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# Music to Enrich Young Minds: A Look into the Inclusion of Music Education in Early Childhood Education Settings

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## Abstract

The research discussed below expanded on the inclusion of music education in early childhood education settings focusing on children from birth to age five. Benefits of the inclusion of music on development are discussed with emphasis on the areas of cognitive, language, motor, and social emotional development. Implementation strategies are expanded on including instructional methods including the Montessori method, the Orff method, the Kodály method, and Eine Kleine Yoga Musik and ways in which they can be used in an early childhood setting. There are issues in terms of teacher confidence and budget restrictions that further hinder the already lacking environment of musical experiences in early childhood setting. These topics are further discussed, and solutions are provided to strengthen the importance of music in early childhood education settings.


Keywords: music, early childhood, education

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## Introduction: Why Include Music in Early Childhood Settings?

Birth to age 5 is a critical period in the development of the human mind and body. Children at this age can learn more rapidly because the brain can adapt quicker to new information and stimuli presented (Benefits of music in early childhood, 2024). Music can be implemented from birth to promote development in several areas as it can engage one's entire being including the mind, body, and emotions (Wolf, 2016). Research has shown that children who engage in musical practices of any kind show more neural growth activity. This is because music can be connected in the brain to skills including speech, language processing, emotional regulation, auditory processing, and movement (Benefits of music in early childhood, 2024). Music also provides opportunities for multi-sensory activities to encourage a child's development and enhance their learning capabilities. It has also been proven to enhance or change moods, strengthen cultural and community identity, boost verbal and non-verbal communication, provide quality interaction and bonding experiences for relationship growth, and assist in developing personality traits (Dartsch, Economidou, & Piispanen, 2022). Children have the natural capabilities to interact with music through movement. This is why young children will begin to bounce or sway to music without prompting from an adult around them (Pogue, 2018). They can understand expression through music and movement before they even begin to develop speech and writing skills that adults typically use for expression (Sarrazin, 2016). Therefore, movement through music included in learning is a natural way to gain their attention and creates an opportunity for a creative outlet in terms of critical thinking, problem solving, and emotional expression (Pogue, 2018).

When it comes to infant children (zero to twelve months of age), music can be a tremendous resource in their individual development. Infants are born with many potential neural pathways that coordinate with specific skills and interests they may have as they grow older. If these pathways are not maintained past infancy, they will die off and no longer be useable to make room for those that are being used. Music instruction at its most basic form can help to preserve these neural pathways so they are not lost, and children have stronger neural potential as they age (Feierabend, n.d). Also, infants have not yet developed communication skills including language or emotional responses, and the incorporation of musical activities has shown to aid infants in developing the understanding of these skills faster, even if they are not physically able to portray them (Feierabend, n.d). Infants understand the musical inflections of the voice rather than the actual words themselves, which researchers have dubbed 'motherese." This is taken from the sing-song voice used typically by mothers to their young children (Fox, 2000). A study investigated by Fox shows that premature babies also have a physical response to musical stimuli through changes in heartbeat, blood pressure, and respiration (2000).

When looking at a preschool setting with children aged two to five years old, music is a useful tool to create a comforting environment that young children can easily understand. This includes adding music to transitions throughout the day, such as playing lullabies while transitioning to nap time, regaining focus through group music activities, teaching letters, numbers, colors, and other important milestones of young children's development through song, and celebrating cultural traditions and holidays from around the world. Music intelligence has been linked to mathematical, linguistic, and interpersonal intelligence in older children as well (Levinowitz, 1999). Researchers have observed that the learning trajectories for mathematics in particular are exponentially similar to those in music, meaning musical education from a young age can bolster

mathematics skills as they grow (McDonel, 2015). Musical activities have also been found to benefit communication skills and overall cognitive development in preschool children specifically (McAllister, 2017). Also, music is a fantastic way to get young children engaged in activities and learning when their attention skills are not fully developed (Pogue, 2018). It is a time when children can learn without fully realizing it is a learning experience increasing enjoyment and reception of a particular lesson (Benefits of music in early childhood, 2024). So, music has great benefit on a child's developmental processes in multiple areas including cognitive, language, motor, and social-emotional skills.

