

Why is music in early childhood important?

One is often asked to justify why there is a need to offer music in early childhood. As well as music being a fun area of learning to engage with, there tend to be 3 reasons 'why' music in early childhood is offered and justified:

1 - to support other areas of learning and development, e.g. music to support speech and language development, health & well-being

2 - to prepare children for instrumental tuition

3 - for children's rights to cultural, artistic and creative experiences – a broad and balanced education

Music education in Primary and Secondary is not solely offered to support other areas of learning and development; why should this be the case in early childhood? The first bullet point above is often used as a reason to justify music in early childhood.

Undoubtedly participating in musical activity is likely to have other benefits, for example, encouraging children to listen carefully to music will be supporting their listening skills; listening is a key component of communication. Music threads through many areas of learning as offered in this example. Discussing the importance of music, and 'why' it is a crucial aspect of early childhood with staff in settings can be a great way of developing the profile of music and your provision.

Here are some points to consider and discuss:

- Children have the right to broad and balanced quality experiences in early childhood and beyond.
- Music threads through areas of learning and development and is a crucial aspect of children's holistic development. This is demonstrated in the 4 aspects of Musical Development Matters guidance and the accompanying sections in the online resource.
- Whilst comparing your visual art provision to your music provision in your setting, ask yourself and colleagues: 'would you ever draw or paint over a children's piece of art work?', the answer tends to be no but the same perspective is not often given for music.
- Music is noisy, but children have the right to express themselves musically, engage in music making and have the right to musical play. How can this be catered for in your setting?