

## Music and the EYLF.

### How Can Music be a Useful Part of the EYLF?

The EYLF is Australia's first national, cohesive document to guide early childhood practice in care and education settings from birth to 5 years. Quality music can be a fantastic learning and development activity, and fit perfectly with the document's philosophy. It would be a great loss if music was not given a prime place within these changes.

To set the scene, here's a brief summary of the 3 elements that begin the document:

- **Belonging:** is the basis for a fulfilling life for children. Relationships in family, community and culture are essential for identity and will shape who children are and who they will become.

- **Being:** Childhood is a special time, a time to seek and make meaning of the world.

We recognise the importance of here and now in children's lives.

- **Becoming:** rapid and significant change occurs in childhood. Children are learning to participate fully and actively in society. (EYLF p.7)

Let's look at the 5 stated outcomes and relate them to music.

#### **Outcome 1: Children have a strong sense of identity**

Music, used in an appropriate and effective way, is about relationship for babies and young children and it can be a strong part of the baby and young child's growing identity. Music is a language that communicates safety, soothes a tired baby or introduces play time. Music in rhymes, simple songs and lullabies support a baby's first communication in babbling and gestures.

For generations music has been an important way that culture has been passed from adult to child, so in parent/carer relationships and within the wider cultural community, music absolutely builds a strong sense of belonging and therefore identity.

Music Activities – games like peekaboo, bouncing on the lap to rhymes, rocking a baby while singing or humming, songs to teach body parts, touch and tickle games, songs to include a child's name and greeting songs all help a child create a picture of their uniqueness and inclusion.

#### **Outcome 2: Children are connected and contribute to the world**

For children, their body is their window to the world. Touch, sound and movement together assist babies' and children's learning. They learn through touching, moving, seeing, hearing and tasting.

Music can be part of a rich environment that ensures more brain connections are made and ensures critical periods for brain development are not missed. Music can broaden children's experience, can teach about diversity, teach new ideas and concepts so children are more likely to feel connected and able to contribute to experiences and situations in their life.

Music Activities – Music and dance from other cultures, moving to action songs, songs that teach concepts, (up/down, fast/slow etc), or social skills such as taking turns e.g. with instruments or in music games. All are important to this outcome.

#### **Outcome 3: Children have a strong sense of wellbeing.**

Music experiences promote attachment and a safe learning environment, but music can also support essential movement learning. A child's brain is built for movement and essential brain connections are put in place through movement. Continual and regular movement is compatible to a child's growing brain and ensures greater wellbeing. Children who experience a rich kinesthetic and varied movement experience (supporting good gross and fine motor skills) will have a stronger sense of self esteem.

Music Activities – for preschoolers, activities to encourage jumping, hopping, skipping, rolling, twirling, crawling, running and using ribbons, scarves, instruments etc. For babies, being rocked, swinging, swaying and bouncing to music contributes to this outcome.

#### **Outcome 4: Children are confident learners.**

Research now supports play as a valuable way to explore, identify, negotiate and create meaning. Play helps build and strengthen brain pathways. Simple children's songs, games and rhymes are valuable neurological exercises because sight, sound, movement and emotions are all involved.

Music Activities – Musical play in action songs, music to indicate transitions e.g. going outside, packing away etc, rhymes and singing games all support cognitive learning.

#### **Outcome 5: Children are effective communicators**

Music is a fantastic language learning tool. So much more repetition is possible with songs and rhymes, all while having fun! Rhymes and children's songs ( those with with sounds are especially valuable here) introduce children to auditory discrimination, speech patterns, vital movement strategies and sensory motor skills. Through music, language is learnt in a multi-sensory, playful context, giving best outcomes for all children! Music also expresses many varied emotions in ways children can understand.

This awareness of feelings and feeling language gives children more control over their growing communication skills.

Music Activities – rhymes with unusual or funny word plays, songs with sounds to imitate, music to move to, that expresses varied moods, simple songs from other cultures all support effective communication

### **MAKING MUSIC**

Rain is falling down, rain is falling down

Pitter patter, pitter patter, Rain is falling down

- Use this traditional song or rhyme as a finger play for toddlers, motioning rain falling with fingers in air, then on pitter patter, tap the rhythm of the words on child's hand or tummy.

- For babies and preschoolers try a massage on arms, legs or chest, tickling down for the rain, then tapping for pitter patter. Preschoolers can try it on a friends back.

Percussion – for older preschool children

Using tapping sticks or chopsticks for each child:

- Keep the beat in the air with sticks, moving down as the notes move down on rain is falling down

- On pitter patter tap on floor, alternating hands for each syllable of the words. Try getting faster, slower, soft or loud. Have fun imagining a big storm or gentle rain etc.

- Find something fun to be a drum kit, to tap on pitter patter. I use round computer mouse mats from Ikea or Officeworks but plastic buckets upturned, or place mats are fine. Use the chopsticks or tapping sticks as if drumming on the rhythm of pitter patter.

- For more challenge, half the group can tap the rhythm of pitter patter all the way through while the rest of the group play the whole song.

## **Music and the EYLF Learning Outcomes**

As part of this important change the National curriculum brings, we see more than ever the enormous role that movement and music can have in high quality, play centered education, and wellbeing for babies and young children. Music involves both social/ emotional and cognitive learning areas, so we hope it will retain a priority place in the new quality provisions. Here's a summary of how we see music supporting the curriculum learning outcomes. It might be useful for a staff meeting or parent information

### **1. Developing a strong sense of identity**

Lullabies for bonding Bouncing & rocking Peekaboo games Greeting songs

Body awareness songs

Name songs

Touch & tickle activities in rhymes and songs

### **2. Children are connected and contribute**

Touch, sound & movement together (optimises learning for babies and young children) Partner/group music games

Co-operation in music games

Concept skills eg up/down etc

Social skills eg taking turns

Using elements from nature eg tapping stones, shaking leaves, paper Songs & dances from other cultures

### **3. Children have a strong sense of wellbeing**

Lullabies at all ages

Varied touch, massage to music

Relaxation to music

Multisensory movement, lots of props to move with Humour in songs/rhymes

### **4. Children are confident, involved learners**

Exploring sounds/using instruments Engendering curiosity about sound or music Musical play/ action songs

Music at transition time

Rhyming/ singing games

### **5. Children are effective communicators**

Songs with repetition Imitating sounds Expressing varied emotions Vocal play

Songs from other cultures

Auditory discrimination through rhyming