### *Cognitive Benefits*

Cognitive development refers to the growth of a child's abilities in information processing, conceptual understanding, and perception among other things. Music is an extremely beneficial source of stimulation to support cognitive growth even through adulthood. Research has shown that musical training of any kind at an early age can strengthen and stimulate cognitive function even after training has stopped (Bernstorf, 2013). One of the main developments for children under age five are the executive functions including focus, planning, memory, and mental flexibility among other things (Dumont, Syurina, Feron, & van Hooren, 2017). These are vital in a child's cognitive development and their abilities as an adult. Music is one of the few activities they can partake in that stimulates multiple brain areas. This includes auditory processing, emotional response, and creative thinking, among others. It is imperative to have children learn to multitask mentally even in infancy to allow for a fully developed and functioning brain makeup (Benefits of music in early childhood, 2024). Dumont, Syurina, Feron, & van Hooren have found that children with any kind of musical background perform better in auditory processing and phonological awareness (2017).

Music is inherently an auditory activity and allows infants to begin developing listening and aural processing skills. The first year of life is the main time when a child is developing the ability to identify, reproduce, and differentiate between sounds they hear around them (Bolduc & Evrard, 2017). Therefore, it is important to introduce opportunities for children to attempt and develop these skills, and music is a great resource to incorporate into daily life. Children can even mimic or differentiate the sound inflections like raised or lowered pitch of the voice or dynamics of loud versus soft speaking.

Music can also be used in the development of focus and concentration skills throughout development. There is greater stimulation in different areas of the brain requiring the child to increase focus to be able to understand what they are hearing (Benefits of music in early childhood, 2024). There is also research that shows music can improve memory skills in children. This is especially true for information that has been transmitted aurally (Benefits of music in early childhood, 2024).

Music can help young children to remember information more accurately. In a study conducted by Rowe, Kirby, Dahbi, and Luk, words taught to preschool aged children through music were better and more accurately retained than those taught through pictures (2023). Consistent experiences with the same or similar songs help young children link the music they hear to different activities or experiences throughout the day. Even infants as young as eight months have shown recognition of a familiar song even if there has been a gap in exposure for up to two weeks (Beyond twinkle twinkle, 2023).

Music can also naturally enhance skills used in math later through the development of spatial awareness, sequencing, and pattern recognition (Wolf, 2016). Repetitive songs like ‘Old MacDonald’ and ‘Wheels on the Bus’ introduce the idea of anticipating sequential motion and

repetitive patterns (Beyond twinkle twinkle, 2023). This later translates into the development of counting skills as numbers are inherently repetitive sequences. The repetitive rhythm and melody allow for easier memorization of numbers (Beyond twinkle twinkle, 2023). There are examples of counting songs that encourage this transposition of skills such as ‘Five Little Monkeys’ and ‘The Ants Go Marching.’

### *Language Benefits*

Language skills are a part of cognitive function that is expressly affected by the inclusion of music. Songs and rhymes can be included as supplemental support in speech and vocabulary skill development by teaching letter sounds and phonetics (Benefits of music in early childhood, 2024). Children learn how to speak through the words and sounds they hear around them, including music (Wolf, 2016). Both skills focus on perception, reception, and production of heard sounds, and therefore the development of one boost the development of the other. Infant children can experiment with the voice as early as three to four months, even without the understanding of language or pitch (Levinowitz, 1999). They develop what is called a “tonal babble” in learning musical expression similar to the speech babble they create before gaining the ability to form recognizable words (Early childhood music, n.d). The more infants hear speaking and music, the stronger their neural pathways for communication become and they begin to babble more and typically develop a larger vocabulary as they grow into toddlerhood (Wolf, 2016). When infants hear increasingly varied words and phrases, the known words, and phrases they can imitate increases as well strengthening their vocabulary (Wolf, 2016). In music, this can be seen in a variety of children's songs. For example, instead of saying “It’s raining,” children are exposed to the phrase “It’s raining, it’s pouring” effortlessly expanding the number of words they understand. The same can be seen through ‘Wheels on the Bus.’ Instead of simply

saying “The bus has wheels.” children are encouraged to say, “The wheels on the bus go round and round, all through the town (Wolf, 2016).”

