

Music in Childhood

Clickable Links for Children's Library Practitioners

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To suggest upcoming topics or recommend websites, please email Betsy Diamant-Cohen at betsydc@gmail.com or Tess Prendergast at tesspre@alumni.ubc.ca.

This is the first of what will be a regular column of “clickable” links to accessible and relevant research on childhood, children, and working with children, families, and caregivers. These resources were selected to help children's library practitioners expand their knowledge about the research that points to the value and importance of music in childhood.

Music and Childhood Overview

The website of children's performer and author Paul Borgese is dedicated to music and childhood. In a report co-written with Jovanka Ciores, Borgese points to research that suggests music's beneficial impact on a child's comprehension, speaking, math, listening, and motor and general cognition skills. He emphasizes that music has been shown to help with concentration, coordination, relaxation, patience, and self-confidence. He even tackles the so-called “Mozart Effect.” In addition to helping children's library practitioners gain familiarity with this topic, this website would be a great addition to parenting resources website links.

www.paulborgese.com

www.paulborgese.com/report_benefitofmusic.html

Music and Early Literacy Skills/Reading Readiness

University of Buffalo Graduate School of Education researchers have found a link between music in early childhood and reading readiness. The music program used in this study was especially

effective in boosting the reading readiness skills of children who tested lowest on reading readiness before the start of the study, but all the children showed significant gains in oral vocabulary and grammatical understanding. While librarians who know ECRR already understand the benefits of singing for phonological skills, this study extends that knowledge to include other ways that music can also support other important early literacy skills.

www.buffalo.edu/news/releases/2013/01/021.html

Music and Early Numeracy

Research-based resources on the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) website demonstrate that music helps children develop math readiness skills. For example, clapping or tapping to a steady beat teaches one-to-one correspondence and the concept of “more.” Children recognize rhythmic patterns and learn to predict them when the rhythm varies in familiar songs. They figure out how to fill in a missing word when adults stop singing just before the animal sounds or the punch line of a song and learning melodies also helps children recognize patterns. These skills are needed to acquire more sophisticated math skills later on. Bonus: The NAEYC Families page features articles to share with families on many early childhood topics.

www.naeyc.org/content/music

Music and Cognition

Researchers at the Music-Science lab at the Ben-Gurion University of the Negev (BGU) determined that hand-clapping songs played regularly by children from ages six to nine can make helpful changes in their brains. This doctoral disserta-

tion study investigated the effects of a ten-week-long, hand-clapping program on early primary children, concluding that positive cognitive and social outcomes resulted even in children who had not previously played clapping games. The researcher believes that during these the sensory-motor transactions of group clapping games, children see, hear, and touch at the same time, which requires eye-ear-hand coordination as well as synchronization with another person. All of this coordination seems to have a positive effect on a wide range of cognitive and social skills. So, introduce a few clapping games to your elementary age programs and see what happens!

www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2010/04/100428090954.htm

www.campacademia.com/blog/?p=259

Music and Empathy

Researchers at the University of Cambridge in the United Kingdom conducted a study with fifty-two eight- to eleven-year-old boys and girls. Split into different groups, the group that received the music program showed marked increases in their abilities to empathize with others when compared to the other groups who did not receive the music program. Researchers believe the shared experience of listening and responding to music within a group creates a sense of community, which helps to increase emotional intelligence and empathy.

www.cam.ac.uk/research/news/music-of-kindness-playing-together-strengthens-empathy-in-children

Music and Children in Hospitals

We know that music makes us feel good, but can it really decrease our responses to pain? A Canadian study published in *JAMA Pediatrics* suggested that music can be used to distract hospitalized children from pain during procedures. A UK study published in the journal *Psychology of Music* found that music helped to slow heart rates, reduced pain, and lifted hospitalized children's moods. Also, some music therapists in American hospitals use music to ease children's pain and to help them through medical procedures. Read more about each of these studies and share them with families whose children need to undergo medical procedures.

www.growingyourbaby.com/2013/07/17/study-music-may-help-ease-pain-of-children-undergoing-medical-procedures

www.bbc.co.uk/news/health-24660048

www.choa.org/childrens-hospital-services/cancer-and-blood-disorders/resources/newsroom/in-the-news/music-therapy

Music and Speech-Language Delays

European researchers studied the effect of music therapy in the treatment of children with delayed speech development and reported on the results of a music therapy program for children with speech delays. In this study of eighteen preschoolers, the researchers concluded that the music therapy intervention had a positive effect on the children's speech and language development. The study describes the musical activities that the children participated in—e.g., interactive singing and playing with musical instruments. Read the entire paper online.

www.biomedcentral.com/1472-6882/10/39

Music and Parent Information

KidsHealth.org (a website dedicating to supporting healthy childhood) features several articles about music that clearly present the foundational value of musical experiences in early childhood. Although written for parents, storytime practitioners who have been reluctant to use music might find something here that encourages them to give those egg shakers a try! Also, these web articles, as well as many others on this site, would be great to share with parents and caregivers.

kidshealth.org/parent/growth/learning/toddler_music.html


kidshealth.org/parent/growth/learning/preschool_music.html?tracking=P_RelatedArticle

Music and Music Together

Music Together, an early childhood music education program designed for preschoolers and their parents and caregivers, has been around since 1987. The research-based program created by Kenneth Guilmartin and Lili Levinowitz has maintained its original philosophy about how to make music accessible and possible in the lives of young children. Similar to what librarians know about early literacy, they say that “participation and modeling” by parents and caregivers are essential to a child's musical growth.

www.musictogether.com

www.musictogether.com/file.aspx?id=1000

Also, for more on music and literacy, check out the 2011 article by Hayley McEwing on music best practices from *Children and Libraries* 9, no. 2 Summer/Fall 2011, 29–35. 

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