



Strike Up the Band Musical Play for Tots to Kindergarten

A Full Body Workout for the Brain

One of the only activities that stimulates both sides of the brain at the same time with a strong social-emotional component. G.Kurtz

The most heavily researched predictor of creativity in social psychology is mood.

Hirt et al. 2008:214

The world is changing a lot. Because of the com and the dot. It's all new today or that's what they say, but friend, it really is not....Arlo and Janis-Jimmy Johnson...

We ourselves feel that what we are doing is just a drop in the ocean. But the ocean would be less because of that missing drop. Mother Teresa

We see the world clearly when we're children and then spend the rest of our lives trying to remember what we say. G. Keillor

**Who knew that tapping sticks or wood blocks
or shaking bells and maracas could be
nourishing brains while impacting all developmental domains?**

Playing music benefits the brain more than any other activity, impacts executive function and memory using the same neural structure implicated in learning. Playing an instrument engages practically every area of the brain at once-especially visual, auditory and motor cortices. Carries over into self-regulation and problem solving in all areas of life.

Resource: From M.Popova <http://www.brainpickings.org/2015/01/29/music-brain-ted-ed/>

While preschoolers learn the most through play and hands-on activities, using musical instruments will also make a difference in the way that they learn. Playing no longer has to only involve puppets, make-believe and toys. It can involve the arts, offering a tactile and multi-sensory experience for this age group. They will have the opportunity to master a variety of skills while moving and grooving to the music at the same time.

Children who are consistently exposed to musical experiences gain neural connections that help with brain development and cognitive thinking. It has been proven that this exposure helps them do better in areas such as reading and math, helps them gain better control of their bodies, aids in focusing, promotes higher self-esteem and emphasizes teamwork. However, what in particular about musical instruments makes it an asset to learning?

"The early childhood years are crucial for using the body to respond as a musical instrument in many ways to many different kinds of music. Real musical instruments, like tools, can then become simply extensions or amplifications of the body's ability to be musically expressive."

L. Levinowitz.

The National Association of Music Education states that “a music curriculum for preschool-age children should include many opportunities to explore sound through singing, moving, listening, and playing instruments.”

Instruments Can Help To

- Increase gross and fine motor skills and helps to develop muscle tone in the hands and arms
- Develop a sense of beat and rhythm
- Reinforce hand-eye coordination
- Encourage imaginative play and storytelling through sound effects
- Increase listening (and hence, reading) skills
- Reinforce and emphasize self-discipline and self-control
- Enhance comprehension of music notation (in its simplest form), dynamics, and musical form
- Develop patterning skills and learn basic mathematical concepts of sequencing, numerical order, counting forwards and backwards and addition/subtraction (for advanced students).
- Develop understanding of where sound comes from and how it changes (according to instrument played)
- Develop a sense of teamwork and social skills such as sharing, taking turns, etc.
- Develop sense of cultural awareness

Neuroscientist Professor Nina Kraus has conducted research that has proven that playing a musical instrument enhances the brain's sensitivity to speech sounds. She states, "Playing an instrument may help youngsters better process speech in noisy classrooms and more accurately interpret the nuances of language that are conveyed by subtle changes in the human voice."

Resource: Sarah Malburg <http://www.brightbubeducation.com/preschool-crafts-activities/123294-making-music-in-the-classroom/>

Promoting the arts and physical activity may be vital for improving academic outcome. Schools can improve academic outcomes by increasing the joy and well-being. *Adele Diamond 2014 Minnesota Symposium on Child Psychology*

The work of neuroscientist Adele Diamond is turning some of our most modern ideas about education on their heads. Her work is scientifically illustrating the educational power of things like, play, sports, music, memorization and reflection. What nourishes the human spirit, the whole person, it turns out, also hones our minds. *K. Tippett*

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