



The magic of music

This chapter covers

- What is music?
- Music before birth
- Music for babies
- The beneficial effects of music for young children
- The presentation of music to children in the early years



What is music?

It is important firstly to identify what is meant by music – almost any noise can be incorporated into musical composition, but sound alone cannot be defined as music.

Music has **structure**, pattern, sound, rhythm and variation in **pitch** – much the same as language. It can however be vocal or instrumental and there is a continuity of sound such that it becomes melodious and is generally pleasing to the ear.

Music can be made by using the body – humming, singing, whistling, stamping and clapping, or instruments which may be shaken, struck, blown, plucked, or bowed. Instruments may consist of conventional ones or unusual ones such as kitchen sinks or piping.

Young children may investigate music through:

| | |
|-------------------|---|
| Listening | Hearing and interpreting sounds |
| Composition | Exploration of sounds and putting these together in a sequence |
| Movement | Moving in response to sound |
| Performance | Making sounds |
| The printed score | To a limited extent. Although some children do learn to read musical notation at an early age, most do not. Through early music teaching children may be exposed to graphic notation. |

Our first musical experience may well be from within the womb, listening to sounds from the outside world. These sounds may lay the foundation for our future development.

Music before birth

A consideration of musical activities for children raises the question, 'At what age can children begin to appreciate and benefit from music?' Are babies too young to learn through musical experiences?

Logan in the USA believes that babies begin to benefit from music from within the womb. Logan (in Logan et al., 1994) proposed that the first pattern that a child receives is that of the heartbeat. In his pursuit of enhancement of human performance, he proposed the concept of pre-natal stimulation. His Babyplus machine plays variations of a synthesised heartbeat to the foetus. On the Babyplus website it is proposed that, 'Babyplus babies are more relaxed and alert at birth, nurse better, are more self-soothing, reach their developmental milestones earlier and later in life are more school ready.'

At the same time in Moscow, Lazarev (in Logan et al., 1994) also developed a course of training for the unborn child. This was based on music rather than sounds and claimed to improve psychological development. Lazarev (2010) claimed that playing music to the unborn child helps to organise the developing foetal brain. He proposed that the naturally occurring death of the brain cells, prior to birth, (approximately half) is reduced by the playing of music to the foetus.

Hepper (in Logan et al., 1994) from Belfast was also studying the psychology of the foetus at this time. He believed that the foetus is capable of learning and proved this to be the case, by measuring response to stimuli after birth, which babies had also been exposed to whilst in the womb. The stimuli were tunes, which were played to babies before birth – their responses were measured by exposure to these after birth. Logan, Lazarev and Hepper each proposed that it is possible to influence a child's development before birth by stimulation of the brain using sound and/or music.

Babies in the womb can relax to external music and can become conditioned to respond similarly to the same music after birth. This is termed '**classical conditioning**'. Classical conditioning can occur from about five-and-a-half months after conception (Eliot, 2000).

Music for babies

A study in 2006 by Blumenfeld and Eisenfeld suggested that premature babies exposed to music – such as that of their mothers singing during feeding – have reduced symptoms of stress, faster weight gain and shorter stays in intensive care.

Kjaer (1993: 7) stated in her seminar paper that:

If an educational programme based on music for the physical and mental development of children is already started when the children are under three years old, these children will be supported in their motor, sensory and linguistic functions, as well as in their social behaviour.

Kjaer supports the view that music can provide a valuable foundation for children and recognises its role in supporting linguistic skills as well as the importance of an early start. She also believes that a baby can recognise melodies played to the mother before birth, after it is born.

The way that a mother or indeed other adults or children speak to babies has been referred to as 'motherese'. It is usually higher in pitch than normal language, and is slower and more deliberate in its delivery and may contain shortened or simplified words. Although some people may think that this 'baby language' is childish and has little purpose, it does in fact help babies to assimilate language in an easier way than more adult speech. The research of Shore (1997) and others confirms this.

The rhythmic rocking, an almost subconscious activity when we hold a baby, is also beneficial to a child's development. Rocking is a soothing activity; it is natural, normal and necessary to our wellbeing. The rhythm in sound was studied by Schreckenberg and Bird in 1987 and they found that mice exposed to **arhythmic** beats, such as those in rock music, left the mice confused and incapacitated as the arhythmic beats disrupted the natural rhythmic patterns of the brain.

A study by Winkler et al. (2009) in Hungary showed that newborn babies develop expectation for the onset of rhythmic cycles (the downbeat). This supports the view that the perception of beat is inborn and not learned such that the capability of detecting beat is already functional at birth.

Goddard (2002: 108) describes music as a 'primary teacher' and says that, 'Before birth, the foetus reacts to music with changes in motor activity.' She believes that babies can imitate rhythms. She identifies melody recognition, language comprehension, picture recognition, spatial orientation and rhythm as skills that children need when starting to learn to read. She points out that music can be used to develop these skills in preparation for literacy.

