

Early Years Foundation Stage Framework 2012

An overview with recommendations for music-making



Commissioned by Sound Connections in June 2012
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Introduction

'Research shows how music plays a key role in the early years in supporting young children's early development, particularly in communicating and in emotional understanding and early patterns of adult-infant attachment. Where sensitive adults respond to babies babble and gestures by reciprocating, and extending by building on young children's innate musicality, playful interactions through songs, rhymes and movement have been seen to be fundamental to language development and healthy wellbeing. It is important therefore, to see music threading through these key areas and not being confined to a single area of creative development as suggested by the current EYFS.'

MERYC (Music Educators & Researchers of Young Children) response to the 2011 Tickell review of the EYFS

Following the review of the old EYFS framework by Dame Clare Tickell in 2011 the DfE has developed a new Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage which all early years providers will be required to follow from 1 September 2012. The purpose of this framework is to set standards for learning development and care for children from birth to five years.

The new EYFS has been 'slimmed down' and, for many, comes as a relief as it is clearer to understand and allows much more time for interacting with children.

It has been noted by many that the word **music** does not appear very frequently within the new framework. However music can be used to deliver activity and experiences across all seven areas of learning and development, supporting very young children in reaching the early learning goals.

Musicians should be encouraged to use the framework to validate their existing practise while at the same time celebrating their own style, approach, identity. This advocacy of the unique power of music, articulated in educational terms that practitioners, school leadership and other policy makers can identify with, is imperative for the future success of our work.

Here follows an overview of the new EYFS framework, and recommendations for music-based activities. We hope this will be a useful tool in identifying elements of your own practise when planning, delivering and evaluating music-making in early years settings.

Overarching principles

Four guiding principles should shape practice in early years settings. These are:

- every child is a unique child, who is constantly learning and can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured
- children learn to be strong and independent through positive relationships
- children learn and develop well in enabling environments, in which their experiences respond to their individual needs and there is a strong partnership between practitioners and parents and/or carers
- children develop and learn in different ways and at different rates. The framework covers the education and care of all children in early years provision, including children with special educational needs and disabilities.

Learning and Development Requirements

There are seven areas of learning and development that shape the educational programme of activities and experiences in an early years setting.

Three of these areas have been indicated as 'prime learning areas'; areas that are crucial for igniting children's curiosity and enthusiasm for learning, and for building their capacity to learn, form relationships and thrive. These are:

- Communication and language
- Physical development
- Personal and social development

The prime areas develop quickly in response to relationships and experiences and run through and support all learning in other areas.

The remaining four areas grow out of the prime learning areas and provide important contexts for learning. These 'specific learning areas' include essential skills and knowledge through which the three prime areas are strengthened and applied. They are identified as:

- Literacy
- Mathematics
- Understanding the World
- Expressive Arts and Design

Practitioners must consider the individual needs, interests and stage of development of each child in their care, and must use this information to plan a challenging and enjoyable experience in all of the areas of learning and development. Practitioners working with the youngest children are expected to focus strongly on the three prime areas, which are the basis for successful learning in the other four specific areas.

Children with English as a second language

For children whose home language is not English, providers must take reasonable steps to provide opportunities for children to develop and use their home language in play and learning, supporting their language development at home. Providers must also ensure that the children have sufficient opportunities to learn and reach a good standard in English language.

Child-led versus adult-led?

Each area of learning must be implemented through planned, purposeful play and through a mix of adult led and child initiated activity. Play is essential for children's development, building their confidence as they learn to explore, to think about problems and relate to others. Children learn by leading their own play and by taking part in play which is guided by adults. There is an ongoing judgement to be made by practitioners about the balance between activities led by children and activities led or guided by adults. Practitioners must respond to each child's emerging needs and interests, guiding their development through warm positive reaction. As children grow older, and as their development allows, it is expected that the balance will gradually shift towards more activities led by adults.

