



Special Report

How to harness the hidden power of music to create a smarter, happier, healthier, more confident and capable child

Introduction

As a parent you want the very best for your children. You're eager to give them every opportunity to reach their full potential ... to be the best they can be.

By giving children the best possible start in life, you can equip them with skills for a lifetime.

We all want our children to succeed at school and ultimately to be successful in later life. But more importantly we want happy children who develop into happy, confident, well adjusted adults.

Parenting today is extremely demanding when combined with the pressures of work and a busy lifestyle. And because children don't come with an instruction manual, many parents are uncertain about the finer details of parenting such as:

- how to encourage learning, problem solving and creativity;
- how to develop qualities such as generosity, compassion and respect,
- how to develop and enhance physical capabilities; and
- how to build confidence and self worth.

While a supportive and loving home environment is the first step, there are many things you can do as a parent to ensure your child becomes everything you want them to be.

And your reward?

Smiles, love, laughter and watching the sense of wonder and accomplishment as your children grow, learn and succeed.



How your child's brain develops

The foetal brain grows at an amazing rate with about 100,000 nerve cells formed every minute. Babies are born with nearly 100 billion neurons. Neurons are brain cells that store and send information. The brain does not produce or replace brain cells, in fact brain cells are lost throughout the ageing process.

The brain continues to grow for several years after birth. By two years, the brain is about 80% of the adult size. This gain is not a result of new brain cell development but is due to the massive growth, branching and increased connections among individual brain cells. At birth, neurons are poorly connected, however in the first two years of life over 100 trillion interconnections between brain cells known as "synapses" will form.

Research indicates that the number of brain cells is irrelevant. Instead a greater number of synapses connecting the cells, allows for faster, more efficient brain signals to be transmitted. This translates to increased brain capacity or perceived "intelligence".

Scientists suggest that if raised in a highly sensory environment where all five senses are regularly stimulated, a child will develop a greater number of neuronal synapses per brain cell, enabling the child to learn more efficiently and thoroughly. Over time, synapses grow stronger from sensory stimulation, while unused synapses wither and die.

Sources:

Making Connections: Helping Children Build Their Brains by Janice Fletcher, Associate Professor Child, Family, and Consumer Studies, University of Idaho www.co.dakota.mn.us/child_care/news_july.htm; Administration for Children and Families, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services <http://nccanch.acf.hhs.gov>; US Pediatric Services www.pediatricservices.com

How music affects brain development

Music is a universal language and mankind's oldest artform. Even before a child learns to speak, they learn to communicate and connect with song and sound. Children take to music naturally. Some suggest that babies are born with inherent musical capabilities because their responses to music are immediate and instinctive: they are not learned.

While every child can enjoy, learn and grow through music, there is increasing evidence to show that active participation in musical activities can actually alter the anatomy of the brain. Researchers believe that early musical experiences intensify the development of neuronal synapses. By increasing the number of interconnections between brain cells, music essentially enhances a child's ability to think, learn, reason and create.

It is important to note however, that for music to have a profound effect on brain development, a child must **physically engage** in musical activities. Furthermore, these activities must provide a comprehensive sensory experience. It is not enough for a child just to listen to music. They need to take part – to feel, make, hear and memorize sounds and patterns; to sing, clap dance and remember movements.

The quality and timing of these musical experiences are paramount. Ideally, parents should aim to expose their children to musical activities prior to age two when the proliferation of neuronal synapses is at its peak. However, the number of synapses remain elevated until a child is around 10 years of age, so the benefits of music can still be realised in older children.

Dr Gordon Shaw, a world renowned pioneer in music and brain studies with over 25 years of research, describes “music as a window into higher brain function”.

Sources:
International Foundation for Music Research, www.music_research.org; American Music Conference <http://amc-music.org>; Australian Music Convention www.australianmusic.asn.au



Research findings worldwide have discovered:

- Music lessons have been shown to improve a child's performance in school.

In a recent experiment, after 8 months of lessons, pre-schoolers showed a 46% boost in their spatial IQ which is crucial for higher brain functions such as mathematics.

Students who were exposed to music-based lessons scored a full 100% higher on fraction texts than those who learned in a conventional manner.

- Research reveals that pre-school years are the optimal “learning time” for developing musical ability.
- Young children with developed rhythm skills perform better academically
- In a ten-year study in the US, which tracked over 25,000 students, a direct correlation between music studies and improved school results has been acknowledged.
- A two-year study in Switzerland involving 1,200 children in 50 classes, scientifically demonstrated how music improved children's reading and verbal skills through enhanced concentration, memory and self expression.

Other findings revealed that the children in the study had better interpersonal relationships, experienced a greater enjoyment of school, were less stressed during testing and were better able to handle performance pressures.

- A series of studies conducted in Europe in the 1950s concluded that learning and playing music not only improved academic performance but also improved memory, reasoning, working as a team, time management and the ability to think creatively.
- Music is now being recognised as a form of intelligence, not just a manifestation of it.

