

SINGING AND MUSIC FOR CHILDREN

AGED 0 – 3:

INDISPENSABLE ASSETS TO CHILD DEVELOPMENT



Why singing?

Singing is an inherent human endowment all children are born with. The more we recognise its universality and natural disposition, the more we can exploit its unmatched benefits.

Singing strengthens our health and wellbeing; it fosters memory and social interaction. In child development singing supports the building up of linguistic, social, emotive and intellectual skills from the earliest age.

Singing draws from hearing; both benefit from stimulation and encouragement.

Why music?

Whether we experience music passively or actively, as listeners or as actors, music balances our intellect and our emotions and is capable of reflecting our life – long personal development.

Music not only shapes and strengthens our relationships with carers, parents, friends and society at large. If carried out actively, also offers a number of fine motor and physical skills that directly influence our brain development and its functions.

Music has been recognised as important therapeutical medium for SEN children and is able to beneficially address developmental particularities and needs.

Babies aged 0 – 6 months

From the 26th week of pregnancy hearing is already fully developed. The embryo listens to, interprets and learns from surrounding sounds.

From birth onward the baby communicates with its environment and increasingly uses its own voice for self-discovery and participation. Infant-directed singing creates space and time between baby and carer, improves their communication by responding to each other and may act as important stress relief for both, babies and carers.

Already around the 2nd month babies' early sound production turns into short-phrased musical babbling which gradually turn into melodic snippets that copy the flow and melody of language that they are surrounded with.

Babies aged 6-18months

Singing games and rhymes stimulate the child's perception of the surrounding world and thereby increase its knowledge, confidence and self-esteem. In a constant and continuous process, the child observes and learns through copying and imitating.

Tickling songs stimulate its sense of touch, whereas playful build-in effects foster the child's sense of anticipation. Bouncing song connect to and re-force the child's perception of movement that it is used to since being carried in the womb. From the age of 1 onward the child will be able to repeatedly sing short musical phrases.



Toddlers aged 2-3

Children aged 2-3 gain more and more independence and turn into explorers and inventors. They start vocalising and discover their singing voice; they may even start memorising songs and taking a pleasure in free – flow, spontaneous singing.

Songs accompany and foster their knowledge about animals, movements, characters. They also introduce contrasting concepts such as louder and quieter, faster and slower, higher and lower and thereby promote children's sense of orientation and their confidence.

Singing in groups enables the sharing fun and emotions and introduces to playful concepts such the taking of turns.



Music and singing for children aged 0-3 based on the Kodály Approach

A musical approach according to Kodály builds on children's inherent musical skills and supports a gradually progressive, consistent



and holistic upbringing.

The method was initiated by the Hungarian composer and music educator Zoltán Kodály (1882 – 1967), who most famously stated that *musical education of the child should begin nine months before the birth of the mother.*

According to Kodály the voice is our most important instrument and should be trained before the learning of any instrument. As *music should belong to everyone*, his approach to singing starts with the sounds we are all familiar with: the call for *Ma – ma*, expressed by a minor 3rd and in *solfa* represented as *so - mi*.

Before the child even learns about pulse, rhythm and melody, it experiences musical concepts unconsciously. Musical phrases are accompanied by matching physical actions such as the touching of facial and body parts, the wiggling of fingers and toes, and the involvement of hands, arms, and legs.

In a Kodály – based music session children will also experience props and toys and thereby acquire confidence and versatility in the handling of various materia-



Key features of Kodály based singing and music making for children aged 0-3

- ♪ Singing starts as early as possible and builds upon sounds and movements that the child has already experienced during pregnancy
- ♪ Basic musical elements are firstly perceived unconsciously, then consciously performed re-enforced through repetition and variation
- ♪ Pulse awareness is directly derived from the child's first physical experiences such as its own and its mother's heart beat and being carried around
- ♪ The child's pulse awareness has to be established before complex rhythmical pattern can be introduced
- ♪ Only the best material is good enough to build up children's musical repertoire and imagination: it shows clear structures, balanced and singable melodies tunes and themes that are suitable for a child
- ♪ Musical repertoire for children aged 0-3 ideally draws from cultural heritage of our nations and uses nursery rhymes, folk songs among others
- ♪ Carer and parents are actively involved in singing to the child and with the