



3 MUSIC AND PLAY

Sounds of Life: Sharing the Joy of Music with Kids

If there is one thing we can all share and enjoy together as kids and adults, it's music. From beloved folk songs and nursery rhymes passed down from generation to generation to quirky new tunes that teach language, science, and math, music is one of education's greatest assets, especially from an early developmental stage. But even more importantly, it teaches us how to work and play with one another – not only when we sing songs about friendship, or learn about other cultures through listening to different types of music, but by collaborating and cooperating. And because our brains function in a specific cognitive way when engaging with music, it's also a great way to fine-tune our minds as well as cultivate a genuine appreciation for the arts. For many reasons, introducing our kids to music is one of the greatest gifts we can give them.

Spending Valuable Time Together, Building Character

One of the best ways we can spend time with our kids is to find ways to develop their interests through fun activities. Music provides the perfect setting. There are songs for virtually every topic, and you can even come up with your own. Rhyming is a great way to learn and memorize facts and make the process enjoyable, and kids can even try their own hand at creativity and come up with their own versions. This is a great time to bond with kids, and cultivate one another's interests. It's social aspect, is a great way for kids to learn about participating with one another as well as making friends.

This also makes music a rewarding method of learning which isn't all about competition. While certain aspects of music can be competitive, the onus on is team-playing. Kids who learn music in a social surrounding will learn lifelong skills, such as how to listen to others, share their own ideas, and work together. Best of all, they will enjoy the incredibly rewarding experience of seeing a project come together, placing emphasis on collective vs. singular achievement. Music as a medium values diversity, and provides a venue in which that diversity can come together without losing its distinctive value.

Just as importantly, music teaches kids patience, discipline, and practice, as well as the drive to achieve goals and overcome challenges. Learning music takes time and involves much more than simply memorizing facts. It is an intensive, yet pleasurable practice which enhances several aspects of cognition including improving memory as well as fine-tuning the parts of the brain which respond to reading, mathematics, and emotional development. Best of all, it helps to instil a solid work ethic, as well as a genuine appreciation for working hard on a project. Children who have access to music are more likely to develop strong analytical skills, as well as a healthy outlet for expression. This is one of the reasons why music is used in a therapeutic setting for kids suffering from depression, learning difficulties, anxiety, or other challenges. It is a safe, liberating, and fulfilling pursuit which gives kids a voice, helps them work through their emotions, and can potentially develop a lifelong interest.





The Next Generation

In a world where productivity takes precedence over intuition and reflection, investing in the arts is more important than ever. It encourages thinking outside of the box, it nurtures creativity, compassion, and empathy, embraces diversity, and enhances the foundation of society itself. When more arts programs are being cut and we are pushing our kids towards a demanding lifestyle, it's crucial to provide an outlet where individuality is nourished in a communal setting. When we give our kids music, we give them confidence, the desire to dream, and the imagination to flourish, and this is why more and more musical projects are being inspired in vulnerable communities around the world.

The arts are among some of the most important cultural institutions of our society, and like the sciences and physical education, by nourishing a love for them at an early age means that we are creating more opportunities for our children as well as nurturing a new generation of thoughtful individuals.

This information sheet was kindly written for Smart Play Network by Anne Foy, Freelance Writer.



Did you know ?

Children who study music tend to have larger vocabularies and more advanced reading skills than their peers who do not participate in music lessons.

SPN Music Activity Cards

Download some ideas of musical play using everyday household items here and they can also be sourced from our Smart Play Network website.

Musical Mittens: www.smartplaynetwork.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/01/MusicalMittens.pdf

Musical Instruments 1: <http://www.smartplaynetwork.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/01/MusicalInstruments1.pdf>

Musical Instruments 2: <http://www.smartplaynetwork.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/01/MusicalInstruments2.pdf>

Further Reading

www.childrensmusicworkshop.com/twelve-benefits-of-music-education/

<https://www.braininjuryhub.co.uk/beats-rhythms-and-brain-function>

<https://www.psychguides.com/behavioral-disorders/adhd/>

www.musicforall.org/who-we-are/advocacy/why-music-why-band

www.musicianswithoutborders.org/#our-work

Smart Play Network Members Support

Member you have access to telephone and email support. For more information about the topics covered in this guidance sheet, or any other queries you may have about your project, please contact us using: 0131 554 2620 or admin@smartplaynetwork.org

