

REASONS TO INCORPORATE MUSIC INTO EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

FOR THE PURE ENJOYMENT OF IT

Most young children love to sing. Many adults love to sing, too, even if it is only when they are alone. Young children give adults the opportunity to share this experience, even those grown ups who think that they do not have a good enough singing voice. Young children are nonjudgmental and not concerned with the quality of vocal sound. Even if a grown up thinks that he or she can not sing, it is possible to find that renewed sense of pleasure that comes from singing with others. This only comes from doing it and practice.

FOR COMMUNITY BUILDING

This is an activity often done with more than one person. When people come together to sing a song, to share their voices, connections are made. Music consists of vibrations and different notes vibrate at different wavelengths. When people sing together, these vibrations overlap, harmonize, resonate, and may come together as one. It is a common experience, a bonding experience.

FOR BRAIN DEVELOPMENT

There is a wide and deep body of research that shows that music stimulates brain development. Neurological pathways are laid down when learning new songs, when memorizing lyrics, when working to recall lyrics. Exercises in memorization build memory that includes both short term and long term. A different part of the brain is stimulated by music. Evidence shows that Alzheimer patients can remember some song lyrics and related to music from their past long after their memory for language fades. Research also shows the benefits of music education include improved language development, increase in IQ, improved test scores, the development of spatial temporal skills, improvement of focus and concentration, among others. "Using brain images of people listening to short symphonies by an obscure 18th-century composer, a research team from the [Stanford University School of Medicine](#) has gained valuable insight into how the brain sorts out the chaotic world around it. The research team showed that music engages the areas of the brain involved with paying attention, making predictions and updating the event in memory. Peak brain activity occurred during a short period of silence between musical movements - when seemingly nothing was happening." Music is simply organized sound and helps the brain learn to distinguish patterns, to pick out patterns from noise. "Neuroscience research into the neuroscience of music shows that musicians' brains may be primed to distinguish meaningful sensory information from noise" (from an article taken from [neurosciencenews.com](#)).

FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF MUSICAL INTELLIGENCE

Within the theory of multiple intelligences (refer to Howard Gardner and Thomas Armstrong's works), one of nine that have been identified is Musical Intelligence. Musical intelligence "is the capacity to discern pitch, rhythm, timbre, and tone.

This **intelligence** enables us to recognize, create, reproduce, and reflect on music, as demonstrated by composers, conductors, musicians, vocalist, and sensitive listeners." Of the nine identified intelligences, people usually have more than one of them as a strength. A goal of education is to further the development of all of these. Educators who are aware of these can tailor curriculum and methods for delivering curriculum through thoughtful and intentional experiences.

FOR THE BENEFIT OF CHILD DEVELOPMENT

There are different theories of child development. The following one is generally adopted by the system of Waldorf Education. There are three aspects to the developing child: the physical, the intellect, and the emotional body. Within each aspect, there is the introverted and the extroverted tendency, which manifests in different ways and can be nurtured by various experiences. Children have all three to various degrees as strengths and weaknesses, but often a predominance lies within at least one aspect. The goal is to identify and develop all of these parts to become a more well-rounded individual. Music can be utilized to develop all of these aspects, but for the predominantly emotional child, music is a key to connecting with and expressing feelings/emotions. Emotional children, and adults, often feel a strong connection to music on a feeling level, and help one to be with or to process emotions.

FOR THE CONNECTIONS TO MULTICULTURAL EDUCATION AND EXPERIENCE

Around the world, various cultures have their own body of music. Learning other languages is easier when in a song. Discussions around the music can help to further understanding and sensitivities to different or similar ways of being in the world. In this way, music promotes connections to social studies. At the same time, music can make connections to multicultural art experience. For example, when the lyrics of a song are printed with illustrations, the music includes the richness of the visual experience.

FOR CONNECTIONS TO OTHER SUBJECT/ACADEMIC AREAS

Songs or rhymes are often created to reinforce many concepts. Science is a very good example of a discipline area that can be promoted in the lyrics of a song. The alphabet is often taught initially with a song. Furthermore, there is a song for the days of the week, and another for the months of the year. Almost anything can be turned into a song, which promotes the memorization of whatever concept is to be learned.

RELATIONSHIP TO LEARNING SYTTLES/ MODALITIES AND MAXIMIZING LEARNING POTENTIAL

People learn in many different ways, although there are three different recognized learning modalities: Auditory, visual, and kinesthetic. Music contributes directly to the auditory learner, while promoting auditory discrimination. The movement and dance aspect of music experience relates directly to the kinesthetic modality. Music education and experience contributes to learning potential.

