUSICAL FUN

INFANTS

The music infants hear is dependent on their caregivers. Mothers might sing short, simple songs in high-pitched voices or dads might chant phrases over and over in deep, low tones. Brothers, sisters, and babysitters may play popular records on the stereo for them. Grandparents may tune to radio stations that play classical or orchestrated music. Some research findings suggest that babies can hear music even before they are born, while still in the mother's womb.

Sing simple, short songs to infants in a high, soft voice. Make up one or two lines about bathing, dressing, or eating to sing to them while you do these activities.

Nursery rhymes said with rhythm and repetition sound pleasant to older infants. You also can provide rhythmic activities for younger infants by rocking them or clapping and patting their hands together. Babies will respond with excited movements like swaying, waving, and bouncing. Gurgling, cooing, and happy shouting are the baby's own way of making music!



TODDLERS

Children from 18 months through 3 years like short songs. Their memories are not fully developed, so they can remember only a few words at a time. Motion also is interesting to them, and actions put to words help them remember their order. Repeating songs encourages the use of words and memorization.

When caring for toddlers, listen when they begin to sing spontaneously. Repeat the songs or nursery rhymes over and over. Encourage the child to reproduce their rhythms by clapping or tapping a metal pie pan with a wooden spoon. Most 3-year-olds will be able to listen and repeat.

As toddlers sing, or music plays on the radio or stereo, call out movements for them to make that involve various parts of their bodies. Ask them to jump and hop, smile and frown, or punch the air with their fists. Then, ask them to sit on the floor or stand on one foot each time you turn the music off. This is a fun game for toddlers and can be played with all kinds of music.

Toddlers' attention spans aren't as long as yours so when they are ready to play another game, turn your attention to something new as well.

PRESCHOOLERS

Children who are 4 and 5 enjoy singing just to be singing! They like songs that repeat words and melodies, rhythms with a definite beat and words that ask them to do things. Preschool children enjoy nursery rhymes and songs about familiar things like toys, animals, play activities, and people. They also like fingerplays and nonsense rhymes with or without musical accompaniment.

If you are caring for preschool children, provide a wide variety of music for them to listen to; folk songs, symphonies, operas, rock and roll, and even sound tracks from movies they might have seen. Suggest that everyone pretend to be animals or objects like cats, elephants, trucks, or bouncing balls, and then imitate these in response to the music. You might provide the children with long scarves with which they can pretend to make butterfly wings. Together, you can move your bodies and "wings" and "fly" along with the music!

EARLY SCHOOL-AGE CHILDREN

Remember, like toddlers, the attention span of preschool children is short. They should not be urged to continue singing or to participate in dancing or rhythmic activities after they have lost interest. Let the child's interest be your guide.

Most 6- to 9-year-olds like songs about everyday happenings. Songs that involve counting, spelling, or remembering a sequence of events are popular. Songs and musical activities with other school subjects also are effective during this developmental stage. Words that tell stories about athletic games, other countries, famous men and women, or scientific discoveries are well-liked and easily remembered. Verses still should be fairly short and limited to one thought.



Early school-age children are able to establish firm relationships with their companions and may use musical experiences to form friendships. They may have a strong interest in taking music lessons or playing in a band. They also may want to listen to records after school with a group of friends or sing in a church or community choir. They are conscientious about practicing and especially like percussion instruments. This age group likes rhythm and can dance or clap in time to the music. Rhythm is important and fun to them!

If you are the caregiver for an early school-age child, you may not have to initiate musical activities. Children, ages 6 to 9, can choose their own friends and activities and organize their own experiences. Listen to the music they may want to play for you.

Suggest that everyone sing and play musical instruments together as a group. If you let the children take turns directing this "jam session" and join in as an enthusiastic member, their interest will surely last longer.

HOW YOU CAN HELP CHILDREN ENJOY MUSIC AND RHYME

For most children, singing is as natural as talking. Kids learn to sing just as they learn to talk - by imitating other people. You probably will not have to teach the children you care for how to sing, but you can help them learn to feel good about their method of musical expression by feeling good about your own. Working patiently to teach them new songs will help them learn how to take instructions and how to cooperate. Teaching them how to make and play homemade musical instruments will help develop self-confidence. Smile when you sing, and be proud when making your music! The children will do as you do!

The fact that you like a certain instrument, like a certain song, or have a favorite kind of music does not mean the children you care for will share your enthusiasm. You may need to interest them in an instrument or motivate them to learn a song by showing pictures, telling a short story, or playing a guessing game. The purpose of motivating is to focus the children's attention on the music or rhythm activity in which you would like them to participate.