There is much scientific evidence to demonstrate that music is beneficial to babies; it provides sound, rhythms and vibrations that can aid relaxation, this in turn enhances the ability to learn. Mothers have always used lullabies as a way to induce sleep for their babies. Music also provides stimulation to fire neural connections and can hone mental acuity.

So far it is possible to conclude that music for babies can be used to:

- aid relaxation
- promote alertness
- promote overall development
- stimulate the brain
- reduce stress
- support motor, linguistic, emotional functions and social behaviour
- help to emphasise the rhythm in language
- help the development of language and other literacy skills.

The beneficial effects of music for young children

A major effect of music is that it almost always elicits some form of response. Some of the beneficial effects that music is known to have on young children are as follows:

Relaxation

Relaxing music is often played when a calming effect is desired and it can help to promote thought and reflection. During relaxation the brain cells are able to work with greatest efficiency. When we are over-stressed, cortisol is produced. Cortisol is a hormone that causes the death of brain cells when we are over-stressed and we are unable to think clearly.

Stimulation

Music can be used to stimulate as well as relax. Loud and lively music can help us to let off steam. The Sufi music of the Whirling Dervishes assists the dervishes to go into a trance! Music can also be uplifting and motivational and can make us feel good. Music can cause mood change and has been reported to increase productivity at work. When the brain is stimulated, neurotransmitters fire causing connections to be made. Oldham et al. (1995) issued office workers with headphones through which they could listen to music. The researchers recorded a substantial increase in productivity of the workers who listened to music. This may well have a similar effect on children in the classroom.

Some people report that listening to music while they work is both enjoyable and helpful, whilst others, myself included, seem to block it out. Storr (1992: 111) suggests that, 'A perpetual background of good music to which little serious attention is paid diminishes both the music and the listener.' He adds that some intellectuals claim that their capacity for study is enhanced by background music but that there is also evidence that music interferes with intense concentration. It has also been suggested that maybe musical people 'tune in' more when listening to music than their non-musical counterparts. The music therefore becomes distracting instead of supportive. This is maybe due to the listener analysing the music rather than simply enjoying it.



Idea

Play some background music of your choice and monitor the effect it has on the children you are working with. Ask the children how they feel about background music.

Imagination

Music can conjure up a world of imagination. Consider the backing music to films: without the music, would we be frightened in a horror movie or would we cry at an emotional scene? Music that we know and remember can stir up memories or music can lead us down new paths in our imagination, promoting inspiration and innovation.

Entertainment

Entertainment is possibly the greatest use of music. Music can be with us everywhere, at work, school, home, shops or as we travel; delivered through a wide range of electronic devices. 'Children are more likely to own a mobile phone than a book,' was a quotation in *The Telegraph* (Paton, 2010). It would seem that some children may listen to music, converse or read from a phone, rather than read a book. Lyrics as well as melodies can be inspirational or emotive. We can use music to support our mood or turn off from the rigours of a day.

Movement

Music can be **motoric**, it may incite us to move – it may make us want to dance or sing or merely tap along. Much folk music evokes a desire to move, as of course does popular disco music. If we dance without music, we are almost compelled to hum or at least **subvocalise** a tune. Listening and moving to music is also associated with healing, improved intellect, alteration of brain states and **entrancement**.

Programmes which have been developed to encourage learning through music and movement include Braindance and Braingym. Where physical exercise is combined with enriched experience, a larger impact is made on the developing brain, especially while there is still **plasticity** in childhood. Exercise provides cognitive as well as physical benefits and enhances the rate of learning. Another programme, Write Dance uses music and movement to help children to develop handwriting skills.



Idea

When selecting music for children, incorporate action songs and those with a strong rhythm that is easy to follow. This helps children to appreciate the rhythm in language.

Participation

Whether as an observer or an active participator, children love to be involved in musical activities. Music can encourage participation and can help to develop social skills.

Language and communication

Music can be used to provide a means of language and communication for children. It is often used in music therapy for communication with children who have no speech. Before children learn to speak, music can help to train their listening skills. Through listening, children are able to then imitate the sounds that they hear in order to produce language of their own. Children may sing before they can speak, this will certainly help to develop their vocalisation skills. Music can help to encourage sound making, both with the voice and with instruments.

Music is a form of expression that can be accessed by all. The system Soundbeam is one specially designed to enable children with profound and complex needs to create a wealth of musical sound without requiring fine motor or vocal skills. Any movement that is made can be transformed into sound by the 'sound beams'. Sound is always activated by movement and an area that links well with the science curriculum. Music is often used with children with learning difficulties where it can help pupils to communicate and express themselves. The Nordoff Robbins charity is one of many that use music therapy to transform the lives of children and adults. There was a report (Smith, 2012) in a national newspaper, of a non-verbal, autistic man who recorded an album after having music therapy. After a lifetime of silence he is now able to express himself through music.