Three Characteristics of Effective Teaching and Learning

Playing and exploring – children investigate and experience things, and have a go

Active learning – children concentrate and keep on trying if they encounter difficulties and enjoy achievements

Creating and thinking critically – children have and develop their own ideas, make links between ideas and develop strategies

The Early Learning Goals

In the period between birth and five years the EYFS aims to work towards the following early learning goals. These goals form the basis of assessment at the end of the Foundation Stage.

Goals in the three Prime Learning Areas

Communication and Language

Listening and attention – children listen attentively to a range of situations, they anticipate, respond, question and comment

Understanding – children following instructions and respond to how and why

Speaking – children express themselves effectively. They use all tenses and can develop their own narratives

Musical activity that could support this might include:

- Ensuring that all our work allows time for the children's ideas; asking open-ended questions
- Repetition to allow children to fully understand and make connections
- The use of new words to extend vocabulary
- The use of home languages
- The recording of songs and music sung and made up by the children
- Sharing video clips with others
- Allowing children to play freely with musical instruments; to explore, question, discuss and learn
- Adding music to stories, both children and musicians
- Including picture and video clips of music around the centre to encourage children to share and talk about their musical experiences with others
- Singing songs with actions big and small
- Encouraging children to make up songs or add their own verses
- The repetition of songs that require anticipation e.g. getting the children to sing the last word of each phrase
- Playing your instrument to the children, allowing them to engage in a listening activity and respond verbally or physically; attempt to engage everybody in this activity

Physical Development

Moving and handling – children show good control in large and small movements. They can move confidently and safely in a range of ways with special awareness. They can handle equipment effectively

Health and self-care – children know the importance of being healthy through eating and exercising and staying safe

Musical activity that could support this might include:

- Ensuring a good space for working that encourages rolling, running, walking, stretching and large movements
- Providing a broad range of sound makers and musical instruments that require both fine motor and gross motor skills
- Encouraging exploration of the musical instruments and sound makers from music treasure baskets, music trolleys and music areas
- Providing activities that encourage spontaneous movement and expression
- Encouraging energetic movement and activities for both children and all adults involved
- Identifying and supporting those for whom physical activity is a challenge
- Recognising the need for rest
- Including healthy foods when singing songs about eating

Personal, Social and Emotional Development

Self confidence – children are confident to try new activities, say why they like some activities more than others, and able to talk and share ideas in front of small groups

Managing feelings and behaviour – children talk about how they and others show their feelings, talk about their own and other's behaviour and its consequences and know that some behaviour is unacceptable. They work as a group and understand and follow simple rules

Making relationships – children play cooperatively, taking turns and taking into account the ideas of others. They show sensitivity to other's needs and feelings, and form positive relationships with adults and other children

Musical activity that could support this might include:

- Singing songs using the names of others within the group
- Including music and songs from home
- Taking time for children to tell you their news, ideas and preferences.
- Celebrating the ideas of the children by singing and dancing
- Playing games that involve turn-taking
- Allowing everybody to have a chance to lead
- Encouraging free play with instruments
- Including peaceful, thoughtful moments in the delivery of music
- Singing songs about how we are feeling
- Providing a routine with the sessions
- Having simple rules about the care of musical instruments

Goals in the four Specific Learning Areas

Literacy

Reading and writing, mark-making

Musical activity that could support this might include:

- Being animated in our songs and words of songs. Including actions even at older end of EYFS and into Key Stage 1
- Playing around with the voice
- Playing around with made sounds as well as musical instruments
- Using puppets and props to tell and sing stories
- Using repetition
- Sourcing some simple and highly illustrated song books to add to the book corner
- Showing the children what music notation looks like

Mathematics

Numbers, shape, space and measures

Musical activity that could support this might include:

- Singing songs with numbers going up and down to 20 where appropriate
- Using props to support counting songs and adding these props to the free play music area
- Alerting children to patterns in songs and music
- Playing around with musical patterns
- Organising the music play area so that groups of sounds can be made; e.g. things that you shake, things that you bang, things that you scrape
- Making up picture patterns for children to interpret as appropriate

