

# **RHYTHM KEEPS FIRST GRADERS ON THE ACADEMIC BEAT**

**Young children with developed rhythm skills  
perform better academically in early  
school years.**

How do early sensory and motor development influence later cognitive, perception and language skills? That was the question asked by Debby Mitchell at the University of Central Florida in her study, "The Relationship between Rhythmic Competency and Academic Performance in First Grade Children" The study explored the cognitive-motor link, and how sensory and motor development may influence later cognitive, perception and language skills.

Findings showed that there was a significant difference in the academic achievement levels of students classified according to rhythmic competency. Students who were achieving at academic expectation scored high on all rhythmic tasks, while many of those who scored lower on the rhythmic test achieved below academic expectation.

The study concludes that the large percentage of children who are achieving below academic expectation are lacking in foundation skills that should have been developed prior to entering school.