Considering that many foreign children are often excellent at learning to speak English, I have often wondered why this is so. I believe that one reason for this accomplishment is the fact that many foreign children listen to English music. Hence, the sound patterns and vocabulary of the English language are established early on. The ability of the developing brain to make connections diminishes in some areas with time and cannot be recovered, one such area being language. There is a critical period for the ability to discriminate foreign speech sounds that lasts only for about the first six months of life. It therefore seems very likely that listening to music in foreign tongues, while very young, may help to facilitate later foreign language acquisition.

Activities 1.1, 1.2 and 1.3 make use of a traditional song that is easy and fun to perform. The lyrics can be found online in many languages. It is given here in English and Spanish with directions for signing. Look at how the note values reflect the **syllables** differently in English and Spanish. If children clap along to the rhythm, they will be able to physically sound out the syllables. This in turn will help them to **internalise** the breaking down of words and to develop **phonological awareness**. Ultimately this will help children with both reading and writing.



Activity 1.1 My Hat It Has Three Corners (song)

Lyrics: Trad.

Trad.
Arr. M. Kay

My hat it has three cor- ners Three cor - ners has my hat

9
If it did not have three cor- ners It would not be my hat!



Activity 1.2 Mi Gorro Tiene Tres Picos (song)

Lyrics: Trad.

Trad.
Arr. M. Kay

Mi gor-ro ti - en - e tres pi - cos ___ Tres pi - cos ti - en - e mi gor-ro
ro, Si no tu - vi - e - ra tres pi - cos ___ Ya no se - rí - a mi gor-ro.



Activity 1.3 My Hat It Has Three Corners (using hand signs)

Perform the song using hand signs as follows:

- My – point to your own chest with one finger
- Hat – raise a flat hand up and down above your head
- Three – show three fingers
- Corners – bend one hand in towards your chest and move elbow up and down
- Did not/would not – with one hand push away to the side and shake your head

Performing these actions without actually singing aloud usually results in the performer 'singing' the words inside their head – 'internalising'.

Whilst listening to music in foreign tongues may help to familiarise us with other languages, listening to music in our own language will clearly assist the development of our native language, too. It can help to improve vocabulary, enunciation, comprehension and an appreciation of language structure.

Learning with music and Mozart

In 1993, Shaw and Rauscher of the University of California, Irvine (in Shaw, 1999), researched the effect of listening to Mozart. They found that listening to the music of Mozart caused a short-term improvement in spatial-temporal reasoning (the ability to visualise something over time, like the unfolding of a piece of paper). They termed this The Mozart Effect. This is now well documented.

Savan (1999), a science teacher, studied the effects of background music on learning. She played Mozart orchestral music in the classroom to a group of boys aged

12+ with behavioural and emotional problems and discovered that it improved coordination and behaviour. Babies in Scotland were able to sample the 'Mozart Effect' through free music CDs, from October 2012–2013, with funds from Creative Scotland, with the aim of enhancing early learning (Simpson, 2012).

Memory

It is possible that music can enhance memory retention. Webb and Webb (1990: 308) describe music as 'the interstate highway to the memory system'. Music can certainly help to evoke memories and facilitate recall. Often, if we hear a piece of music, it reminds us of where we were when we first or last heard it. We can 'hear' music that is not even present. This can be referred to as '**inner hearing**', hearing music in the head. It is the same to hearing as visualising is to seeing. I have previously referred to this process as 'internalising'. Gordon (1979), a music education researcher, coined the term '**audiation**' as a more extensive term to include 'thinking and comprehending' the music in addition to 'hearing'. The facility to imagine music in this way is important as it helps us to learn and remember how a song or piece of music should sound. This in turn helps us to reproduce the sound either vocally or instrumentally.

A traditional song for children that may be used to help the development of inner hearing and also introduces children to alphabetic letter names is shown in Activity 1.4.



Activity 1.4 Bingo (song)

There was a farmer had a dog and Bingo was his name 'O'

B-I-N-G-O, B-I-N-G-O, B-I-N-G-O and Bingo was his name 'O'.

The same verse is sung six times. For the first verse, instead of singing the letter name, 'B' the letter is silent, children can clap instead of singing the letter. The second time 'B' and 'I' are silent, the third time 'B', 'I' and 'N' and so on. When all the letters have been silent, the final verse can be sung with all of the letters enunciated. The music for this song can be downloaded from <http://www.soundsandsymbols.co.uk>. Performing this song also helps concentration as the performers need to remember how many letters were omitted in the previous verse.

Singing in **rounds** helps children to focus and to hold the melody and lyrics in their heads. In a round, two or more groups sing the same words and the same song but start at differing times. Well-known songs that can be sung in this way are, London's Burning, Row, Row, Row Your Boat, I Hear Thunder and Frère Jacques.