There is also a growth in receptive language when music is involved. This refers to a child’s ability to hear music or words and respond in other ways than speaking. A study was done using late 19th century French composer Camille Saint-Saën’s *The Carnival of Animals* that portrays the different sounds one may hear while at a zoo or circus. The children were able to communicate the different animals through action or created sounds (such as the individual animal sounds) in response to the different movements (Beyond twinkle twinkle, 2023). These skills are also being researched in correlation to learning a non-native language where there seems to be at least some benefit.

### *Motor Benefits*

Motor skills would seem to have no correlation to the inclusion of music, but as mentioned above, a natural sense of movement to music can be seen in children, even those too young to speak. Both types of motor functions can be developed through music. Gross motor skills apply to the larger movement children learn such as walking, balance, jumping, and crawling. These skills can be encouraged through music by dancing, rocking infants, and the manipulation of found items like bubble wrap and instruments. Fine motor skills refer to smaller movements focusing on hand and arm movements such as reaching and grasping. Finger play songs such as ‘Open Shut Them’ and ‘Itsy Bitsy Spider’ promote the development of these fine motor skills.

There is a strong connection between physical movement and rhythm. The gross motor functions are tightly linked to rhythmic responses, especially in preschoolers (McAllister, 2017). Many functions of the human body require rhythm, including walking, reading, and speaking among many others. It is crucial that young children are introduced to rhythm externally first as it is

impossible to develop a sense of internal rhythm without it (Beyond twinkle twinkle, 2023). Music is the easiest way of introducing the concept of rhythm to young children as they have some sense of natural external rhythm already. Swaying, bouncing, or clapping to the beat of music is a reliable source of external rhythm that is appropriate for even the youngest children. Including movement with musical activities can help develop coordination as it requires exercise from both halves of the brain, as each half controls the opposite side of the body. These activities can include playing with two-handed drums and the 'Hokey Pokey' dance among many others (Beyond twinkle twinkle, 2023).

Music can also assist in the development of balance. Dancing, swaying, and rocking require children to find their center of balance and the more these activities are repeated, the easier it becomes for them to balance themselves. Once a sense of balance is established, children can crawl and walk with fewer issues (Beyond twinkle twinkle, 2023).

A sense of bodily awareness can also be developed through music. Songs such as 'Head Shoulders Knees and Toes' and 'Hokey Pokey' encourage children to identify and acknowledge certain parts of the body and then move them to the music (Beyond twinkle twinkle, 2023). Spatial awareness refers to the child's ability to follow set rules and routines associated with events happening around them. Children with neuro-divergent issues such as autism and ADHD tend to have an even more challenging time developing these necessary skills. Music creates guided opportunities to practice these skills in a repetitive manner they respond well to. Song like 'Pop Goes the Weasel' encourages children to wait for the correct cue to shout the correct words strengthening their awareness of what is happening around them. The same can be said for call and response games as they are expected to wait until it is their turn to respond in the pattern of the game (Wolf, 2016).

### *Social Emotional Benefits*

Music is inherently a form of expression, so it comes to no surprise that it can assist in the development of social-emotional skills in children. It can be used to teach appropriate emotional responses and how to control emotional overstimulation in a healthy manner (Benefits of music in early childhood, 2024).

