

Music for Communication - some suggestions for home



Below are some suggestions for parents to try out with children at home, either 1-1 or in a family group:

1. **Mirroring:**

“Doing exactly what the child is doing musically, expressively and through body language at the same time as the child is doing it [or immediately after the child]. The child will then see his/her behaviour in the therapist's behaviour”.

(Wigram, 2004)

Try with the same 2 percussion instruments e.g. hand shakers

With kazoos

With different but similar instruments

2. **Matching:**

“Improvising music that is compatible, matches or fits in with the child's style of playing while maintaining the same speed, volume, texture, quality and complexity of other musical elements”. (Wigram, 1999)

Don't play exactly the same as the child, but match their speed and volume. You can choose different instruments or the same.

3. **Singing:**

Group songs together. Singing with your child is the best way to encourage them to use their voices. You can further increase their participation by leaving spaces and asking them to fill in the words...or add sounds e.g. for 'Old Macdonald Had a farm'. You can then repeat these first 'loud' and then 'really quiet'; then 'fast' and then 'really slow' to make it fun whilst increasing their awareness and regulation of their voices. Singing non-verbally is a great way to encourage communication for pre-verbal children or children with limited sounds/words.

4. **Action songs:**

Include actions songs too if your child likes to feel music through their body. Invent your own moves and ask your child to invent theirs! You can have fun copying each other's actions!

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- Wigram, T (2004): *Improvisation: Methods and Techniques for Music Therapy Clinicians, Educators, and Students*. London: JK pub.
- Ed. Edwards, J. (2011): *Music Therapy and Parent-infant Bonding* Oxford

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