Behaviour

Roskam (1993), a music therapist and teacher, discusses the influence of music on behaviour in her book *Feeling the Sound*. She discusses the impact of the power of music on the individual and groups and its positive and negative effects.

All the above responses to music can be utilised to motivate children in many different areas of learning, encouraging them to think, move, laugh, sing, sleep and be creative.

In conclusion, music for young children can be used to:

- promote relaxation/stimulation
- reduce stress
- fire the imagination
- provide entertainment
- induce movement
- encourage participation
- promote language and communication skills
- help foreign-language acquisition
- assist learning
- teach syllabification
- enhance memory
- influence behaviour.

The presentation of music to children in the early years

A child's first initiation into the 'language' of music may be prior to birth, hearing sounds that the mother is listening to or making; after birth the child may hear a variety of music that the mother also listens to, or music that the mother plays for the child, such as recorded nursery rhymes or her own singing. Many adults instinctively sing to babies, making soft, soothing sounds or rhymes to elicit response.

Private provision

Pre-school music groups

There are many pre-school music groups that are privately run. Participation in the musical activities of a group enables young children to learn by observation and by trial, experimenting with sound. If children attend pre-school music groups then they will be exposed to a variety of musical sounds and the concepts of **duration**, **dynamics**, **tempo**, **texture**, timbre, pitch and structure. They will learn to keep time by maintaining a beat or rhythm as well as by singing, performing action rhymes and moving to music. They may also learn some musical notation. They will usually also be introduced to instruments, which generally take the form of percussion instruments (homemade or bought), these being easy to 'play'. By using untuned instruments there is no fear of striking a wrong note as there can be no discordant sound.

Using a simple song such as that in Activity 1.5 assists in the development of rhythm, rhyme, syllabification, dynamics, tempo and memory retention. Lyrics may be varied for specific purposes, to accompany a theme or to practise rhyming skills. Playing along to the rhythm and taking turns with instruments help the development of language and social skills, too.



Activity 1.5 I Hear Thunder (song)

Use the traditional tune to Frère Jacques

I hear thunder, I hear thunder (use drums and play loudly)

Hark don't you? Hark don't you?

Pitter, patter raindrops, pitter, patter raindrops (use rain sticks and sing and play quietly)

I'm wet through, you are too.

Clouds are floating, clouds are floating (sing and play all instruments slowly)

Through the sky, through the sky

Look! Here comes the sunshine. Look! Here comes the sunshine (sing and play all instruments quickly)

Please don't cry, we'll soon dry.



Idea

My advice when buying instruments for pre-school children is to ensure that they are safe. They need to be strong and solid. Some beaters, for example those provided with metal triangles, may be unsuitable for children under three years of age. Do not buy cheap, insubstantial 'toy' instruments as these may fall apart and small pieces may present a choking hazard. When making instruments such as shakers, ensure that lids to containers are securely fixed so as not to release any contents. Percussion instruments in wood are usually ideal as they tend to have rounded edges. Plastic beaters may be sharp and easily broken.

In a pre-school music group, social skills are developed by children being with their peers and working alongside adults. Children learn to share and to appreciate the actions and desires of others as well as their own. They can learn how to express their emotions and to recognise those of others. They can investigate their feelings and experience and respond in a safe and caring environment.

Being encouraged and praised when participating, engenders a feeling of worth and acceptance. Being listened to and listening to others is an important part of music making. Children learn that they have a voice and that it is worthy of attention, also that they should listen to others, too. A feeling of belonging and of being included is important and of being part of a group. Each member has a role to play. During music group activities, children are encouraged to interact and to practise their communication skills.



Idea

Attend a pre-school music session and ask the leader if they could share ideas with you. This is how I was first inspired to start a music group and I am much indebted to that individual music teacher. Select activities that you are comfortable with. Do not be over-ambitious at the start.



Idea

Take along props such as a puppet to 'speak' to the children. Children may respond more readily to a puppet than to an adult. Children may also be encouraged to speak through a puppet. Use dowels to make claves for tapping rhythms. Use ribbons or scarves for writing in the air or making patterns to music. Use props to support a selection of songs on a theme, for example use small hoops as steering wheels for transport songs or finger mice for mice rhymes.

Pre-school music groups provide activities that support the development of many skills for early years children. Music is a lovely medium through which to present a wide range of learning opportunities. For example, Activity 1.6 helps children to learn the days of the week and helps to introduce the concept of structure.



Activity 1.6 Days of the Week (song)

Lyrics: M. Kay

Trad.
Arr. M. Kay

Mon-day Mon-day Mon-day starts the week, Tues-day Tues-day let's play hide and seek,
 5
 Wednes-day Wednes-day sing-ing is such fun, Thurs-day and Fri-day the
 8
 week is al-most done. Sat-ur-day starts the week-end
 10
 time for us to play, Hoo-ray for Sun-day I can sleep all day!

