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ASSESSMENT OF PARENTAL MOTIVATION FOR
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ASSESSMENT OF PARENTAL MOTIVATION FOR ENROLLING A CHILD IN
EARLY CHILDHOOD MUSIC INSTRUCTION

By

Namsoon Park

A THESIS

Submitted to
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ABSTRACT

ASSESSMENT OF PARENTAL MOTIVATION FOR ENROLLING A CHILD IN EARLY CHILDHOOD MUSIC INSTRUCTION

By

Namsoon Park

The purpose of this study is to provide information about parental expectations that can be used to improve the learning environment in early childhood music classes. More specifically, this study is to identify the reasons parents pursue early childhood music instruction for their children. Forty-two parents and caregivers participated in this study by completing a survey about their reasons for enrolling their child in the program. Data were collected and analyzed for the reasons parents pursue early childhood music instruction for their children. The reasons were classified according to importance as reported by the parents. Also, the results were examined according to age group, education level, and musical background of the parents/caregivers. The five reasons in order of greatest salience were: exposure to music, music appreciation, social development, enjoy class, and brain development.

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Dedicated to my family whom I love

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Most music educators believe that music making is an essential part of childhood. Music is one of life's essential ingredients. According to Gordon (1997), "Music is unique to humans and, like the other arts, is as basic as language to human development and experience. Through music, children gain insights into themselves, into others, and into life itself" (p. 3). Also, most music educators insist that music education in early childhood is important to children's musical development. Gordon (1997) states, "Although music is a literature and not a language, children learn music in much the same way they learn language. So, structured or unstructured guidance at home is necessary if children are to develop musical understanding, and it should be similar to that which is given to encourage them to engage in language babble and continue the sequential process of learning their native language"(p. 5). Campbell & Scott-Kassner (2002) insist that music is essential to children's lives, as it is the substance of their playful exploration of and experience in the world around them, the center of their socialization and expressive communication with one another, and the refuge in which they find peace, joy, and fulfillment away from the worries of their young lives for children. Most music educators agree that a central purpose of music teaching is to enable students to understand music. Moreover, Gordon (1997) believes that it is only through

understanding music that children can learn to appropriate music fully and make music a meaningful part of their lives. Another purpose of music teaching is to help children to develop their music aptitudes. According to Gordon (1997), a child's music aptitude is innate, but it is also affected by the quality of the child's environment. Children's music aptitudes stabilize when they reach approximately nine years of age. Because of this, providing an optimal environment in which young children can experience music is an important responsibility of parents and music educators.

Recently, many early childhood music programs have become available to very young children, and many parents have chosen to enroll their children in those programs. This study will investigate the reasons why parents pursue early childhood music instruction for their children. To provide the background for this study, the author will discuss musical play, parenting, and music environments, all of which are related to potential reasons for enrolling a child in an early childhood music program.

Musical Play

Researchers have studied music in early childhood. Many of these scholars in music education equate appropriate music education at this level to musical play (Littleton, 1998; Tarnowski, 1999; Heyge and Sillick, 1998; Taggart, 2003).

Littleton (1998) states, "Play contributes to each child's attachment, adaptation, and growth as play contributes to the evolution of a whole culture. Children play with music, and musical play consists of activities that allow children to explore, improvise, and create with sound" (p. 8). She describes three categories of musical play based on the types of cognitive play that were first described by Piaget and Smilansky: Functional

play, constructive play and dramatic play. Functional play is activity in which children use their bodies to run, jump, or repetitively manipulate objects in order to learn about the world around them. Constructive play is that activity in which children use objects to create structures or forms: painting, building with Legos, or playing with sand. In dramatic play, children engage in role-playing or the transformation objects. In Littleton's musical play, functional musical play might include exploring vocal, instrumental, and environmental sounds, as well as the way in which these sounds are made. Constructive musical play may be seen as an extension of functional play, in which sound explorations begin to exhibit a sense of structure through patterns of rhythm, melody, tempo, dynamics, or tone color. Dramatic musical play might involve the use of songs or instruments within a musical or nonmusical play theme. Littleton believes, "Acknowledgement of the importance of music-play on the developing infant and young child poses a shift in the paradigm concerning music education in early childhood" (p. 14). This shift requires that the teacher focuses on the developmental needs of each child rather than on formal instructional goals that may have been developed by the teacher. She also insists, "Naturalistic, observational studies demonstrate that young children in free-play in music settings are capable of self-pleasing, self-initiated, self-directed, complex music behaviors, and that ecological factors, including the interactions of adults with children, of children with peers, the learning settings, the amount of space, fixed materials, loose parts, and the presence and absence of music-making materials influence young children's cognitive, social, and musical development. To date, the most successful practices in early childhood music education can complete playful and multi-

sensory experiences within a rich musical language of feeling and expressiveness” (p. 14).

