

Active Music Making to Support Learning the EYFS

What if there was an activity that could grow and improve neural networks like no other activity?

What if that activity can be started from birth and the earlier it is started the better the effect?

What if this activity is fun and engaging and something that children enjoy being involved in?

What if this activity support mental health and wellbeing of practitioners, parents and children?

What if practitioners and parents can be trained to deliver this activity as part of daily activities?

What if this activity has the potential to contribute to closing the school ready attainment gap?

GREAT NEWS: there is such an activity- active music making that involves playing with rhythms, melodies, timbre, pitch, tempo, dynamics, patterns and sequencing of sounds and actions.

The Evidence:

“The evidence suggests that children who undertake music education from early years have higher levels of cognitive capacity (especially regarding language acquisition and numerical problem solving), tend to remain in education for longer, and earn more across their lifetime. Even better news is that it can also reverse the cognitive issues relating to disadvantage.” **Anita Collins, a researcher in neuroscience and music education at the University of Canberra.**

Dr Kraus gives a brilliant explanation of the importance of sound processing in language development and how music can impact on the development of sound processing in the brain - specifically for children in early years. **Dr Nina Kraus, Neuroscientist Northwestern University USA, Breaking the wall to Neuroeducation talk 2015.** Brainvolts Neuroscience Laboratory investigating sound processing and the brain: <https://brainvolts.northwestern.edu/>

“Children with dyslexia find it challenging to hear speech rhythm and speech timing, and in perceiving musical rhythm and timing. Early Years educators can take simple steps to benefit language skills and minimise the impact of dyslexia. Having a rich early repertoire of singing and musical remediation will help matching syllable beat patterns to language before they start learning to read.” **Prof Usha Goswami, Professor of Cognitive Developmental Neuroscience, University of Cambridge.**

As well as supporting language development, numerous neuroscientific studies over the last decade have provided evidence that music also benefits the parts of the brain that control social, emotional, physical, mathematical, creative and cognitive skills (IQ). The effect of music on the brain is described as “‘like fireworks going off in the brain’ No other activity had been seen to have such an effect on the whole brain. Music is a whole brain workout.” **Anita Collins ‘What if every child had access to music education from birth?’ TED Talk**

Chichester University Study – [An evaluation of the Boogie Mites Early Years Music Education Programmes in respect of parents and practitioners. Nikki Fairchild 2014.](#) Practitioner and parent training was found to increase the knowledge, confidence and practice of active, creative music making in the settings and in the homes. Parents perceived an improvement in their children’s confidence, concentration and language skills, particularly for children with EAL or speech delay.

[Oxfordshire based music charity – Soundabout,](#) created and ran parent education courses over 2 years, evaluation results published in March 2019 - revealed that targeted music sessions for children in early years and their families, in areas of high deprivation, can improve their capacity to manage their feelings, behaviour, boost self-confidence and heighten their ability to pay attention, enabling them to close the gap in age related expectations.

All children are born with an innate musical potential and we as early years providers can support the development of this potential. Equip all practitioners and parents in music training and resources to harness the power of music to support early development, will give children a good start for school, contributing to closing the school ready attainment gap.