Lullabies provide soothing melodies to help calm and self-regulate when children are working through strong emotions. It also provides an opportunity to learn words or expressions to show emotions for clarity and easier communication of feelings. Songs like 'If You're Happy and You Know It' demonstrate ways for children to appropriately demonstrate related emotions in a manner that is safe and effective (Beyond twinkle twinkle, 2023). In their study on the effects of music on children, Rowe, Kirby, Dahbi, and Luk reported that children with early musical training showed better self-regulation skills which allowed for more productive learning outcomes (2023). There is also research that shows singing and talking through emotionally stressful tasks or situations can be extremely beneficial in teaching self-regulation tactics (Wolf, 2016). These strategies can be especially beneficial for children with sensory processing disorders as they can use music as a coping strategy, a form of communication to express their emotions, or a form of exposure to learn the proper response to the emotions they are feeling (Benefits of music in early childhood, 2024). It can also be a signal to understand the emotions of others and make children more aware of the emotional consequences of their actions (Wolf, 2016). If they receive a negative reaction to an action, that response will influence their choice to repeat it later.

Music can also be a form of connection and relationship building. Sharing favorite songs is a simple and meaningful way to share love and affection for one another. Music can be a central part in the strengthening of family and friend relationships through smiling and other signs of positive interaction. The soothing nature of lullabies can create a deeper connection between an infant and their caregiver. The state between sleep and awake is a very vulnerable point for a child and the lullaby is naturally soothing and allows for the building of trust for the child and their caregiver (Wolf, 2016). Also, children involved in music classes are more likely to show sympathy to others around them and exhibit kind behaviors (Dumont, Syurina, Feron, & van Hooren, 2017).

Music can also be a great resource for boosting self-esteem in young children. They can recieve encouragement from an adult figure through emotional responses like clapping or cheering or verbal positive reinforcement that encourages stronger self-esteem and confidence from a young age. This reinforcement can encourage creativity, interest, and joy only further boosting their self-esteem as they begin to accomplish new things and grow in confidence (Wolf, 2016). It can also help to build an understanding of culture and identity (Beyond twinkle twinkle, 2023). Playing multi-cultural music in class can diversify children's understanding of the world creating empathetic and understanding adults while also validating the children whose cultures are being represented through music (Beyond twinkle twinkle, 2023).

## General Implementation and Instruction Methods

After learning the general benefits of music education for young children, it then must be decided how to properly incorporate these practices into the classroom curriculum. This can be fairly difficult as children birth to age five are not capable of the typical music education structure used that includes notation and reading music. Therefore, other methods of

incorporating music into the classroom must be used. Many educational associations recommend that at least twenty minutes throughout the day be dedicated to musical activities of some sort (Bolduc & Evrard, 2017). This can be split between large group and individual musical activities (CECE Early Childhood Videos at Eastern CT State U., 2023). In terms of organized methods of implementing music, there are many options. Some of the more popular include the Montessori Method, The Orff Method, The Kodaly Method, and Eline Kline Yoga Musik among many others.

### *General Incorporation*

In general, activities appropriate for infants, toddlers, and preschoolers are very simple and easy to follow. It is also important to follow the children's guide on what they are interested in and developmentally capable of (Bernstorf, 2012). General appropriate activities can include: clapping to the beat of songs, making sounds to embellish a story such as animal noises and car sounds, making homemade instruments from found objects like bottles, pots, and pans, free play with simple instruments like drums, maracas, xylophones, adding movement or dance to songs, and playing music in the background during other activities like coloring or free play (Benefits of music in early childhood, 2024). It is important that activities be visually interesting or use consistent body movement to increase attention and focus (Bernstorf, 2012).

Music activities can be beneficial in supplementing learning practices as they are better at getting and keeping the attention of young minds. Music can be added through nursery rhymes, songs, or created melodies that pertain to the focus point (Bolduc & Evrard, 2017). If children are learning about shapes and colors, include songs or chants about the shapes and colors they're learning about. As aforementioned, adding musical activities can enhance their understanding and overall recollection of the topic.

An important part of music for children in this age group is singing. The children should be able to hear themselves over others, the instructor, or recorded music so they can hear their own voice and develop self-awareness if they hear a different word or pitch from someone else. Recorded music can be implemented alongside acapella singing, but it should never be the sole source of music for this reason (CECE Early Childhood Videos at Eastern CT State U., 2023). Also, the children want to be engaged with the instructor, so it is important to sing with the children and not over them to invite collaboration and keep interest in the activity.