The structure of a music session itself is important. Activities should be varied but include the same songs to indicate the introduction or closing of activities each time. This helps children to learn to anticipate what is going to happen next. 'Hello' and 'goodbye' songs can be used to signal the beginning and ending of sessions. Also, songs specific to particular activities can be used to indicate what will happen next. For an example, see the song in Activity 1.7.



Activity 1.7 It's Time to Put the Instruments Away (song)

Lyrics: M. Kay

Trad.
Arr. M. Kay

It's time to put the ins-tru-ments a - way, it's time to put the ins-tru-ments a -

5 way, Let's put them all a - way, rea - dy for an - oth - er day, Yes, it's

8 time to put the ins - tru - ments a - way.

Popular methodologies

Another way in which children may access music and music tuition is by attendance at private provision that may subscribe to the philosophies and methods of well-known musicians and educators such as those of Kodály, Suzuki, Orff and Dalcroze.

Some children learn to play instruments from a very young age. Violins, for example, may be played by small children as they are available in many sizes. Children can often play a tune on a piano or keyboard once they have been shown the order of the notes, although caution should be exercised with regard to the physical toll on developing bones before young children spend excessive amounts of time playing an instrument.

Guiding

Music is also part of other extracurricular activities for young children such as Guiding. Rainbows, Brownies, Beavers and Cubs traditionally sing 'campfire' songs. You can find songs such as Quartermaster's Store, On Top of Spaghetti, Three Little Angels and We are the Redmen on the Guiding website.

Youth Music

The government-funded Youth Music Initiative has run several programmes to support early years staff and parents since the First Steps programme in 2000. The Music Start programme ran from 2007 to 2008 to encourage families with children aged 2–5 years of age to make music at home.

Music in the National Curriculum (NC): pre-school

The Pre-school Learning Alliance (PLA) has long advocated the incorporation of musical sessions in playgroups. Mother and toddler groups, playgroups and nurseries usually include musical activities in their sessions.

In government-run nurseries and in schools, the National Curriculum (NC) is delivered throughout the UK. Each country within the UK adapts the curriculum to its

own requirements. The curriculum for pre-school (0–5 years) is thus prescribed by the country's respective educational body. In 2012, these were the bodies responsible for each country in the UK:

- England: Department for Education (DFE), the government department responsible for education from 2010 (replaced the Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF))
- Scotland: Learning and Teaching Scotland (part of 'Education Scotland')
- Wales: Department for Education and Skills
- Northern Ireland: Department of Education

In England, the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS), a legal requirement under the auspices of the Childcare Act 2006 is a comprehensive framework that was published in 2007 by the Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) that became statutory in September 2008. The Statutory Framework for EYFS set standards for the development, learning and care of children from birth to five years and applies to all formal childcare settings. The 2008 EYFS had six equally important areas. In September 2012, these were replaced by a new Statutory Framework for the EYFS (DFE, 2012a). The changes were implemented as a result of the recommendations from the review by Dame Clare Tickell in 2011. She recommended a simplification of the learning and development requirements by reducing the number of early learning goals from 69 to 17. Of the seven identified areas of learning and development, greater weight was placed upon the 'prime areas' than the 'specific areas'.

The essence of the overarching principles remains unchanged from the 2008 guidelines but a summary of the rewording in the 2012 framework is 'every child is unique, children learn to be strong through positive relationships, children learn and develop well in enabling environments and children develop and learn in different ways and at different rates' (DFE, 2012a: 3).

In the 2012 EYFS framework (DFE, 2012a), 'literacy' became a separate area, making *seven areas of learning and development*, which were identified as '*prime*' or '*specific*' areas.

The *prime* areas are:

- communication and language
- physical development and
- personal, social and emotional development.

The *specific* areas are:

- literacy
- mathematics
- understanding the world and
- expressive arts and design.

Each of the seven areas of learning can be addressed through musical activities.

Communication and language

This area of learning and development is further divided into 'listening and attention', 'understanding' and 'speaking'. The guidance material *Development Matters in the Early Years Foundation Stage* (Early Education, 2012), illustrates what may be observed from children at various ages and suggests how adults can support this development by the activities and environments that they provide. Reference is made to the use of rhymes, stories, songs and pictures. The use of variety of tone and intonation in the voice is advised and the use of sounds from other cultures. Children need to hear and enjoy rhythmic patterns in rhymes, stories and songs.

Music is a form of expression and can be used to encourage communication. The activity programme for babies Sing and Sign provides one example of how music can help to support the learning of a communication system. Songs can convey emotion and can tell elaborate stories that are often easily recalled once the tune is called to mind.

