

HEART Midlands Stronger Practice Hub



Musical food for thought...

A blog by Davina Brownrigg BMus (Hons)

Hi! For those who don't know me, my name is Davina and I've worked for 14 years as an early years music educator. I have a BMus (Hons) in Voice and Opera from Royal Birmingham Conservatoire, a Certificate in Music Education: Early Childhood (CME:EC), a PGCert in SEND Music and I am also a trained Baby Massage, Story Massage, Hygge (Danish mindfulness) and Early Childhood yoga practitioner.



I want you to take a second to think of a piece of music that is meaningful to you and then think about WHY it's meaningful to you. Don't read on until you've got something in your head.

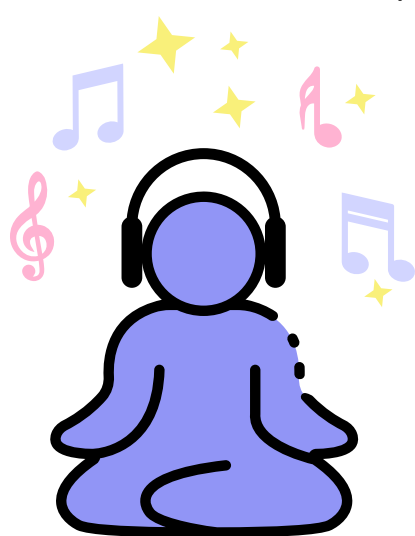
Did you choose a piece with a positive, happy memory attached? That's where most of our brains go when we link a piece of music to something meaningful in our brain. E.g. a piece playing at your Aunt Jenny's wedding that got everyone on the dance floor, or a song you used to sing to your baby to help them sleep. Music has a power to make us feel strong, wonderful emotions.

Now think of a piece of music you find relaxing. Perhaps you use it to have a chill out after a stressful day, or to calm down during a horrible commute in the car.

**Have you ever shared
this piece with the
children in your setting?
If not, why not?**

We are conditioned to just focus on nursery rhymes in the early years we forget about the importance of external musical influences on children too. Whilst nursery rhymes are definitely important, the more we can expose children to different instruments, timbres (musical layers and tones) and sounds in their early years, the easier it will be for them to have a developed ear later in life – an ability to listen to instructions, pick up instruments themselves and explore the world around them with open ears. There is definitely some truth to the 1990s idea of 'The Mozart Effect' (that listening to Mozart would make babies smarter).*

*<https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC1281386/>



Don't be afraid to play the children in your setting some whacky 'out there' jazz, rock, country and western etc if it is something you have a positive association with. Chances are you'll bring that joy to them. And perhaps next time you want to have some calm quiet time in your setting, you can introduce the children to your favourite piece to relax to. Get the children to draw what they hear or lie down under a parachute.

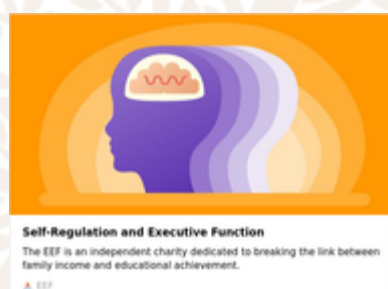
I'll be going deeper into music for relaxation including some skills for you to take into your setting during the SPH CPD session on February 4th. I hope to see you there!

EEF Evidence store promotes using music activities to support children's self-regulation and executive function.

Development Matters promotes the use of music in all areas of learning. These include: Playing and learning: Introduce children to different styles of music and art.

Communication and Language: Babies love singing and music. Sing a range of songs and play a wide range of different types of music.

Expressive arts and design: Respond emotionally and physically to music when it changes. Move and dance to music.



HEART – Midlands Early Years Stronger Practice Hub

Covering: Birmingham, Coventry, Herefordshire, Solihull, Warwickshire, Worcestershire

 Stronger Practice Hubs