Many young children are learning to explore the world through sound, so it is appropriate to encourage that exploration in musical activities. Experimenting with vocal inflections like loud, soft, high and low can be interesting to children. Body percussion such as clapping, patting legs, etc. are developmentally appropriate and should be included in musical activities. Exploring with sounds around the child's environment is also a beneficial activity. Patting different surfaces like a table or a wall can be a great way to explore timbre and the varieties of sound around them.

When it comes to the inclusion of recorded music, simple is not always better. Children can grow in cultural understanding when introduced to the music of other cultures from around the world that are not able to be replicated acapella. Recorded music is also an opportunity to introduce different tonalities like major and minor keys, modes, and other tonal structures in music. The emotional inflection of the music can be observed by talking about how the music makes the child feel. Typically, major tonalities are considered happy music and minor tonalities are considered sad music. Introducing children to different styles of music at a young age creates a diversified taste in music, so although it is tempting to play only music generally marketed towards early childhood settings, the child is better off with a diversified sense of musical taste at a young age (CECE Early Childhood Videos at Eastern CT State U., 2023).

Creating musical activities appropriate for infants can be difficult, but they should be simple as children under eighteen months old don't understand to work with more complicated musical ideas. Activities like bouncing the child to music, wiggling games like 'This Little Piggy,' gentle tickles on hands and feet, tapping and clapping to a beat, simple songs, and lullabies during naps are developmentally appropriate and beneficial for children as they are learning more complicated skills (Feierabend, n.d).

### *The Montessori Method*

This method was designed by Dr. Maria Montessori in the 1920's after she noticed a deeper understanding of language, mathematics, science, music, and social-emotional skills in children who were given opportunities through experimental learning. The method focuses on children led instruction with emphasis on hands-on activities where they can set the pace for their individual learning. Children in Montessori classrooms learn through experience with guidance from a highly trained Montessori certified instructor. The Montessori method expands past early childhood with programs spanning into high school settings. The method is not specifically music education based but does include music elements to enhance learning (*Montessori education*).

Though the Montessori method is not music based, there is a large encouragement for the inclusion of music. Dr. Montessori believed children should begin singing with some form of informal music education between the ages of three to six. She encouraged what she coined daily "concerts" where the children were able to listen and move to music either sang acapella or from a recording (Faulmann, 1980). She also developed a list of standard repertoire works in classical music for children to listen to and become acquainted with formal music structures. These more

complicated structures introduce varieties of music besides simple children's songs to expand understandings of what music can be from an early age expanding children's understanding of what music is (Faulmann, 1980).

Dr. Montessori observed that children were more responsive to the rhythm of the music instead of the melody, so she focused instruction methods on movement such as jumping or dancing over singing or playing instruments (Faulmann, 1980). Music in this method is separated into different categories based on movements that are appropriate for the rhythm and tempo. These categories include marches, runs, gallops, skips, trots, slow walks, slow marches, waltz steps, and polka dances. These different movement styles are encouraged with their corresponding set of songs and allow for the children to differentiate between the different characteristics like tempo and rhythm they are hearing (Faulmann, 1980).

Though this method focuses on movement-based activities, Dr. Montessori did develop instruments that could be used during instruction. She first designed a set of wooden cylinders that showcased dynamics ranging from softer to louder produced sounds. This encourages the development of children's listening skills as the concepts of both noise and silence can be explored. She later developed a set of thirteen bells that included every pitch in the octave. Each bell was painted to correspond with a pre-existing keyboard and solfège model that was already being used in Montessori classrooms. Children are first encouraged to focus on pitch recognition and matching before learning to perform the entire scale on the bells while also singing. This activity is complex, however, and is not recommended for children under the age of five (Faulmann, 1980). However, younger children can simply experiment with the instruments to

begin developing an understanding of the pitch system noticing that some bells play higher or lower pitches than others.