RECORDS

Records are an important kind of music, but since "listening records" are different than "participation records," try to vary your collection so you have some of each. When you care for children, expose them to storybook records, classical recordings by the great composers, dancing songs, and music that can be used as background while you finger paint, rest, eat a snack, or play. Consider the following when choosing records.

- Speaking voices should be sincere and natural.
- "Participation records" should offer clear, simple directions.
- A few, well-liked records should be used over and over again rather than overwhelming the children with a vast collection of new music.
- Children are happier when allowed to interpret and react to music in their own individual, creative way.



- Toddlers and preschoolers like to hear silly words and nonsense rhymes; later school-age children like stories about mysteries and secrets.

MUSICAL TOYS

These activities might be fun to try with younger children.

1. Sit on the floor in a circle. First, listen to a record without words or someone playing a tune on the piano. Choose music that is easy to keep time to.
2. Now, start the music over and clap your hands to the music. Many pre-schoolers cannot keep time to music, so do not insist that they clap in time.
3. Start the music again, and this time use a musical toy to keep time or make a special sound.
4. If working with more than one child, you may want to have enough equipment so all children can have the same toy or instrument at the same time. Small children usually want something exactly like everyone else has. This is a good time to talk about sharing.
5. Children may want to move as they play their instruments and should be free to march, skip, hop, jump, or dance as they please.
6. Some children may not want to clap their hands or use their toy. Do not force them, but let them participate when they are ready.

When selecting musical toys for young children, remember that these are toys and should be made of durable, safe materials. Do not use anything that is valuable or breakable. Learn how to make some of your own toys in the Learn by Doing part of this section.

MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS

Older children will enjoy activities with real musical instruments. Here are some activities you might try with them.

1. Show children how to play an instrument, and let them try to play it, too.
2. Play the instrument in many different ways; loud, soft, fast, slow, with short and long sounds.
3. Compare the sounds different instruments make.
4. Explore the sounds that two or more instruments played together make.

When choosing musical instruments to use during a child care session, be sure you have permission from the instrument's owner to play it. Be sure it's an instrument that can be replaced, if broken, and be sure it's safe for the child to use. If you are not sure about the safety of the instrument, discuss it with the child's parents.



RHYTHM ACTIVITIES

Try some of these activities with children. Most of them can be tailored to use with any age group.

1. Ask the children to close their eyes (or blindfold them) and listen. What sounds do they hear? Where are they coming from? Compare indoor and outdoor sounds, or sounds in different rooms. Can the children guess what room they are in from the sounds they hear? Have them listen to a snowstorm.
2. Make up "guess what's making the sound" games using sounds from odd things in the room, musical instruments, children's voices, etc.
3. Experiment with rhythms, using hands, feet, voices, rhythm sticks, and other instruments. Can the children make a fast rhythm? A slow one? The rhythm of a horse galloping? A snail crawling? Play "follow the rhythm." Can they copy a simple rhythm that you or another child plays? Can different children play different rhythms at the same time? Beat out the rhythm of a familiar song.
4. Form a symphony of sounds with real and unconventional instruments and give a "concert." Alternate loud and soft sounds, slow and fast rhythms; let children take turns conducting; ask different "groups" to play at different times or in different rhythms; alternate solos, trios, with "full orchestra" passages; form a marching band; let children dance or sing to the music.

Before beginning a rhythm activity, think about how and when it will end. When several children dance, march or play instruments at the same time, the music can turn to noise and the movement activities can turn to chaos. Think ahead! How can you structure music and rhythm activities so they remain in your control?

You might buy a kitchen timer, set it for three minutes, and ask the children to stop playing an instrument or dancing when they hear the buzzer. You might ask another child to "be in charge" of the band and give the directions to trade instruments and begin a new song. Children also respond to redirection. Interest them in a new activity or a new song. Play the record player, or if it's on, turn it off, and begin singing yourself. You might be interested in learning more about redirection and calming chaotic situations. See what information you can find.

TEACHING MUSIC AND RHYTHM

There are many reasons that children need to have musical experiences in their lives. One reason is that they develop confidence in their own abilities to express themselves. They can tell others whether they are happy, sad, lonely, excited, or scared just by singing a song or moving their body. Music also is important because it helps children learn to cooperate, follow directions, and develop social relationships. It helps them to learn how to get along with other people who live in their society.

