



## The Power Of Music

Music makes me very happy. At this time of the year I get excited for concert announcements, summer music festivals and outdoor shows. Music has always played a big role in my life. From piano lessons to voice lessons, to band, to musical theatre; my childhood and youth was full of music. Whenever music left my life for a period of time it would always return to me. When I attended University I sang in a rock band. Most recently I have worked as a karaoke host, all in attempts to keep music in my life. My Grandpa's voice echos in my head "Have you been singin'?" was always the first question he would ask me, followed by "How bout that guitar? You learn to play it yet?"

And now as an adult I've even taken up dance! Who knew I could move in a coordinated fashion?? The directors of the theatre productions I was in would certainly wonder. I always had this secret wish to be a cheerleader in high school, something that is pretty tough to do when you are attending high school online. I think joining dance classes as an adult is some regressed therapy...certainly a topic for another blog.

You can imagine what a wonderful morning I had this morning when I visited the Francophone site at [ABC Head Start](#). Most of the children who attend that site have African heritage. In African culture music and movement is engrained. One of the ABC Head Start staff was telling me how when they have an evening with friends often after dinner is over they push the furniture in the living room to the side and have dance parties with all of the adults and children. This certainly shows when watching these children respond to music. They have some of the best rhythm I have ever seen in 4 year olds. The teacher has told me when she starts the day off with a few songs where the children can sing and dance they have a much better day then when they do not start with music and movement.

And research would support this claim. My man, [Dr. Bruce Perry](#), has done research in this area in terms of children who have experienced trauma. He has found that often in these children internal rhythms have been lost or interrupted. Having just 5 minutes of music and movement a day can help restore this internal rhythm creating more calm but even helping physical symptoms such as problems with walking and gait.

More and more research has shown the positive effects of music and movement on ALL children. Researchers Stellaccio & McCarthy found that intuitive aptitude for music tends to stabilize in children at 9 years of age. Therefore exposing children to music in the early years is critical for comprehending and producing music later on in life. And what positive impacts exist? Well there really are countless positive impacts. Research has shown music as being instrumental (no pun intended) in language development, as well as spatial reasoning and memory. A 2008 study states that young children who are actively involved with music (sing or play music regularly) do better in reading and math when they start school, are better able to focus and control their bodies, play better with others and have higher self-esteem ([The Nemours Foundation](#)).

So the question isn't *should* we expose our young children to music, it's why wouldn't we? In the wise words of Madonna, "Music, makes the people come together."