Understanding the World

People and communities, the world, and technology

Musical activity that could support this might include:

- Offering musical treasure baskets and music free play areas
- Including music and songs from the cultures of all the families working with you
- Finding ways of introducing the children to many different musical instruments
- Organising visits from other musicians, maybe older children from another school
- Adding and extending vocabulary where appropriate
- Listening to the children's experiences of music and sharing these with others through photos, videos, stories and You Tube.
- Encouraging children to use CD players and computer software that plays with and designs sounds and music

Expressive Arts and Design

Exploring and using media and materials – children sing songs, make music and dance and experiment with ways of changing them. They safely use and explore a variety of materials, tools and techniques experimenting with colour, design, texture, form and function

Be imaginative – children use what they have learnt about media and materials in original ways, thinking about uses and purposes. They represent their own ideas, thoughts feelings through design and technology, art, music and dance, role play and stories

Musical activity that could support this might include many of the ideas listed above. In addition to these, you might:

- Suggest ideas of how to create an area inside and outside where children can play music freely at free flow or choosing time
- Create a sound line by threading sound makers on a rope or line
- Add musical instruments, mirrors, microphones, dressing-up clothes and props to role play areas
- Ensure there is a broad range of materials and sound makers that can heighten a child's musical awareness
- Spend time with the children at free play to support, encourage and extend the ideas that they create
- Use a simple story as a starting point for improvisation by the children
- Make musical instruments and use in adult-led and child-led activities
- Explore exciting ways to use technology to sing and make music

Other areas of the EYFS that may be of interest to music providers

EYFS and Assessment

Assessment plays an important part in helping parents, carers and practitioners to recognise a child's progress, understand their needs and plan activities and support progress. When a child is between the ages of two and three practitioners must review their progress, and again in the final term of the year in which a child reaches the age of five. This is when an EYFS profile will be completed for each child.

Suitable people

Providers must ensure that people looking after children are suitable for their role.

Providers must obtain an enhanced criminal records disclosure in respect of any person aged 16 or over who works directly with children. Providers must tell staff that they are expected to disclose any convictions, cautions, court orders, reprimands and warnings which may affect

their suitability to work with children (whether received before or during their employment at the setting).

Risk assessment

Providers must have clear and well-understood policies and procedures for assessing risks to children's safety, and review these regularly.

Equal opportunities

Providers must have and implement policies and procedures to promote equality of opportunity for children in their care. This includes support for children with special educational needs or disabilities.

Final thoughts on our work as musicians

As we are working more and more towards identifying 'good and effective practice' we could reflect on the following:

- Do we know about the musical development of babies and young children?
- Are the other adults aware of why we are doing what we are doing?
- Does our work ensure that children are joining in and not just being entertained?
- When using an adult-initiated approach are all the children attempting to join in and are they coping with the pitch, the flow, the pace?
- Are we aware of how participating adults feel after the session?
- What provision are we making to ensure that we are listening to the ideas of the child, using the child as a starting point, creating a balance between adult-led and child-led music activity?
- Do we reflect on what we are doing? Can we justify this?
- Are we leaving a legacy within the early years setting? Are we empowering parents and other adults?
- Are we aware of what is happening in the homes of the children we are working with?
- How can our work aid the practitioners with the completion of each child's EYFS profile? Are we contributing to the holistic assessment of each child that we work with?

Further reading

The complete version of the EYFS statutory framework can be downloaded from the DfE website

<https://www.education.gov.uk/publications/standard.Allpublications/page1/DFE-00023-2012>

A useful guide to implementing the EYFS framework 'Development Matters in The Early Years Foundation Stage' can be found on www.early-education.org.uk

For more information about Linda Bance's work, please visit www.playmusicplay.co.uk

To find out more about Sound Connections' early years work and to join the London Early Years Music Network, please visit www.sound-connections.org.uk

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