Sources:
International Foundation for Music Research, www.music-research.org; American Music Conference, www.amc-music.org; American Music Association, www.americanmusic.org; Australian Music Association, www.australianmusic.asn.au

Jungle Music

Jungle Music is an early music programme specifically designed for children aged 6 months to 3½ years. Jungle Music was developed by a collaborative team of experts in early childhood education, music, dance and movement and is based on sound principles in all of these areas.

The programme targets children in their peak brain development phase and offers a curriculum of diverse sensory-based activities, which include:

- Circle games with the parachute and rainbow ring;
- Directed creative movement;
- Singing;
- Circle dances;
- Playing individual percussion instruments;
- Group play on the beautiful big gathering drum;
- Lap rides;
- Finger plays;
- Peekaboo games;

And to maximise the overall sensory experience, Jungle Music employs a range of classroom teaching materials including:

- silk parachute;
- rainbow ring;
- peekaboo bags;
- coloured scarves;
- a wide variety of percussion instruments;
- puppets;
- felt pieces; and
- soft animal toys.

Your child will be given the opportunity to play with a variety of simple percussion instruments discovering different texture and sounds.

Music opens up a whole new world for small children.

Music has it's own language and gives children a unique way of viewing the world. Through fun and playful activities Jungle Music will help your child interpret this language and together you can discover and experience the foundation skills of music.



The 9 Key Elements of Childhood Development

There are 9 key elements of childhood development.

These elements represent the most important senses and skills that must be cultivated for your child to reach their full potential.



Self Esteem



Social Skills



Emotional Development



Intellectual Development



Language



Literacy



Fine Motor Development



Gross Motor Development



Sensory Development

Children develop a real affection for the cast of colourful Jungle Music characters. They get to know Bella, Rikki and all of their friends through hand puppets and beautifully illustrated course materials.

Your child will become immersed in a musical environment by attending the weekly lessons, playing the Jungle Music CD and recreating some of the activities at home.

You will learn how to use music as a tool to aid your parenting. Music can be an effective way to settle a crying baby, to help children with transition and to overcome resistance to new and unfamiliar experiences. Jungle Music's songs and quirky actions equip parents with a useful "bag of tricks" for when boredom sets in – in a shopping queue, in the car or whenever young minds need to be kept amused.

Throughout the Jungle Music programme, social skills such as sharing, taking turns and putting things away are introduced and encouraged. For many children, Jungle Music is their first group encounter. They discover how to work and learn within this class dynamic, providing an invaluable foundation for the years of schooling ahead.

Jungle Music classes are divided into three age categories:

Jungle Babies – 6 months to 18 months

In Jungle Babies, movements and interactions are guided by the parent. Your baby will learn and experience the concepts through you and your interaction with him.

Jungle Tots – 18 months to 2½ years

As your child makes the transition from baby to toddler, they become more independent. In Jungle Tots, parents move into the role of support person, encouraging and helping their child as needed.

Jungle Friends – 2½ years to 3½ years

Now your child is beginning to use language skills to socialise and manage their responses. He is gaining more control of body co-ordination and movement. Parents now move into a partner role, sharing the experience with the child. There is greater emphasis on fine motor control and pre-reading activities.

The benefits of learning music become apparent over time. Although you will witness positive effects from the first lesson, parents need to accept that changes will occur slowly in your child and may become more evident over the longer term (ie 6, 12, 24 months).



Jungle Music teaches the foundations of music

Through a diverse range of fun activities and musical games, Jungle Music introduces your child to the foundations of music including:

PITCH	High sounds and low sounds.
BEAT	Developing the feel for the steady pulse that runs through all music.
TEMPO	Fast/Slow.
TIMBRE	Sound texture, various types of sounds eg wooden sound of sticks or the jingle of metal sounds.
FORM	The structure and patterns that exist within music.
RHYTHM	The sequence and patterns that include sounds and silence.
METRE	Waltz, march, skipping.
DYNAMICS	Soft or loud.

Jungle Music addresses the 9 key elements of childhood development

Fundamental to Jungle Music are the 9 key elements of childhood development. Each activity has been specifically created to stimulate and enhance each of these essential skills, senses and abilities.

Following is a summary of the 9 key elements and how Jungle Music addresses each criteria, providing maximum developmental benefits.



Self Esteem

Self esteem, independence, and mastery are skills that build a happy and well adjusted child.

Jungle Music provides opportunities for your child to master skills and to feel competent and positive about their achievements. Positive management, praise and encouragement are all vital ingredients of a Jungle Music class. Within this supportive atmosphere your child can try new activities, confident that they will achieve mastery.



Social Skills

Learning how to feel comfortable in a group and connect with others are skills that build a happy child. Jungle Music provides a delightful environment for children to enjoy interacting with others of the same age whilst still supported by the presence of a parent or carer.

Learning to share, co-operate, and work together are built into Jungle Music activities. Social skills learnt in these early years build the foundations for friendship building and adjustment into more formal educational settings such as school.



Emotional Development

Music is a wonderful medium for sharing and expressing emotion. Researchers have concluded that children who are sung to by their parents have a much stronger emotional bond to them.

