

THE ROLE OF MUSIC FOR THE UNDER FIVES: THE EVIDENCE BASE

Supporting Early Years Professionals Across the UK



Outlining the research which underpins the evidence for music therapy as a psychosocial intervention for the under fives, aligned with the UK Government's *Early Years Foundation Framework*; giving us confidence that engaging early years practitioners in music based interventions can help them to better understand the children they work with.

“ Music Therapy...builds directly on the children's predisposition to be social and draws out the innate musicality with which we are all born.”

The Evidence for Music Therapy: Research Summary



In association with:



music as therapy
international



The Music Therapy Evidence Base

Music therapy has an important role to play in early intervention programmes for young children, and focuses on the use of music in young children's communication and language, and personal, social and emotional development.

Music therapy can also provide crucial early intervention in the case of speech and language delay, or identifying a Special Educational Needs or Disability (SEND). This has been recognised in the UK by the NHS's Paediatric Psychology Service, which provides music therapy services to children, and in the dedicated Music Therapy Services within NHS Trusts. such as Oxleas NHS Foundation Trust (one of our Interactive Music-Making Associate organisations).

Supporting the above is a wealth of research evidencing the ways in which music therapy can aid early child development:

- Promoting the development of verbal communication
- Promoting the development of non-verbal communication skills (Such as: turn taking, eye contact, anticipation and listening)
- Developing attention and concentration
- Developing a young child's awareness of themselves and others
- Developing cognitive skills
- Boosting self-esteem and confidence
- Building resilience.

Abad, V. & Williams, K. (2006); Aldridge, D. (1996); Allgood, N. (2005); Archer, C. (2004); Ayson, C. (2008); Beebe, B. (1982); Braithwaite, M. & Sigafos, J. (1999); Bunt, L. (1994); Bunt, L. (2002); Burrell, M. (2011); Colwell, C. (1994); Ettenberger, M. et al (2014 & 2016); Forrester, M. (2009); Hibben, J. (1992); Hughes, M. H. (1995); Humpal, M. (1991); Jacobsen, S. et al (2014); Jonsdottir, V. (2002); Kale & Pitre (2016); Kennedy, R. (2008); Kin, J. et al (2008); Mclean, E. (2016); Malloch, S. (1999); Malloch, S. et al. (2012); Malloch & Trevarthen (2018); Mampe, B et al (2009); Maselko, J. et al (2010); Molyneux, C. (2005); Murray, L. et al (2000); Nicholson, J. M., et al (2008); North, F. (2014); Oldfield, A. et al (2012); Oldfield, A. et al (2001); Papousek, H. et al (1989); Papousek, M. (1996); Pasiali, V. (2011); Pasiali, V. (2013); Pasiali, V. (2013); Pavlicevic, M. (1990); Pavlicevic, M. (1991); Pavlicevic, M. (1995); Pavlicevic, M. (2000); Prochnow et al (2017); Quin, A. (2013); Register, D. (2001); Robb, S. L. (2003); Ruud, E. (1998); Shoemark, H. (1996); Shoemark, H. (2008); Shoemark, H. (2016); Standley, J.M., Hughes, J. E. (1996); Stensæth, K. (2013); Stern, D. (1985); Streeter, E. (2001); Trehub, S. (2001); Trevarthen, C. & Malloch S. (2008); Vlismas, W., Malloch, S. & Burnham, D. (2013); Vosoughi, S., Roy, B., Frank, M., and Roy, D. (2010); Walworth, D. (2009); Wetherick, D. (2009); Winnicott, D.W. (1971); Woodward, A. (2004); Yang (2015); Young, S. (2006).



The Current Early Years Foundation Stage Framework

The department for Education's *Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage* (2017) spells out seven key Early Years development areas, each containing relevant Early Learning Goals. The areas with primary relevance to our approach are:

EYFS Focus	Early Learning Goals	The Interactive Music-Making Approach
Communication and Language	Listening and attention; understanding; speaking	Listening to others' music-making; listening to own music-making; hearing and producing different sounds; singing & vocalising; following instructions, watching & waiting, turn-taking and copying within musical activities; self-expression (verbal & non-verbal).
Physical Development	Good control and coordination; confident movement; effective handling of equipment and tools.	Careful handling of instruments of different sizes; using one or two beaters; clapping; dancing; swapping places; making strong movements for louder sounds or controlled.
Personal, Social and Emotional Development	Self-confidence and awareness; managing feelings and behaviour; building relationships.	Leading activities and influencing the music of others; impulse control; channeling energy; showing and recognising feelings; collaborative play and forming positive peer relationships; self-expression.

Music as Therapy International's Approach

Music as Therapy International has been delivering skill-sharing projects internationally for over twenty years. We have been working with people in vulnerable situations in the UK since 2016, and in 2020 we were shortlisted for a *Markel Third Sector Care Award* in the Innovative Quality Outcomes category for our UK Programme.

Our approach for the early years is called Interactive Music-Making (IMM). IMM uses techniques drawn from music therapy within an approach designed to make music integral part of children's early development opportunities, supporting skills associated with social communication, including attention and listening, non-verbal and verbal communication, turn-taking and sharing.

IMM can be accessed either through a tailored skill-sharing project, delivered directly within an early years setting, or through our annual structured training course (September - April, South East London). Alongside our recent *Nursery World Award* short-listing, the IMM course has twice been shortlisted for an *Advancing Healthcare Award* and runs in association with *Oxleas NHS Foundation Trust*, *North London Music Therapy*, *Nordoff and Robbins*, and *Quaggy Development Trust*.

Quantitative Evidence from our UK Partners

In the context of care and early education of young children, 100% of Practitioners and Managers told us that participation in music sessions had benefitted children's:

- Non-verbal communication
- Self-regulation
- Social motivation and participation
- Turn-taking



It is of note that the following identified benefits are considered significant:

- Improved peer relationship (outside group)
- Spoken language
- Reduced anxiety
- Reduced isolation

Music as Therapy International, UK Sustainability Review Report (2018)

Qualitative Evidence from our Early Years Partners

“ I've seen changes in my children I didn't think were possible... I think every early years practitioner should have this training. ”

Nursery Manager

“ Having the sessions run over 6 weeks, I was able to think about them and ask questions, and then the gradual take over made the whole thing less daunting. ”

Early Years Practitioner

“ The dialogue I've had with a little boy in my group who is selective mute, on the drum has been completely mind-blowing. After his first sessions his key worker said to me 'Hes' so much more confident. ”

Early Years Practitioner

“ It was funny when you went fast with the drum and cymbal, I liked it! ”

Child feedback

“ The inclusive nature of the [IMM] approach enables children to participate irrespective of their starting points... Moreover, the positive regard which they experience in the group has a profound impact on their wellbeing and by extension their learning. ”

Children's Centre SENCO/Deputy Head

To find out more about meaningful music for the children in your care or to discuss training for your staff, please contact:

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