When teaching musical activity, some times are better than others for musical experiences. Some of the best times are during transitions. (A transition time is the period between the end of one activity and beginning of another.) Singing a song helps kids leave one activity behind and go on to another. Here are some examples of transition times:

Child Care Resources



Helping Families Find Child Care

- A quiet time when the children are seated, such as before or after a snack.
- Walking to the park or riding in a car.
- Before nap time or bedtime.
- While gathering children together for a group activity.
- After the children have been playing hard and need to calm down for a meal, bath, or rest.

Tips for Teaching Music and Rhythm:

- Know a variety of songs about emotions and moods. Use them to sing to a child that is having a hard time expressing anger, excitement, and so on. The song at the beginning of this section is a good example and can have a verse made up about any emotion.
- Give the children the overall feel of the song by explaining what it is about. Read it aloud and explain the words.
- Sing the song through once by yourself (at a good pace - don't slow down) while the children listen. Children learn songs by hearing them sung. Don't try to teach the song line by line. Sing the same song several times.
- Let the children join in as soon as they can. If there is a chorus after each verse, teach that first; then the children can sing out on the chorus after you sing the verses. Learning verses will come easier this way.
- Do not force the children to learn all the words. If they enjoy singing what they do know, you can all have a good time.
- Do not force children to sing, or stress the tone and technique so much that it takes the enjoyment out of singing. How they sing is not as important as why they sing! Let it be fun!
- Let the children make it their song. As they learn it, lower your voice so you do not dominate.
- Other children often are the best teachers. If one child already knows the song, let him or her teach.
- Record the children's singing, and let them dance to their own music.
- Substitute the child's name or a familiar location for names in a song: "Old Bill Thompson Had a Farm."
- Sing LOUD like a monster or soft like a mouse.

TEACHING MOVEMENT AND DANCE

By putting on a record or playing a simple rhythm on an instrument, you can transform rainy-day wiggles and squirms into welcome outbursts of free-form dancing. Be sure that you have plenty of space and that the noise will not disturb others. Start simply and slowly, keeping in touch with the kinds of dancing the children want to do. Let them take turns thinking up new steps and movements.

1. Start with simple warm-up exercises like touching toes, walking, running, stretching, twisting, bending, bouncing, jumping, or hopping in time to the music. Or have a parade. Set the beat by clapping your hands, and in no time the children will be marching all over the house.



2. Start a game by giving complete directions and instructions for a "dance," and gradually make them more difficult. To begin, say, "Jump, jump, jump" as you jump. Next do the movements without describing them. Jump but do not say the word out loud. Let the children imitate your movements without your instructions. Now change it around and have the children do what you say, but do not demonstrate the motion. Say "Jump, jump, jump," but do not jump yourself. This way, the child will have to listen and think to be able to do what you ask.
3. Call out different parts of the body and have the children move just that. Swing both arms, then first one arm and then the other. (Try chin dancing by asking children to move just their chin.) Or have them move the whole body to music: sway, shake, run, hop, or jump to a beat they hear.
4. Make drastic changes in the rhythm and tempo while the children dance. This will help them concentrate on listening to the sound and dancing with it.
5. Do pantomime dancing: lumber like an elephant or weave like a snake; pretend to be a bouncing ball or a tree in the wind; someone picking up spilled pins or carrying heavy packages.
6. Add props: balloons, scarves (try big ones or a sheet), mirrors, costumes.
7. Older children will enjoy learning folk, round, and simple square dances. It will be necessary for them to keep in time with the music, carry out instructions as they are given, and work with others.

If dancing ends too abruptly, the children's energy is left scattered, jagged, and raw. It's best to wind down gradually from kangaroo steps to snail steps; from a bouncing ball to a floating feather.

LEARN BY DOING

Here are some activity suggestions to help you learn more about children and their response to music and rhythm. Other suggestions have been given throughout this section. Be creative in choosing your activities.

Observe children every chance you get. See how they use and respond to music and rhythm in their play. Watch each child as a whole and watch the parts of their bodies, too. What do their eyes look like when they sing? What do their feet do while they listen to music and draw in time to the rhythm?

Making Musical Instruments or Toys

Small muscles are developed as children help make and use musical instruments. Children may have more interest in using and experimenting with instruments that they have created. Some of these examples are too hard for small children to make by themselves. You'll have to patiently help them and be satisfied if their results are less than perfect.

Drums

- o Tape the top securely on an oatmeal box, or a margarine container.