## *The Orff Method*

Carl Orff is a 20th century German composer and music educator most widely known for his dramatic cantata *Carmina Burana*. The Orff method is specifically a style of music education developed in during the 1920's and 30s that is used to develop musical skills from a young age. Orff based his approach to music education on play over musical skill like pitch accuracy. He used many different activity styles in instruction including dance, acting, singing, and the playing of various percussion instruments. This method also encourages children to compose original musical ideas and improvise during play. These of course are not expected to be notated as young children have yet to develop necessary skills, but still are highly encouraged. Orff wanted focus to be on learning through non-formal play activities with little to no pre-set lesson (Mr. Rob, 2023).

The Orff method centers around movement much like the Montessori method. The goal is to tech musical expression through natural speech and movement patterns of young children as a foundation of positive musical experience. The method encourages the grouping of speech,

movement, play, and music into a singular activity. Children in these settings are encouraged to participate in group activity to express their imagination and foster a sense of musical enjoyment while also building their self-confidence (Göktürk, 2012).

The Orff method is best known for its inclusion of percussion instrument and recorders to supplement instruction through play (Göktürk, 2012). Typical instruments include xylophones,

bells, tambourines, and other very simple percussion instruments. Activities usually begin with a story or poem as an initial listening experience for the children. The instruments are used as improvisation devices for expressing the ideas heard in the story or poem. Vocal inflections are also encouraged, especially in cases where instruments are not available. The story or poem is repeated multiple times, with each repetition requiring more in-depth participation from the children. The final result should be the reading of the story with the children providing a background framework like that of a film score (Mr. Rob, 2023). Overall, this method creates an understanding of basic musical ideas while also fostering a foundation for learning later on both in music and general studies (Göktürk, 2012).

### *The Kodaly Method*

The Kodaly method is a very well-known music educational approach developed by Hungarian composer, music theorist, and educator Zoltan Kodály in the early 20$^{th}$ century. Kodály developed the method as a way to preserve the traditional folk music practices of Hungary. He deeply believed in the inclusion of a child's native culture in their education and development. In 1945, the Hungarian government implemented the method into the national music education requirements and is still the most widely used instruction method to this day (Musical U Team, 2023).

The Kodály method focuses on singing over movement and instrumental practices as Kodály believed the voice is the best instrument for learning. Music in this method is treated as a core subject alongside mathematics, sciences, and language and instruction should begin as early as possible (Burns, 2019). There are four main objectives of the Kodály method: developing a natural sense of musical expression in all children, familiarizing children with formal musical

phrases and terms, teaching children about the musical traditions of their culture, and fostering and appreciation for music in children.

At its core, this method is about children hearing things first before learning how to repeat them back and later producing read melodies without initial demonstration. Instruction includes simple, short, and repetitive activities and short three to five note songs in a natural rhythmic pattern like 2/4, 4/4, or 6/8 (Göktürk, 2012). These patterns mimic the natural rhythmic movements of the body and are easier for children to understand and express. Many of the songs used in the method are traditional folk melodies and nursery rhymes as they are simplistic and easy to follow. The method also includes other educational tools such as solfege syllables (do, re, mi, and so on), Curwen hand signals that coordinate to the different solfege syllables, and syllables for rhythmic patterns (Göktürk, 2012).

Some movement is encouraged alongside songs like facial expressions, fingerplay, and clapping. Clapping, the first tool of expression a child has, is focused on the most. It is recommended children and instructors clap after each activity to encourage participation and self-esteem. After the child has developed the grasping ability, instruments can be introduced (Chrystine, 2014). Typical instruments include simple drums, egg shakers, and homemade instruments. These can be used during singing in place of clapping and fingerplay movements.

The Kodály method also suggests other simple ways of incorporating music into the education process. These include singing books instead of reading them, matching vocal expressions like dynamics (loud and quiet) and pitch (high and low) and body movements to the words of songs, adding the child's name into a song, and singing songs with simple actions (Chrystine, 2014).