Communication skills are encouraged through musical activities via imitation, singing, listening and making sounds. Children learn appropriate intonation, dynamics and vocabulary by listening to, copying and responding to the sounds that they hear. Encouraging children to echo melodies using lots of repetition helps children to embed sounds for later recall.

Physical development

Music helps to induce movement and children can develop fine and gross motor skills through musical activities.

A rhyme to practise a variety of movements to is Can You Tiptoe? (Activity 1.8). Recite the rhyme and move along according to the lyrics. Also, speak quietly when tiptoeing and lengthen the word 'fly' when being a bat; accentuate the marching rhythm for the soldier and use a fast, squeaky voice for the scampering rat.



Activity 1.8 Can You Tiptoe? (rhyme)

- Can you tiptoe like a cat?
- Can you fly like a bat?
- Can you march like a soldier?
- Can you scamper like a rat?

Lyrics: M. Kay

Personal, social and emotional development (PSED)

Covered in this area is participation in groups, learning how to relate to peers and how to communicate and cooperate within a group. Music group activities help to foster the development of all three aspects of personal, social and emotional development (PSED) – building relationships, increasing self-confidence and self-awareness and managing feelings and behaviour. Musical stories and symbolic play can help to support this area of the curriculum.

Included in this area is ‘**emotional literacy**’, the ability to recognise, understand and appropriately express our emotions. Emotions may be investigated through music; we are able to tell whether a piece of music is happy or sad. Listening to music may cause our emotional state to alter. Musical activities offer a wonderful opportunity for socialising and can provide a vehicle for self-expression.

Using the melody for the song *It’s Time to Put the Instruments Away* (Activity 1.7), sing the lyrics in Activity 1.9 and perform appropriate actions.



Activity 1.9 If You’re Pleased and You Know It (song)

Verse 1: If you’re pleased and you know it, do thumbs up! (x 2)

If you’re pleased and you know it and you really want to show it!

If you’re pleased and you know it, do thumbs up!

Verse 2: If you’re sad and you know it, do thumbs down!

Verse 3: If you’re brave and you know it, stand up tall!

Verse 4: If you’re scared and you know it, run away!

Verse 5: If you’re great and you know it, shout ‘I’m amazing!’

Substitute the lyrics appropriately for each verse.

Literacy

In this area children are required to use phonic knowledge to decode regular words. Music can help in the development of phonological awareness – the sound structure of words. Helping children to recognise rhymes, syllables and letter sounds within words is a first step in nurturing the skills that will eventually enable them to decode words. An awareness of variations in sound is imperative to the successful development of literacy skills.

Mathematics

Children are able to meet numerical concepts through music, to investigate how problems may be solved and to investigate cause and effect.

There are lots of counting songs, the lyrics and tunes for which are readily available on the Internet, such as: *Five Currant Buns in a Baker’s Shop*, *Ten Fat Sausages Sizzling in a Pan*, *Five Little Men in a Flying Saucer* and *Five Little Monkeys Jumping on the Bed*. Use these to help children to appreciate the sequence of numbers and to learn ‘**The oneness of one**’.

Understanding the world

Songs can be informative and can be used to help children to understand and remember difficult concepts and the sequence of events.

The song *Creepy Crawly Caterpillar* (Activity 1.10) helps children to understand the process of metamorphosis. The use of a suitable prop such as a reversible puppet (caterpillar to butterfly) or pictures, helps to further embed the memory of the life-cycle process.



Activity 1.10 Creepy Crawly Caterpillar (song)

Lyrics: M. Kay

Trad.
Arr. M. Kay

Cree-py, craw ly ca-ter-pil-lar, shed his stri-py skin, He be-came a chrys-a -lis, a
 7
 home to live with - in, Out came a but -ter- fly beau - ti - ful and
 12
 bright, Off he flew in - to the gar - den out in - to the light.

Expressive arts and design

Music is expressly referred to in this area and the early learning goals are determined as follows.

Exploring and using media and materials: children sing songs, make music and dance, and experiment with ways of changing them. They safely use and explore a variety of materials, tools and techniques, experimenting with colour, design, texture, form and function (DFE, 2012a: 9).

Being imaginative: children use what they have learned about media and materials in original ways, thinking about uses and purposes. They represent their own ideas, thoughts and feelings through design and technology, art, music, dance, role-play and stories (DFE, 2012a: 9).

The other countries in the UK generally cover the same or very similar areas in their early years curricula.

Music can provide a medium through which children can:

- develop their physical and mental strength
- use musical activities to help provide a sense of belonging
- build confidence
- develop a sense of self and provide an arena where a child can be listened to and valued.

Music in the National Curriculum: primary school

As children enter school their music curriculum is under the directives of the government Department for Education (DFE). There are stages through which children should progress, the first of these being Key Stage (KS) One (DFE, 2012b). This is covered in years 1 and 2, generally for children aged 5–7 years.