Helping Families Find Child Care

- o Cut the ends off a large can, cover both ends with rubber inner tubing and lace the tubing together, or use a plastic snap-on lid on each end.
- o The end of any cylinder-shaped container can be covered with construction paper or fabric scraps.
- o Try any surface that is available. Compare the differences in the sounds they make.
- o Drumsticks can be your hands, spoons, pencils, dowels, or sticks. You may want to wrap one end of the dowel or stick with cloth, or tie cotton on it to make a different sound.

Tambourines

- o Remove corks from bottle caps. Flatten the caps, and punch holes in them. Make sure there are no sharp edges. Tie caps to the edges of aluminum pie pans or paper plates.
- o Lace two paper plates together and tie small bells to the edges.
- o Put bottlecaps, buttons, or stones in an aluminum pie pan. Place another pie pan face-down over it. Punch evenly spaced holes around the rim and lace together tightly.

Shakers

- o Use film containers, plastic eggs, baking powder cans, oatmeal boxes, or boxes with lids. Experiment with different sounds by putting dry beans, macaroni, rice, buttons, stones, etc., in them. Tape together securely. Little children like to put things in their mouths, so be sure they can not get to the contents of the shaker.
- o Staple paper plates together with something that rattles inside. Use fairly large objects inside, and place the staples very close together so the contents will not fall out. Place tape over staples, or whip edges with yarn after holes are punched. Attach tie strings for musical hats.

Rhythm Sticks

- o Use dowel rods or bamboo fishing poles. Cut them 12 to 15 inches long. Paint or shellac gives them a different sound.
- o Chopsticks, spoons, or rungs from old chairs can be used.

Swish or Sandpaper Blocks

- o Glue sandpaper to one side of 2-by 2-by 1-inch wooden blocks, rough side up. Rub sandpapered sides of the two blocks together for sound effects. Be sure the blocks are smooth and do not have splinters.

Cymbals and Bells

- o Make cymbals from jar lids, saucepan covers or aluminum plates. A spool may be attached as a handle.



Helping Families Find Child Care

- o Finger cymbals can be made by punching two holes in the center of two matching jar lids, large buttons or bottle caps. Fold a fat rubber band in half and push each end through the holes. Put your thumb and forefinger through the loops and clack away.
- o Sew small sleigh bells to elastic and make a wrist band of bells.

Kazoos and Horns

- o Tape waxed paper over one end of a cardboard tube (from paper towels or toilet paper). Hum into the open end with your mouth open a little. This may take a little practice. A different sound is made if you make three holes in the tube with a pencil. The waxed paper can be held in place with a rubber band.
- o Use different sized empty soda bottles and blow across the mouth of the bottle. Different sizes give different tones.

Banjos and Guitars

- o Cut a large hole in the middle of a shoe box lid and a piece out of the end of the lid and box. Cut slit in cardboard tube, and fit into place. Stretch rubber bands around the box. Space them far enough apart to get your fingers between them. Slide a pencil or short piece of cardboard tube under them. "Tune" the banjo by using different sized rubber bands. Stretch rubber bands of different sizes around the partially opened box. How can you make the sound change?

Water Chimes

- o Put water in eight glasses. Start with an almost full glass on the left, and end with a small amount of water in the eighth glass. The tone of the full glass will be deep and clear. Add or pour water from the other glasses until you have the eight musical notes of a scale. Tap the glasses gently with a spoon, a pencil, or your fingernail. If you want a short note, put your finger on the rim of the glass, and the sound will stop.
- o Fill a number of glass containers with different amounts of water. By carefully striking the sides of the containers with different utensils, they will ring out with varying degrees of sound.

RESOURCES

A suitcase of materials on music for the young child can be borrowed from the Colorado State University Bulletin Room (for use in Colorado only). Order through your county Cooperative Extension office. These and other pamphlets may be part of the suitcase:

Michigan - *Songs, Finger Plays, and Creative Activities for Young Children*

North Carolina - *Music and Stories with Children*

U.S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare - *Fun in the Making*

West Virginia - *Fun with Children Through Art and Music*



OTHER RESOURCES

These organizations will provide you with catalogs, lists of records, songbooks, and information about musical activities for the young child.

