

The Montessori Music Program

The purpose of the Montessori musical program is to develop the children's non-verbal affective communication, to increase their understanding and enjoyment of music within our culture, and to enhance their ability to express themselves through music. The curriculum has been designed to best meet the needs and interests of the child and to encourage the child's self-development and nourish his or her curiosity, imagination, and developing intellect.



The program is intended to construct a sensorial foundation for music through ear-training. Ear-training is the ability to hear music with eurhythmics (the art of harmonious bodily movement, especially through expressive timed movements in response to improvised music).

The development of food listening skills is the hallmark of a solid education. By learning to listen to music, the child will begin the journey of creative self-expression.

He or she will first recognize, then absorb and understand the composition. This will inspire the child to originate his or her own modes of personal expression, as well as providing a necessary foundation for the mastering of other important skills.

Music in the Montessori Environment

“...There should be music in the child's environment, just as there does exist in the child's environment spoken speech. In the social environment the child should be considered and the music provided.”

-Maria Montessori

Maria Montessori observed that musical education would greatly benefit children during their developmental years. Contemporary, scientific evidence has revealed that Dr. Montessori was correct.

Infant brains are sensitive and responsive to musical sounds, preferring them over other types of sounds. It is no accident that parents instinctively talk to their infants in a high-pitched, “sing-song” type of voice. A child's musical receptiveness remains especially strong through the preschool years until about the age of six.

Educators, behavioral scientists and researchers, medical doctors and child developmental specialists are confirming that musical training can significantly enhance

child development. Several studies indicate that exposure to music—listening, learning, and playing music, does have beneficial effects for pre-schoolers. Active musical training, in particular, can improve their problem-solving skills, physical coordination, poise, concentration, memory, visual, aural, and language skills, self-discipline, as well as their self-confidence and ability to learn.

Children who are taught music may be more easily socialized. Acquiring musical knowledge and skill can imbue them with a sense of pride and accomplishment, and increase their personal and social awareness. Playing music also provides children with a creative outlet for self-expression and can help to relieve stress and anxiety.

Music stimulates the creation of neural bridges in the area of the brain that is responsible for particular types of mathematical computation. Musical training, therefore, helps to develop and exercise a child's abstract reasoning skills. Recent studies indicate that music lessons can significantly enhance the kind of intelligence (spatial-temporal reasoning) that humans utilize for math and science. Spatial-temporal reasoning is what helps us to form mental images of physical objects and to recognize multiple patterns and potential outcomes several moves ahead.

For children to realize maximum benefit from musical training, the experience should be initiated before the age of five. The “window of opportunity”, to increase and strengthen the number of neural bridges, stays open until about the age of ten, but the first six years are the most important, offering parents and educators an ideal opportunity to facilitate a child's intellectual growth. Many Montessori schools employ a music specialist to teach music to children once a week.

Musical Enrichment in the Home

The parent is the most influential role model in the child's life. A child relies on the parent far more than the teacher for intellectual and creative stimulation, and for the receiving of encouraging messages that can maximize the learning experience. The teacher builds from this basis.

The child will develop rhythm and pitch with proper encouragement from the home environment. For example, the parent should observe and respond to the child's voice or sense of melody and, in turn, watch for the child to recognize and react to their response. Playing a variety of music, from contemporary to classical, can help the child find his or her own milieu. Also, it is important to remember that the child can find solace in silence, without background noise or other distractions.

Activities Which Help the Child to Prepare for Listening to Music

- Encouraging the child to notice situations in everyday life that involve shifts from silence to sound.
- Playing games that ask the child to identify mystery sounds or sound combinations.

- Listening and recognizing sounds in the immediate environment indoors or out.
- Observing the noises made by the human body.

It is crucial that the child's environment be conducive to this learning experience and that the child is comfortable in these surroundings. By creating a specific atmosphere based on a musical theme, there will be an underlying sense of expectancy that builds excitement and increases interest.

The child should feel free to join larger groups when performing; but it is fine if the choice is made to only sit and listen; as long as there is time to speak about the music that is heard, and what effect it is having on him or her.

As children love repetition, a listening session should end with a well-known piece of music that grounds the child in the familiar.