EYFS MUSIC - How and why?

Child-led learning plays a large part in the Early Years curriculum, and rightly so. Supporting children in following and exploring their own interests allows for a greater depth of learning and understanding and much higher levels of well-being and involvement.

You can support children in their use of music as part of child-led play, whether singing songs, listening to music, dancing or playing instruments. Thus allowing them to express their creativity and emotions, as well as reaching a deeper level of musical understanding.

Rather than creating an artificial learning opportunity, instead wait until you observe that a child or group of children have shown a particular interest in a topic. Offer to help them enhance their chosen area of play by providing additional resources, demonstrating how to use existing resources or even using the computer. This could mean:

- Demonstrating how to play certain instruments
- Encouraging children to perform together as a group
- Starting to sing a familiar song and play an instrument, encouraging others to join in
- Clapping or tapping out a beat
- Providing lyrics to a song
- Using familiar, everyday objects to create new instruments and sounds
- Demonstrating how to use your body and voice as instruments
- Searching for and watching videos showing traditional dances
- Learning and practising traditional dances together
- Using a safe search engine to find out more information or facts about particular dances or music types
- Searching for and listening to music together
- Finding out about different music relating to customs and festivals that are important to the children

The children can then use the information you have given them, or that which you have discovered together to further their project or to influence a new idea. Learning in this way often sparks curiosity in the other children in the class, leading to potential large group projects or even whole class projects.

Print off any relevant pictures and/or use a camera to take photographs of the children's project and record the learning in a class book, make a display or to present to the other class members.

Resourcing your continuous provision

If possible, it is best practice to have musical instruments and equipment available as part of your continuous provision. This means that it is accessible to children at all times and stays the same throughout the year. You can enhance the provision by adding additional resources to support projects but the foundation resources should always be available.
Ongoing provision resource list:

Resource list

- Percussion instruments: drum, triangle, guiro, rain stick, boomwhacker, claves, tambourine, xylophone, maracas

- Recycled/homemade 'instruments': pans and spoons, empty bottles made into shakers, shells threaded onto a string, tubs and small boxes

- Instruments from a range of countries

- CDs

- Music player and headphones (or Ipads with music)

- Paper and pencils

Enhanced provision

Enhanced provision is normally provided to encourage consolidation of learning after a lesson, in response to children's expressed interests or a seasonal event. It is up to you how long you leave the enhanced provision in

your classroom but as a guide, you would normally expect this to be taken away after a week or when the children are no longer using the resources. Enhanced provision resources may include:

Enhanced provision resources

- Seasonal instruments, for example, sleigh bells at Christmas
- Instruments related to a particular culture
- Instruments related to a special festival
- Instruments created by the children
- CDs or other listening material related to a topic of interest
- Costumes related to a topic of interest

Useful prompts for learning

When talking to the children about their project or interests, try using some of the following open-ended prompts to encourage thought and conversation.

- “I wonder why…?”
- “What if…?”
- “How could we…?”
- “I wonder how…?”
- “What do you think?”
- “What can you…?”
- “Tell me about…”
- “What might happen if…?”
- “How can we find out about…?”
- “How could we decide?”

Observing children at play

Children will display their musical knowledge through their play on a regular basis. You can use the following list as a guide to know what to look out for, although it is obviously not an exhaustive list.

- Singing familiar songs to themselves or others
- Humming a tune
- Tapping or clapping beats or rhythms
- Using their bodies to make sounds (stamping, clapping, clicking fingers etc.)
- Using their voices to make or imitate sounds
- Creating or copying dances
- Creating or recreating songs either with or without instruments
- Experimenting with the sounds instruments make
- Creating instruments using junk modelling
- Singing and performing action songs
- Asking to listen to music
- Naming or talking about instruments
- Creating a band or performing a concert