



## How does music education benefit young children?

Adult-child music interactions can support **positive parenting practices** and parent-child interactions, particularly in the earliest years when a child relies on his or her adult attachment figure to learn about the surrounding world, gain self-regulatory skills, and begin language development. One study in New Jersey with parents and children aged 0-7 who had been separated due to abuse and neglect found that the Music Together component of this reunification process was found to promote positive parenting practices, increase parents' understanding of child development, and contribute to **overall success rates in families' reunification**. (<https://www.musictogether.com/about/research/research-about-music-together>)

In the early childhood years, brains are developing quickly and are very adaptable and responsive to the environment. Infant's **brains are shaped by early experience** by strengthening the neurons that are exercised and atrophying those that are not. Early childhood music programs stimulate and build the **neural development of networks essential to music-making**. Infants are also especially responsive to face-to-face interaction with 'purposeful touch.' These interactions promote many **positive health and neurological processes**. These types of interactions are an integral part of parent-child music classes. (<https://www.musictogether.com/content/media-files/MTOutreach-MTSupportsEarlyBrainDevelopment1.pdf>)

A study published by *Developmental Science* compared **active music-making classes** and passive exposure to music among infants. Children in participatory classes not only learned more about music but also showed **greater development of pre-language communication and social behaviors**. (Gerry, D, Unrau, A, and Trainor, LJ (2012): *Dev Sci*, 15(3):398-407).

A wealth of resources about early childhood music benefits is available at <https://www.musictogether.com/about/research>.