

USING MUSIC TO SUPPORT SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL SKILLS

Music has a power and meaning beyond words. In all cultures it is a way that love and learning is shared with babies and young children.

Music promotes development simultaneously in many domains. We often suggest thinking of **touch, sound and movement** as best for optimum learning.

Music supports:

1. attachment and social and emotional intelligence
2. language development
3. spacial awareness and gross motor skills.

Let's focus on the social skills aspect.

Because it is so often a shared experience, as we sing, dance, touch, tickle or play instruments with children, music offers many opportunities to....

Learn and practice self-regulation

If we define self regulation as the ability to manage one's emotional state and physical needs, we can see that using a lullaby to soothe a baby will help them learn to soothe themselves. For a preschooler, participating in a group music activity or sharing and taking turns on an instrument can help growing behavioural self regulation.

Learn about emotions

Songs can describe feelings using words (e.g. "if you're happy and you know it ..") but music also evokes feelings.

Music can suggest playtime as we bounce a baby to a dance tune, or loud and quiet music can suggest drama play moods and actions for preschoolers.

Cooperate and build friendships

Music is often a team effort, offering lots of opportunities for social skills and building early friendships. Toddlers can parade and play instruments together. Preschoolers can dance in circles, sing together and play in a band, fostering positive peer interactions.

Support self esteem

So many music opportunities offer babies and children a chance to succeed and gain positive feedback. From a baby delighting in the sounds a shaker can make in a tiny fist, to a preschooler playing on an instrument in a satisfying way, children gain competency through music.

Develop cultural awareness

Hearing songs and playing to music from a child's home culture, creates continuity between home and a care and education setting. Children's feelings of safety and security are nurtured and the importance of their home culture is validated.

So to summarise: music can play a powerful learning role for young children. They can better understand themselves and their feelings as well as develop growing cooperative skills and friendships. Importantly, sharing music experiences with the people they love, make young children and babies feel cherished and important. Music truly can be an enriching experience for our children.

Reference; *Beyond Twinkle Twinkle.* in Young Children Magazi