Stone (1995) insists that play serves a crucial role for children, and musical play is a natural type of learning for children. She states, “Play provides the natural and experiential learning that supports the child’s construction of his own knowledge of the world and his place in it. It significantly affects the development of the whole child (p. 45). She believes that play enhances children’s cognitive development and gives children the opportunity to interact socially and “de-center” their thinking from themselves by focusing on a playmate. Stone also believes that music may allow children to express their feelings, helping them cope better with emotional stress, and that it may help children develop self-esteem.

Heyge and Sillick (1998) believe that music educators have come to realize that the music and movement of children’s own bodies are the foundations of their musical lives. Infants are pre-programmed to activate these instruments at birth. In an enriched musical environment, infants will naturally hear music and will begin to listen and respond as they become more acquainted with the sounds they hear; they feel the warmth of music and absorb its meter, tonality, and patterns: the foundation of musical language. Children move as their first visible response to music. Hicks (1993) insists that, as children are continuously acculturated to music, some young children anticipate music and often physically and independently respond to music during silence. Also, young children who are exposed to songs without texts performed by adults who accompany themselves with movement, respond to those stimuli without verbally or nonverbally being asked to

respond or being told to respond. The movement responses made by young children to music are developmental and are at least dependent upon the fluctuation of physical and audiation maturation. Moreover, young children being to make purposeful vocal response to music. Hicks believes that young children who are acculturated to variety of tonalities and meters can profit from those experiences. Heyge and Sillick believe that movement and listening responses lay the foundation for speaking the language of music. As babies develop favorite activities, they will begin imitating short vocal sounds or patterns in the activity. Adults can encourage this response through imitation and improvisation.

Taggart (2003) insists on the importance of play in music learning environments. She says, "Play is important in early childhood music learning environments. Children learn music through musical play. By watching a child play musically, educators gain insights into child's musical development and that how to facilitate future music learning" (p. 16). Also, she proposes that guided musical play is the best way to facilitate children's music learning, believing that, even within group activities, children must be allowed to listen, watch, and musically explore as they wish (2000). She suggests that aspects of free musical play enhance group activities and that children must be immersed in a playful music environment in which their music utterances are nurtured and valued.

Role of Caregivers

Some music educators rely strongly on parental involvement in music education (Heyge and Sillick, 1998; Adachi, 1994; Levinowitz, 1999; Jarjisian, 1999; Guilmartin, 1999; Szabo, 1999; Nelly, 2001; Taggart, 2003). According to Heyge and Sillick (1998), music is vital in constructing a harmonious and supportive environment in which children

grow and develop. Musical play offers loving parents a means to meet the physical, psychological, and emotional needs of their young children, while addressing their children's needs in a vital, understandable, and non-threatening way. Through musical play, caregivers can comfort, console, and stimulate an infant, thus facilitating development using the natural forces of rhythm and melody to interact with a baby.

Trehub (1999) describes the function of parental singing. She believes that singing to infants could serve some or all following functions: easing the burden of physical labor required of parenting, relieving the pressure of daily life, fostering identification between caregiver and child, generating feelings of well-being for both parent and child, and providing an outlet for the expression of negative feelings. Usually parent/infant interactions are private, allowing expression of a wide range of both positive and negative emotions on the part of the parent. Trehub has observed that parental singing to infants may enhance the emotional ties between the parent and infant and that infants show preference to the higher pitch level of their mothers' over their fathers' voice.

Adachi (1994) insists on the importance of the caregiver's role in music learning. He proposes that children do not learn cultural signs as separate entities from the social interaction, but they learn them as a part of the social process. Thus, the process of internalizing cultural signs inevitably involves the process of internalizing social process in which these signs are originally introduced to children. In music learning, adults transmit musical culture to children.

Levinowitz (1999) states that, not only teachers, but also parents can nurture a child's disposition toward music. She sees parental involvement as absolutely crucial.

She recommends what she calls the ABCs of music education for teachers' sharing music with parents: A. Make the music accessible to parents, B. Understand that the music needs to be beautiful for optimal effect, and C. Ensure that parents are confident in their understanding of their child's development so that they can share music with their children as they grow.

The advantages that Jarjisian (1999) sees in parental involvement in the classroom are that one or both parents can observe how their children interact in large groups and could administer to them as needed, through hugs, rest periods, snacks, and visits to the bathroom. Parents and children are also enjoying sharing music together.

Guilmartin (1999) proposes that the developmental rule of nature is model-imperative and that children learn the disposition for making music only from their primary caregivers. He believes that music educators are only beginning to understand the developmental importance of including parents in early childhood music classes and that the job of music educator is not to teach the children musical skills but to create an environment in which adult primary caregivers learn to model those skills.

Szabo (1999) also believes that parents and caregivers have a role in children's music learning. Szabo states, "Parents and caregivers can make a very significant contribution to infants' musical development by singing to them routinely and encouraging their tonal babble response" (p. 19).

