



Early Childhood Music Therapy

Fact Sheet

What is Music Therapy?

- Music Therapy is an established healthcare profession that utilizes music and music interventions to address the individualized needs of clients. Services are provided by a Board-Certified Music Therapist who has completed an approved music therapy program. Music therapy provides unique music experiences in an intentional and developmentally appropriate manner to facilitate development of communication, social/emotional, motor, and cognitive skills.

Music Therapy Facts

1. Music stimulates all the senses and engages the child in play experiences, which facilitates many developmental skills.
2. Music is processed by both hemispheres of the brain, which can stimulate cognitive functioning and encourage development of speech/language skills.
3. Music is highly motivating, and activities are designed to be success-oriented to build self-esteem.
4. Music therapy can help a child manage stressful situations, and interventions are designed to encourage socialization, self-expression, communication, and motor development.

Music Therapy Interventions

1. Hello Song

The hello song incorporates the child's name in order to familiarize the child with their name.

2. Sign Language

Teaching basic signs allows your child to communicate before their speech is developed. Using the sign for "all done" can also help with transitions. Parents can start by forming the signs hand-over-hand with their child and prompting use of signs at consistent times such as meal time and bath time.

3. Instrumental Play

Playing instruments promotes development of gross and fine motor skills including different finger and hand grasps. Children are encouraged to reach for instruments and to pick them up independently.

4. Movement

Movement to music is a great way to encourage developmentally appropriate movements. Songs may be used to prompt children to walk, run, jump, or dance to music. Pairing music and movement is used to facilitate gross motor coordination.

5. Story

Reading stories is an important step in pre-literacy skills and cognitive development. Reading helps children to imitate sounds, build a vocabulary, and recognize that words are read from left to right on a page. Tapping a rhythmic beat while reading engages the child as an active participant in the story and can promote speech development.



6. Toys

Pairing puppets with music is a great way to encourage imaginative play and teach animals. Children love to play with puppets and make animal noises to familiar songs like "Old MacDonald." Allowing children to play with scarves and bubbles during music also encourages independent exploration, visual tracking, and pre-academic skills such as colors.