

[IMAGE]

## **Music: A Positive Way to Impact Learning and Social Behavior in Children**

By Editorial Staff

Children love music; just do a keyword search of children and dancing on YouTube and you'll find a lot of smiling faces. But beyond enjoyment, music also positively impacts learning and social behavior in children, according to the *International Journal of Music Education*. The recent study indicates that language development, literacy, numeracy, creativity, fine motor coordination, concentration, self-confidence, emotional sensitivity, social skills, teamwork, self-discipline, and relaxation are all tied to playing and listening to music.

### **Music Training = Brain Training**

According to a study performed at the Boston Children's Hospital, early musical training enhances the areas of the brain responsible for executive functioning, which enables information processing and retention, regulates behavior, and is responsible for problem solving and planning, as well as other cognitive processes.

The study took musically trained children, ages nine to 12, who received at least two years of private lessons, and compared them with children in the same age range that had no musical training, concluding that children with musical training had enhanced activity levels in the prefrontal cortex. Long-term results include heightened IQs, stronger SAT scores and an overall better academic performance.

### **Music Therapy and Behavior**

Another study, which took place at Queen's University in Belfast, Ireland, focused solely on children and adolescents with emotional, developmental and/or behavioral problems.

Two hundred fifty-one children were divided into two groups; 128 received traditional care, while the other 123 received music therapy in addition to traditional care. The study concluded that music therapy reduces depression and even improves self-esteem, in comparison to those who only received traditional care. The participants also had improved communicative and interactive skills.

Music programs often seem to be among the first to go when schools make funding cuts, but perhaps these collective study findings will give music – and the children who benefit from it – a fighting chance.

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