Listening to Nature - Coastal Soundscapes
Ages 3–6

Objectives:

1. Students will listen to and respond to a variety of natural sounds.
2. Students will identify and describe how sound can represent elements of nature.
3. Students will use imagination to interpret sound through movement or visual art.
4. Students will connect sound to personal experiences and storytelling.

Materials:

- Drawing paper (optional: divide into 4 sections)
- Crayons or markers
- Pencil
- Open space for movement
- *The Little Island* by Margaret Wise Brown or (virtual read aloud here)
- Access to the following nature sound clips:
    - (Tip: play 30–60 second clips for each sound.)
    - Gentle water lapping in a cove
    - Seagulls and ocean sounds
    - Campfire and ocean waves
    - Dolphin sounds

Directions:

- Tell students: "When you come to the Gaillard Center, you will see *The Littlest Cove,* a performance by Treehouse Shakers. In this show, you will hear sounds of nature that help tell the story."
- Explain: "Nature has its own kind of music. Waves, wind, and animals all create sounds that help us imagine a place."
- Ask:
    - What sounds do you hear at the beach?
    - What sounds do you think belong in a quiet cove?
    - How do those sounds make you feel?
- We will read a story about a little island with lots of nature and animals. As we read, paint a picture in your mind of the nature in the story and try to imagine the sounds you might hear on this island.

- Read aloud *The Little Island* by Margaret Wise Brown or (virtual read aloud here).
- Next, we will listen to more nature sounds you might hear on an island or cove.

Activity directions:

Step 1: Listen & guess

A. Play the first nature sound clip.
    a. Gentle water lapping in a cove
B. Ask students to close their eyes and listen carefully.
C. Then ask:
    a. What do you think this sound is?
    b. Where might you hear it?
    c. How does it make you feel?
D. Repeat with each sound clip.
    a. Seagulls and ocean sounds
    b. Campfire and ocean waves
    c. Dolphin sounds

Step 2: Respond through art or movement

A. After listening, give students a choice:
B. Option A: Illustrate
    a. Draw what they imagine (setting, animals, movement)
    b. Use lines and shapes to match the sound
C. Option B: Move
    a. Use their body to show the sound

Reflect:

A. Students share one response:
    a. "I heard…"
    b. "I think it was…"
    c. "It made me feel…"
    d. "I moved/drew this because…"
B. Ask:
    a. Which sounds were calm?
    b. Which sounds were loud or strong?
    c. Which made you want to move differently?
C. Discuss:
    a. Did everyone imagine the same thing?
    b. How can sound tell a story without words?

Conclusion:

Share with students that today we used sound to help us imagine nature and tell a story. Say, “When you come to the Gaillard Center to see the performance of *The Littlest Cove*, notice how different sounds help create the setting.”

SC Early Learning Standards:

- GM.RE.1.1– Listen to and describe music and sounds using appropriate vocabulary
- GM.CR.1.1– Generate creative ideas in response to music and sound
- GM.CN.1.1– Connect music and sound to personal experiences and environments
- VA.CR.NH.2– Create artwork using materials and techniques
- DA.CR.NL.1– Express ideas through movement
- Goal CD-5 - Children demonstrate self-expression and creativity in a variety of forms and contexts, including play, visual arts, music, drama, and dance.
- Goal CD-10 - Children observe and describe characteristics of living things and the physical world.
- Goal APL-4 - Children demonstrate creativity, imagination, and inventiveness.
- Goal LDC-8 - Children develop interest in books and motivation to read.
- ELA.AOR.1- Evaluate and critique key literary elements that enhance and deepen meaning within and across texts.