In Music at KS One of the NC (DFE, 2012b), children are expected to use their voices to make songs, chants and rhymes, play instruments and perform with others, and to create musical patterns, to listen to, internalise and recall sounds. Children learn about pitch, duration, dynamics, timbre, texture and silence and how sounds can be described using invented signs and symbols.

When children first begin to learn to read music they may be introduced to symbols to represent times when the instrument or sound should be played (this is termed 'graphic notation'). This could be a pictorial representation of their instrument or a teacher may use hand symbols. Concepts such as loud and quiet may be symbolised by a large picture for loud and a small one for quiet. An example is given in Figure 1.1.

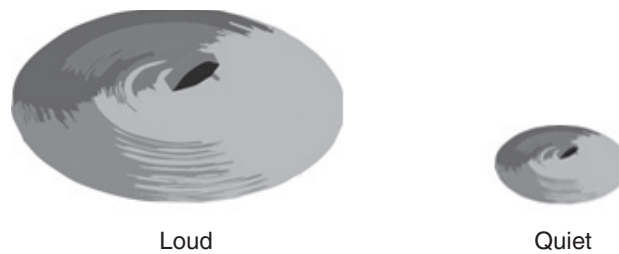


Figure 1.1 Symbols to Represent 'Loud' and 'Quiet' Sounds

Using graphic notation children can also be encouraged to write their own music. It is something of an anomaly that whilst the term 'literacy' when applied to language refers to both reading and writing (plus listening and speaking), the term 'musical literacy' usually refers only to the ability to read music.

On paper, children can use symbols to illustrate the types of sounds that they wish to play. They may have several instruments and then pictures of each to represent the order in which the instruments are to be played. In addition to indicating loud and quiet, symbols may be elongated or truncated to represent long or short sounds, for example by a snake for a long sound and a mouse for a short one. An example is given in Figure 1.2.

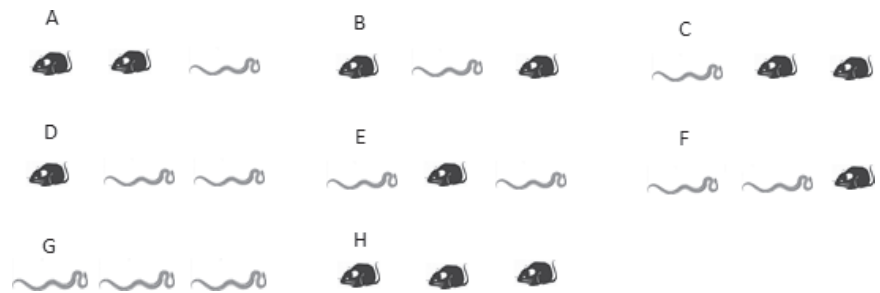


Figure 1.2 Symbols to Represent 'Short' and 'Long' Sounds



Activity 1.11 Graphic Notation

Using symbols as above, cards could be made up of various combinations. An example worksheet is provided below. In pairs, one child chooses and plays a rhythm from the list. The second child then guesses which rhythm has been played. The children then swap roles.



Reading and playing sounds helps children to develop **bibliographic knowledge**, an understanding that sound may be represented visually and that reading moves across the page from left to right and from top to bottom. This is not true for all languages. In Arabic, writing moves from right to left and Chinese traditionally was read in vertical columns from right to left and top to bottom.

Alternatively, compositions can be made using pictures to denote the instruments used and their frequency of play. For example, three shakes of a maraca would be represented pictorially by three maracas. Children can write their own music in this way.

Other symbols can be used such as rungs on ladders or sloping lines to indicate rise and fall in pitch.

As children progress, the mice and snakes can be replaced with conventional musical notation. Create different rhythms using crotchets, quavers and minims. Children could create and play their own rhythms. Rhythms could be performed with various body or percussion instruments.

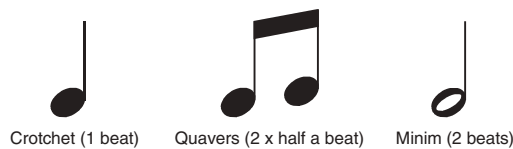


Figure 1.3 Musical Note Names and Time Values



Idea

The teacher could ask the children how they might move to these rhythms. To further demonstrate these note values, each note could have an alliterative name, for example Katy Crotchet, Quickie Quaver and Moody Minim. The teacher could have puppets of the same name and each could be described. Katy Crotchet would walk at a walking (andante) pace. Quickie Quaver would move quickly (allegro) and Moody Minim would move with long, slow movements (lento). These musical terms are Italian, as is the word 'tempo' meaning 'time'. Many musical terms are Italian as most early composers in the Renaissance period were Italian. These terms were thereafter adopted internationally.