By sharing the Jungle Music experience the loving bond between parent and child is nurtured. Peekaboo, partner play, finger plays and lap rides activities have been specifically designed to enhance this relationship.



Intellectual Development

During the first four years of life, a child's brain develops at an enormous rate, laying down the foundations for all future learning. Musical activities allow children to notice differences, make decisions and act on the things that they see and hear.

Musical activities that physically engage a child in the learning process, promote the increased development of neural pathways. Jungle Music provides a highly interactive sensory environment. As children process and store this sensory input they build a bank of experiences. A wealth of songs and rhymes motivate them to memorise and recall lyrics as they participate in class activities.



Language

Musical activities enhance a child's ability to process and organise sounds. There is a richness of rhythm and rhyme in songs that young children delight in. Jungle Music introduces young children to a whole repertoire of new and familiar songs. This stimulation of their language skills is highly beneficial for speech and language development and later for phonic skills necessary for early literacy.



Literacy

Early childhood is a critical period for the development of skills that underlay learning to read and write. Jungle Music activities encourage visual literacy, through guided play with specially designed classroom materials. These focused activities are particularly relevant for children approaching preschool age. Fingerplays encourage the fine motor development necessary for beginning writing skills.



Fine Motor Skills

Fine motor development involves the smaller muscle groups found in finger, toes etc. At around two years of age, fine motor skills and hand-eye co-ordination become significant. Fingerplays, finger puppets and instrument playing build both hand-eye co-ordination and fine motor skills necessary for holding a pencil, reading and eventually writing.



Gross Motor Development

Movement is a fundamental tool for learning and discovery in babies and toddlers. Gross motor development involves the control and co-ordination of the body's large muscle groups responsible for sitting, crawling, walking, skipping, throwing a ball etc.

Jungle Music is designed to build on the child's natural desire to gain control and manipulate his large muscles to become an active learner. Body awareness, tactile awareness and balance systems are important to motor development and are stimulated through music and movement activities such as parachute play, lap rides, circle games, and dance.



Sensory Development

Jungle Music immerses your child in a new world of sensory stimulation through puppets, parachutes, quality musical instruments, soft toys, and educational equipment. Activities have been carefully designed to channel the children's awareness of sound, sight and movement. As your child gains experience he will be encouraged to focus and respond to particular aspects of sensory stimulation to build a platform of musical understanding.

10 reasons why you should choose Jungle Music for your child

1. Music enhances brain development by increasing the number of interconnections between brain cells. Jungle Music can improve your child's ability to think, learn, reason and create.
2. Jungle Music promotes active participation by children, which is essential for heightened brain development
3. Jungle Music's strong focus on fun, sensory-based activities enhances your child's learning experience and increases the impact and overall benefits afforded by music.
4. Unlike other programs, Jungle Music was designed specifically to address all 9 key elements of childhood development.
5. Jungle Music will build your child's confidence and self esteem.
6. Jungle Music develops positive social skills such as sharing, respect and empathy.
7. Jungle Music will improve your child's memory, problem solving techniques and stimulate functions in the brain that heighten understanding and recollection.
8. Jungle Music will develop your child's fine and gross motor skills through dancing, clapping and other choreographed physical movements.
9. Music aids language development. Jungle Music will help your child learn new words and develop their vocabulary.
10. Jungle Music provides a wonderful opportunity for one-on-one bonding between you and your child.



Make music a part of your child's life today!

There's no need to wait ... you can introduce your child to the enriching world of music right now and see the benefits immediately.

Start by making music a natural part of your every day life.

Some tips to get you started at home:

- **Sing with your child** whenever you can. In the car is a great place to start. If you can't remember the words, make them up and personalise them for your own family.
- **Make music part of your family rituals.** Sing your favourite lullaby at bedtime or a special song for birthdays. Make up a "putting on shoes song" to the tune of Farmer In the Dell. Take simple little nursery rhymes and change the words to suit your child!
- Children's voices and bodies are their first musical instruments! **Encourage them to discover all the sounds they can make using their bodies;** clapping, tapping, beating their chest, kissing, the list is endless.
- **Dance with your child.** Pick them up and swish them through the air. Stand them on your feet and waltz with them. Teach them simple clapping patterns.
- **Play different kinds of music;** soft and soothing, lively and exciting, slow and sombre. Encourage your child to respond to the music, moving their bodies or talking about how it makes them feel. Give them crayons or paints and let them draw to the music.
- **Give your child a taste of music from other cultures;** Celtic, Polynesian, African styles all have their own feel and are exciting for young children's ears. Scarves, ribbon and bells all add to the experience.



So what's the next step?

Making music part of your child's every day life is the first step. Listening to music is a great place to start but to reap the full benefits of what music can offer, your child needs to become part of the experience and engage in a wide range of sensory based musical activities. Look for a programme that addresses and nurtures the nine key elements of childhood development.

Forte School of Music is pleased to offer the opportunity to try Jungle Music for yourself. For a free lesson voucher, please call 1300 367 830.



Nurturing young minds through fun & music!

Jungle Music is proudly brought to you by



1300 367 830

www.fortemusic.com