Association for Childhood Education International, 3615 Wisconsin Ave., N.W., Washington, DC 20016

Bank Street College of Education Bookstore, 69 Bank Street, New York, NY 10014

Children's Music Center, 5373 West Pico Blvd., Los Angeles, CA 90019

Educational Resources Information Center, 4936 Fairmont Ave., Bethesda, MD 20014

Folkways/Scholastic Records, 906 Sylvan Ave., Englewood Cliffs, NJ 07632

BOOKS

Most of these books are written for adults as teaching or resource guides. They're packed with songs, fingerplays, games, and activity ideas. Check to see if they are in your public library or ask your local music teachers (school, church, or private teachers) if they have a copy.

Adoff, Arnold. *Mandala*. Harper & Row Publishers, Inc., 10 East 53rd St., New York, NY 10022, 1971. The Sanskrit word mandala means "magic circle." The author of this book developed a poem chanted by an African family about a magic circle.

Barlin, Anne Lief. *Teaching Your Wings to Fly: The Nonspecialist's Guide to Movement Activities for Young Children*. Goodyear Publishing Co., Inc., Santa Monica, CA, 1979. Guide to teaching movement and dance.

Flemming, Bonnie Mack and Hamilton, Darlene Softley. *Resources for Creative Teaching in Early Childhood Education*. Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, Inc., New York, NY, 1977. Extensive resource guide with numerous songs and rhythm activities.

Glazer, Tom. *Eye Winker, Tom Tinker, Chin Chopper: Fifty Musical Finger-plays*. Doubleday and Company, Inc., Garden City, NY, 1973. Songs accompanied by musical scores and suggested dramatizations.

Jenkins, Ella; Krane, Sherman; and Lipschultz, Peggy. *The Ella Jenkins Song Book for Children*. Oak Publications, New York, NY, 1966. Ms. Jenkins' most requested songs and chants that encourage children to participate and respond.

Klagsbrun, Francine (Ed.), *Free to Be You and Me*. McGraw-Hill Book Company, New York, NY, 1974. A book of non-sexist, non-racist stories, songs, poems, and drawings. Has a companion album by the same name.



Wirth, Marian; Strassevitch, Vera; Shotwell, Rita; and Stemmler, Patricia. *Musical Games, Fingerplays, and Rhythmic Activities for Early Childhood*. Parker Publishing Company, Inc., New York, NY, 1983. The title says it all.

RECORDS

FOLK MUSIC

- Peter, Paul, and Mommy*. Warner Brothers Records, Inc., 3300 Warner Blvd., Burbank, CA 91510. (Performed by Peter, Paul, and Mary.)

TV AND MOVIE SOUNDTRACKS

- Star Wars*. 20th Century-Fox Record Corp., 8544 Sunset Blvd., Los Angeles, CA 90069. (Composed and conducted by John Williams, performed by The London Symphony Orchestra.)
- You're A Good Man, Charlie Brown*. Atlantic Recording Corp., 1841 Broadway, New York, NY, 10023. (Performed by the original television cast for the Hallmark Hall of Fame special.)

STORIES

- Walt Disney Presents Best Loved Fairy Tales*. Walt Disney Music Co., Walt Disney Productions.

CLASSICAL

- Prokofiev's Peter and the Wolf and Britten's the Young Person's Guide to the Orchestra*. Capitol Records, Inc., Hollywood and Vine, Los Angeles, CA. (Narrated by Mia Farrow and Andre Previn and performed by The London Symphony Orchestra).

LISTENING AND LEARNING

- Animals of Africa: Sounds of the Jungle Plain and Bush*. Nonesuch Records, 15 Columbus Circle, New York, NY 10023.
- Free to Be You and Me*. Arista Records, Inc., 1776 Broadway, New York, NY 10019. (Performed by Marlo Thomas and friends).
- Getting to Know Myself*. Educational Activities, Inc., Box 392, Freeport, NY 11520.
- Play Your Instruments and Make a Pretty Sound*. Folkways Records and Service Corp., 43 W. 61st Street, New York, NY 10023. (Performed by Ella Jenkins.)
- Turtles and Snakes and Snowstorms*. Folkways Records and Service Corp., 43 W. 61st Street, New York, NY 10023. (Performed and written by Gerry Axelrod.)
- You'll Sing a Song and I'll Sing a Song*. Folkways Records and Service Corp., 43 W. 61st Street, New York, NY 10023. (Performed by Ella Jenkins.)
- Rock and roll, country and western, jazz, big band, soul, popular, easy listening, rhythm and blues, reggae, and rap are just a few music categories. Visit your local record shop or music store and learn



about the differences in these types of music. Listen to some of the prominent artists and share their music with children.

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Any additions or changes to these materials must be preapproved by the author.

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