There are some very creative music reading ideas for children such as using animal pictures for each note, Noteimals by Glenna Cook, or using colour to code the notes. Colour-coding notes works well; I have used it with great success with children with learning difficulties. One system that uses colour and shape is Figurenotes, developed in Finland. It is used by Drake Music, Scotland, helping children and adults with disabilities to read, create and perform music.

As with pre-school music, primary school music can support many parts of the curriculum. Reference is made in KS One Music of the NC (DFE, 2012b) to links between music and English, Information Communications Technology (ICT), drama, physical education (PE) and science. For example, songs and rhymes can be sung in different languages; listening to and performing music helps children to learn to identify changes in sound such as those used in language. Movement to music would also be part of a drama curriculum, encouraging expression and communication. In PE, movement to music may help to develop body and spatial awareness. Music could help to embed other concepts such as those in science. Additionally, the making of instruments would cover art and creative development and rhymes, chants and songs can be used as reinforcement in maths, such as the chanting of multiplication tables.

External to the NC there are various initiatives available to support music making. One government-funded programme, Sing Up, invested £4 million over four years from 2007 in order to promote singing in primary schools in the UK and there are many Youth Music Projects supporting extracurricular music, too. The Sing Up website in 2012 had many examples of songs in English and foreign languages for use with primary school children.

Encouragingly, there is growing support for the implementation of increased music provision in the early years and primary school curricula. In addition to the support such as that from Benedetti (in Horne, 2011) and Kraus and Chandrasekaran (2010), referred to earlier in the Preface, there are many others championing the cause, including Henley and Norman, detailed below.

- Darren Henley's review on *Music Education in England* recommended that 'singing should be an important part of every child's school life from Early Years' (2011: 11). He also recommended that: 'A new minimum number of hours of Initial Teacher Training for primary music teachers be spent on the delivery of music education and that all primary schools should have access to a specialist music teacher' (ibid.: 25).
- Jesse Norman, MP, in his report in *The Sunday Times* (2011) proposed an increase in music provision in schools, the promotion of choirs and orchestras and suggested that music is 'not a wheeze; it is part of the wiring'.

Summary

Through the activities presented to children in their early years, children are able to assimilate information from their environment, their peers, their family members and other older children and adults. They are able to role-play, explore and interact with their world. Providing a wide range of experiences nourishes children's brains and enables them to make the connections necessary for future development. Music may enhance a child's development even prior to birth.

Pre-school music is not just a good idea; the benefits to be derived are extensive. Music provides a medium that is fun, engaging, relaxing and creative and one that may create connections that enable future language skills to flourish. As you will learn in the next chapter, many of the skills acquired through musical activities are almost synonymous with the skills required for literacy. The participation in pre-school music requires no prior knowledge or skill. A child need only be present at a music session in order to gain from the experience. Children are naturally inquisitive and even the most reticent of children will usually participate and certainly benefit in some way. Music provides a non-threatening medium through which much experience can be gained.

In the school environment music may continue to support many areas of learning, including language and particularly literacy.

Something to think about

- How do you think that musical activities may help to promote literacy skills? What songs do you know that you could use with children?
- Does background music help children to focus or is it distracting?
- For each activity presented so far, in addition to the particular skills stated, think about other skills that may be developed through the activity.
- As in several of the activities in this chapter, set your own words to familiar tunes to put across your own messages or to complement a current theme.

Something to read

- Harrop, B. and Sanderson, A. (1994) *Okki-tokki-unga: Action Songs for Children*. London: A. and C. Black.
- Hart, J. (1983) *Sing a Song of Sixpence! The Best Song Book Ever*. London: Victor Gollancz Ltd.
- Matterson, E. (compiled by) (1991) *This Little Puffin*. London: Penguin Books Ltd. An excellent source of rhymes, songs and games for children.
- Umansky, K. (1996) *Three Singing Pigs: Making Music with Traditional Stories*. London: A. and C. Black.

Useful websites



The publication *Learning Through Play in the Early Years* compiled by the Early Years Interboard Panel in Northern Ireland contains many ideas for musical activities. This may be accessed online at: http://www.nicurriculum.org.uk/docs/foundation_stage/learning_through_play_ey.pdf

<http://www.babyplus.com> – prenatal education system

<http://www.drakemusicscotland.org> – information on 'Figurenotes', a note reading system using colour and shape

<http://www.guidinguk.freesevers.com> – campfire songs

<http://www.kididdles.com> – songs for young children

<http://www.mamalisa.com> – songs from around the world

<http://www.piano4kids.com> and www.noteimals.com – the 'animal notes' method of teaching musical note reading to children

<http://www.singandsign.com> – communication for babies

<http://www.singup.org> – resources for teachers in England

<http://www.soundbeam.co.uk> – a system for generating sound through movement

<http://www.soundsandsymbols.co.uk> – the literacy-through-music programme based on this book

<http://www.youthmusic.org.uk> – information about musical events and programmes in the UK