The most important thing overall is the frequency of musical instruction (Göktürk, 2012). The more the child participates in the activities, the stronger their skills will be.

### *Eline Kline Yoga Musik*

The Eine Kleine Yoga Music method is a fairly new development that combines music education with traditional yoga practices. It encourages play and experimentation through music while focusing on the listening practices while performing yoga movements. The method combines yoga poses with keyboard practices based on the alphabet. Each pitch on a keyboard has an animal assigned to it based on its first letter and the letter of the traditional pitch name. For example, the pitch 'C' is represented by a cat and the pitch 'E' is represented by an elephant. Each animal is then matched with a yoga position that accurately represents it. This creates a multi-sensory experience as children are strengthening motor skills through the yoga poses, cognitive skills as they practice listening and make connections between the music and movement, and language skills as they learn the different animal names and the defining characteristics of the animals they are portraying. The method can be simplified for younger children by including singing and rhythmic practices in place of the keyboard activities as they tend to be more appropriate for children four and older (McAllister, 2017).

## Issues in the Inclusion of Music

While there are many benefits to including music in early childhood settings, there has been a drastic decrease in young children's exposure to musical ideas and expression. Children are beginning kindergarten with dramatically fewer singing skills than they are capable of, according to Levinowitz. These skills have been on an extreme downward spiral since Generation X was in elementary school (1999). There is a lack of research in the benefits of daily music activities and the importance of using musical experiences as a teaching mechanism. Most modern research on

music with children birth to age five focuses on the play and movement aspects that are seen as fun and seemingly more developmentally appropriate (Pogue, 2018). Other issues such as teacher insecurity in music and budget restrictions only complicate the matter further.

Studies have shown that many teachers feel inadequately trained in music skills to teach musical activities to their children. In a study done by the Music Educators National Conference or MENC (now known as the National Association for Music Education or NAfME), only half of the teachers included felt they have the skills to teach children arts skills in general (Bolduv & Evrard, 2017). Many teachers have reported they fear musical activities will just end in chaos with no productivity as they do not have the knowledge of how to direct students on the topic (Hildebrandt, 1998). However, teachers need no formal musical training to create a musically innovative environment. Most of the traditional music education techniques are developmentally inappropriate for children under the age of six, so just listening to music and exposing the children to different styles and cultures through music is enough (McAllister, 2017). If early childhood educators are interesting in learning how to further their abilities in music skills, many colleges and universities are implementing music education strategies into early childhood education courses (Fox, 2000).

Arts programs are typically first cuts during budget crises in the education system. These cuts can be seen from early childhood settings through high school and higher education settings. When music faculty is cut, general teachers are the ones who must fill the gap and implement music education into their classrooms (McDonel, 2015). This does not have to be complicated or time consuming. It can include simply playing music and singing with the children at appropriate times and providing instruments and other sound exploration activities during free play. They

can also use language and literacy activities to implement music by including activities such as singing stories and making up songs to teach letters, colors, numbers etc. Budget issues can also bring forth a lack of materials like instruments, manipulatives, visual aids, and varied music selections that make music education difficult to implement (Rowe, Kirby, Dahbi, & Luk, 2023). However, educators can create activities where children make their own instruments like paper cup drums and bead maracas to fill this gap while also meeting other requirements in the classroom setting.

## Conclusion

Because the early childhood stage is extremely important in a child's development, it is beneficial to include music practices into the child's everyday activity to boost cognitive, language, motor, and social emotional development. These are some of the most important areas in a child's growth and music can only benefit. More research needs to be done in the topic to provide children with the best possible outcome in their educational journey. More methods need to be developed in the inclusion of music in early childhood settings to create the best environment and support for educators as they begin to include music into thir classrooms. While there is enough literature supporting the inclusion of music in the education of young children, it is brushed to the side in these settings that can make a large difference in the outcome of a child's educational experience. There should be a larger push for the inclusion of music in early childhood settings to support children and educators in the struggles and triumphs of child development.

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