The Role of Music in Children’s Development

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Presenters:
Tal-Chen Rabinowitch, PhD

Session Objectives

At the end of this presentation, you should be able to:

• Describe research on the effects of music on children’s cognitive and social development
• Understand how different types of musical interventions may enhance cognitive and social capacities in children
• Identify ways to implement these music interventions in your own setting

Session Agenda

Here’s what we’re doing today:

1. Review how music might influence children’s cognitive and social development
2. Discuss why music may be linked to cognitive and social development
3. Examine strategies for enhancing children’s cognitive and social development through music
Music as a listening activity

Music as a performance activity

Music as a social activity
How do you use music with children?

How have you used music with children?
- Have you listened?
- Performed?
- Engaged in music socially?

Type your responses in the chat box

Music in children’s lives

A transfer effect

TRANSFER
Every-day life
Music as a listening activity: The ‘What’

- Listening to music may make kids’ spatial ability and creativity slightly better

Schellenberg, 2005

Music as a listening activity: The ‘Why’

- Listening to music may require children to use their spatial ability and creativity in order to understand and make sense of it

Music as a performance activity: The ‘What’

- Musical training boosts:
  - IQ (specifically in reading, mathematical, spatial and verbal abilities)
  - Children’s working memory
  - Ability to learn a second language
Music as a performance activity: The ‘Why’

• Additional enjoyable learning opportunities
• Develop specific abilities
• Music’s abstract nature
• Type of personality

Corrigall et al., 2013; Schellenberg, 2005; Swaminathan & Schellenberg, 2016

Music as a social, interacting activity: The ‘What’

• Cooperation
• Sharing
• General prosocial skills
• A capacity for empathy

Music as a social, interacting activity: The ‘Why’

• Synchrony
• Imitation
• Attention
### Music as a social, interacting activity: The ‘Why’

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Rabinowitch, Cross & Burnard, 2013

### Summary so far

- Forms of musical engagement
- Cognitive and social benefits for children
- Transfer effect
- Likely underlying processes for a cognitive transfer effect
- Likely underlying processes for a social transfer effect
A few points to consider

• The importance is in how children perform the music activities rather than in the type of music being used

• Other mediums can also enhance cognitive and social skills in children; music is one of them

From Research to Practice:

• How to create more opportunities for children to engage with music?

• What kinds of activities can they do?

Creating opportunities for children to engage with music

• Provide children with a playing device

• Take children to music concerts and shows

• Open children up to a wide variety of musical genres, styles and instruments
Creating opportunities for children to engage with music

- Provide children with musical tools to play with; any tool that can produce a sound is good!
- Learning how to sing or play a musical instrument is a wonderful way for children to perform music

Gather a few children together and provide musical instruments/tools to play with
- Group music classes especially for the very young children
- Participate in a choir, orchestra or ensemble

Activities for listening to music

- Ask questions about the music being played to deepen the child’s engagement with it
- Provide the child with information about the origin and culture of the music being played
Activities for making music

- Encourage the child to try out as many sounds and sound combinations as possible
- Providing a child with formal musical training is a great way to expand one’s opportunities for engaging with music

Activities for making music social

- Synchrony games
- Imitation games
- Attentiveness games

How will you use music?

What kinds of activities are you inspired to try with children?

Type your responses in the chat box
Wrap-up

- Music can be experienced in different ways
- Music can be beneficial for children's cognitive and social development by transferring skills from the music domain to other domains
- There are specific underlying processes that might be responsible for these transfer effects
- Ways to both create opportunities as well as activities for children to engage in music in a meaningful way

Thank you!