



CHAMPION CENTRE GROUP MUSIC SESSIONS

Music is part of our personal, social and cultural life. As music practitioners we need to consider how to bring everyone together as a music community within group music in ways that are musically, socially and emotionally enriching for everyone. We need to be sensitive to the cultural, social and musical needs of the parents and children in each group. We also need to be able to match the physical, emotional and physiological needs of the children and the parents. This requires skill in being able to 'read' the energy levels of the whole group and to adapt the tempo and structure in order to match the moment. This might mean reducing the time frame for group music, pacing everything to match the general group energy levels.

Music creates social space and can generate bonding between parents and children. While making music together can bring everyone together in a powerful way, and give shape, texture, colour to each person's experience, the songs can also be too long, too fast, with too many words, or be culturally inappropriate, thus causing a sense of exclusion from the collective social space.

It is important to consider how the music belongs to the group in an emotional sense. Owning the music is not so much to do with you as group leader selecting music for sessions, but rather working with your children, families, teams who may have strong preferences, or needs for specific types of songs and music routines in order to match energy levels, build relationships and to calm and regulate the group as a whole.

The key elements of music should be used in every session. For example: Rhythm, (Repetition, Tempo,) Melody, (within child's pitch range middle C-A) Dynamics, (loud/soft), Form, (clear beginning, middle and end). Children quickly start to use these elements themselves such as using the calling song "Elke's Song changing the words to "Music time". These music tools help us to be prepared and flexible so that we be spontaneous and keep the music experience alive and meaningful for everyone.

Keep a predictable music routine through use of the "Hello song, build from calm, to more arousing songs back to calm with the "Baby Massage' song, or "Cuddle Song". Groups respond to phrasing, timing, tonality, repetition, use of humour, and joyful interactions. When songs provide enough repetition, then group music can begin to make sense fairly quickly for listeners and players.

A steady pulse, similar phrase lengths, or regular cadential points, can give a feeling of familiarity and inclusivity, since the music provides enough clues for everyone to know what is coming next. This helps everyone to have a sense of 'being a part' of the group and the session.

Select beautiful, musical arrangements if using recorded music and ensure that the words are simple. Don't lose your group of children by providing songs that are too advanced, too high or too low, or that have too many words. Check with your team if you are in doubt. Be spontaneous whenever possible picking up on the children's offerings and weaving these into a song. Use visuals with children who need them.

Do regular reflections on each music group. Use headings such as structure of the session, songs prepared, new songs, or improvisations, Notes on the whole group, notes on individual children's responses, anything unusual, successful, or not quite so successful. This helps you to make sense of the session in a specific way. Reflect and evaluate. Your team can provide valuable assistance and feedback. Your team may want you to include specific group activities, in order to enhance fine/gross motor skills, watching, waiting, turn taking, being the leader, supporting a child through use of a weighted blanket, use of a visual plan.

Listen, watch, wait, and wonder about the quality of energy, interaction, physical and emotional responses when your group listens to the music. It will tell you volumes about the group's musical experience.

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