



Why Makin' Music is so Important for Your Child's Education

Scientists are confirming what we music teachers have long suspected: **Music not only touches people's souls, it also shapes growing minds. When children sing or play music they become better readers, thinkers and learners.** The more we discover about how the brain works, the more we recognize how crucial music is to children's learning. (Cassidy, 1996) Studies demonstrate that mental mechanisms that process music are deeply entwined with the brain's other basic functions, including perception, memory, and language. (Deutsch) "There is accumulating evidence, that musical experiences are an excellent vehicle for early learning," says Howard Gardner, PhD (Gardner, 1983)

Here are some of the most dramatic findings from recent studies:

- **Young children who received a year of musical training showed brain changes and superior memory compared with children who did not receive the instruction.** (Takako Fujioka, 2006)



- **Research shows that music**

stimulates the neuron development of the brain. Music can actually increase intelligence. First graders who were taught the rhythm and melodies of folk songs 40 minutes a day for seven

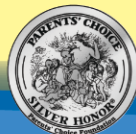


months show significantly higher reading scores than a control group. (Richard K Flowers AA, 2006)

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- **Young children with developed rhythm skills perform better academically in early school years.** Findings of a recent study showed that there was a significant difference in the academic achievement levels of students classified according to rhythmic competency. Students who were achieving at academic expectation scored high on all rhythmic tasks, while many of those who scored lower on the rhythmic test achieved below academic expectation. (Mitchell, May 1994)

- **High school music students score higher on SATs in both verbal and math than their peers.** In 2001, SAT takers with coursework/experience in music



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performance scored 57 points higher on the verbal portion of the test and 41 points higher on the math portion than students with no coursework/experience in the arts. (The College Board, 2001)

Musical Intelligence

The body and voice are the first instruments with which children are born. In the same way a child learns to speak by being immersed in their language, a child requires a rich musical environment so that they may develop their “musical intelligence” or “music aptitude”. This begins in infancy with tonal and rhythmic patterns (think of the cooing and babbling you do with your infant) and continues on to chanting, singing, creative movement and exploring rhythm with percussion instruments. You’ll experience all of this with Makin’ Music.

Our focus is on “musical age”, rather than chronological age. A two-year-old who has come to our classes for several terms may be more musically enriched in terms of tonality and rhythm than a three-year-old who has never had exposure

to this type of quality music class. Children in our classes find their “musical intelligence” through singing along with our songs and playing along with the rhythms.

“ Children are gaining an understanding of math readiness by counting and doing songs that subtract or add ”

“ A child requires a rich musical environment so that they may develop their musical intelligence ”

We keep our classes moving and changing every two minutes, keeping the children engaged at all times and having a tremendous amount of fun experiencing the music and musical props. It might not seem like there would be much learning going on, but with all that fun comes a lot of learning, development and growth. Every Makin’ Music song has specific objectives that we introduce and consistently reinforce in our classes.

- When using **rhythm sticks** for songs like “Chicken Soup”, we are honing **fine motor skills**, learning **spatial relationships** (how to use the sticks properly and not bop someone on the head!) and **rhythm introduction** . . . as well as learning all the ingredients that go into chicken soup.



- **Reciting chants** like “Icicles” helps us learn **verbal skills, fine motor skills** and how to use our **imaginations** when the sun comes out to melt the icicles.

- **Singing** the ever popular “Pet Shop” sharpens our **cognitive skills** (thinking and reasoning as we go backward through the animals), and making **animal sounds** helps us learn **early vowel sounds**.

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Throughout your musical experience at Makin' Music, your child will receive an education that goes far beyond music. Children are gaining an understanding of:



- **Math readiness** by counting and doing songs and chants that subtract or add.
- **Colors, body recognition and awareness.**
- **Speech and letter recognition** (Ducky Duddle begins with D).

• **Organizational skills and cooperation** when we learn to get two eggs or two sticks.

• **Patience** by **waiting our turn** at the prop box and to put things back in that same box when we are finished.

• **Sharing** when several children want the same stuffed animal.

Music and Emotions

While it is important to understand the educational components that make a musical education so important, if education is the only thing you have in mind, you have missed a large part of what is so important. Music is about emotions. The songs we learn in childhood stick with us forever. There is nothing we love more than hearing that families are



listening to our music in their cars or at home and everyone is singing and clapping along. Use the songs and chants during diaper changing, in the car, during cranky time or while waiting for a meal at a restaurant. Sing about raking the leaves, sledding, swinging at the playground, or holding hands while crossing the street.

We had the sweetest e-mail from a mom who said that our music had become a part of their daily life. They sing "Building Blocks" while playing with blocks, "Jumpin' in the Leaves" while raking leaves, and "Sage's Lullaby" when rocking her son to sleep. She wrote,

"It's about sharing something so deep that it stays with you for a lifetime."

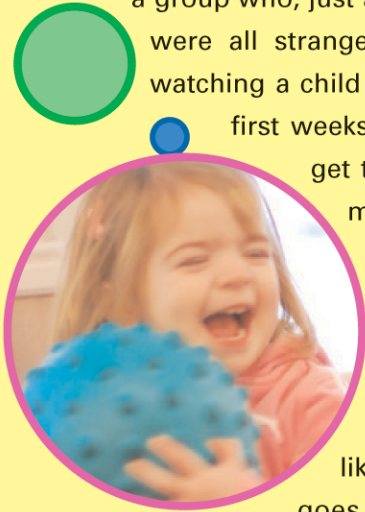
"Your music has helped to solidify the memories of my son's early years and I am very thankful for that. I'm sure that I'll be able to play those tapes and CDs a decade from now and be struck with some very clear memories. And when I heard 'Oh, Little Playmate', it brought back a memory that had been buried in my brain for decades. My mother used to sing that to me when I was young and I don't believe I've heard it since then. So while my son is singing about the dump truck and loaders, the other track that gets a lot of play is the one that reminds me of my childhood and cherished memories of my mother."

It's not just about music. It's about sharing something so deep that it stays with you for a lifetime. It's about watching your

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child becoming comfortable enough to dance around and sing with great enthusiasm in front of a group who, just a few short weeks before, were all strangers. Or maybe it's about watching a child who was tentative in the first weeks and now can come and get their shaker eggs without mom. The littlest strides can mean so much. Or maybe you have a child who sits quietly in class and soaks up all the music and movements like a little sponge and then goes home and does "the class" verbatim for dad after dinner. How fun is that?! We have some moms who worry when their children don't participate much in class but do EVERYTHING all the time at home. As teachers, we love that...we know the music is "getting in there". Learning styles in children are very different and we accept and appreciate all types.



An apple a day has been a standard in our culture for good health. A song or two a day is good for your soul and mind. It can help you cuddle, make you giggle, get you moving all while stimulating your little one's brain and making them happy. What is better than that?

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Music at Home

Here is a fun twist on an old chant that you can do today to have fun with your little one. Pat your knees or use drums, rhythm sticks or shaker eggs.

Enie, meenie, minie, moe, I can make the rhythm go (pat knees in rhythm)
 Very fast (pat very quickly!)...or very slow (now very slowly)
 Enie, meenie, minie, moe (go back to normal rhythm)

Pat the floor now, here we go
 Enie, meenie, minie, moe, I can make the rhythm go
 Very fast...or very slow
 Enie, meenie, minie, moe



Curriculum objectives: verbal skills, fine motor skills, spatial relationships, rhythm introduction, distance perception, imitation