Neelly (2001) insists that children and adults make powerful learning connections as they engage in singing musical conversations, moving interpretively, improvising on familiar songs, and playing rhythm patterns on percussion instruments. The quality of a

music learning experience for young children depends not only on musical materials, but also on ways in which adults shape the experience to create personal meaning for a child. As adults include musical conversations throughout children's daily routines, they provide opportunities for mutual musical problem solving, decision-making, and reflecting on musical choices. Both children and adults can learn and grow musicians and people.

Taggart (2003) states that, ideally, early childhood music classes should include parents and caregivers. When immersed in an appropriate music environment with their children and when provided with models of appropriate musical interactions, these adults may improve their own musical skills as well as the music environments they provide for their children outside of music class.

Parental involvement in early childhood music learning is crucial, and there are several positive effects. First, adults can be a musical model in their children's music learning. From musical activities with adults, children can learn how they sing, move, and respond to music. Second, parents and caregivers can see how to interact musically to facilitate their children's music learning. They can understand how they need to interact musically in children's music learning outside of music class. Third, parental involvement in the music class can be a good time for bonding parents and children. Many early childhood music programs include parental involvement. Through parental involvement, parents and children develop deeper attachments to one another for other. Parents and children also are able to enjoy developing musical skills together.

Environment and Aptitude Development

Researchers believe that a rich musical environment has a positive effect on the development of a child's music aptitude, thus laying a foundation for future success and involvement with music (Doxey and Wright, 1990; Moore, 1990; Pond, 1981; Simons, 1986). Some researchers insist that providing a balance between spontaneity and structure is central to providing a learning environment to facilitate young children's aptitude and brain development. Andress (1999) believes that age-appropriate activities must include both spontaneous and structured experiences and that spontaneity should be a dominant part of the approach with young children for "therein lies the true creative spirit of the medium" (p. 31).

Jarjisian (1999) states that young children thrive on structure but with spontaneity as a part of that structure. Children like routine and activities that begin and end in the same way. She says, "This helps them to develop a sense of competence because they know how a procedure goes and what happens next" (p. 31). She insists that spontaneity should be structured into the routine, and it should be acknowledged that sometimes the children may have a better idea of how to do something than the standard way in which a teacher might approach it. For example, when children engage in rhythm activity as a part of music class, they might request rhythm sticks as well as provide ideas for using them.

Roebuke (1999) believes in balancing structure and spontaneity. She recommends that teachers expose children to a musical goal in class that will stimulate their interest and curiosity and then encourage them to follow through and explore it during free time. Roebuke asserts that children need to be encouraged to explore musically on their own.

Flohr (1999) insists that music learning is related to brain function in children and that early childhood programs need to provide music education for children. Flohr states, “A variety of new research techniques are now being used to investigate brain function and development in young children. Preliminary results indicate that music may have an impact on brain activity, especially during the early childhood years, when human development hinges on the interplay between nature and nurture” (p. 41). According to Flohr, “The impact of music education may be dramatic and specific, not merely influencing the general direction of development but also affecting the circuitry of the human brain” (p. 43). Early care and nurturing have a decisive, long lasting impact on how people develop, their ability to learn, and their capacity to regulate their own emotions. Because of this, preschool education programs need to emphasize music as a part of this care and nurturing. The human brain has a remarkable capacity to change, but timing is crucial. It appears that early childhood is a significant window of opportunity for music learning” (p. 54).

Gardner (1993), in his theory of multiple intelligences, states that there are separate intelligences. Each person possesses linguistic, logical-mathematical, musical-rhythmic, visual-spatial, bodily-kinesthetic, interpersonal-social, and intrapersonal-emotional, naturalistic, existential, and each of these is discrete. According to Gardner, all children deserve to have all nine intelligences nourished so that they can develop to their full potential. If any of the intelligences are overlooked during early childhood, essential learning stages may be missed and that potential intelligence may diminish. Because of

this, Gardner believes that music instruction is crucial to early childhood education in the development of music as an independent intelligence.

According to Feierabend (1990), early childhood specialists have embraced the integration of music into their curricula and rationalized its use because of the extramusical benefits in the areas of social, cognitive, motor, affective, and creative development. However, he, like Gardner, insists that success in singing and moving to music involves a type of intelligence independent of other intellectual skills and that the foundation for these skills are optimally laid in early childhood.

Gordon (1997) believes that every child has music aptitude, and providing a rich music environment in early childhood is important for developing music aptitude. He asserts that every child has at least some music aptitude from birth. His research supports that music aptitude is innate, but that a child's environment can affect his or her level of music aptitude from birth or even before. By the time a child reaches appropriately age nine, his or her music aptitude has stabilized. Even though the child may have a good musical environment, that child cannot develop her or his music aptitude after age nine. Only his or her achievement can increase. Because of this, Gordon insists that providing a musical environment is important to children in their early childhood years.

Sims (1997) proposes that providing appropriate environments for young children is crucial to their developing positive attitudes about music. Sims states that some researchers have found that, during early childhood, children show positive attitudes toward many kinds of music. Because of these positive attitudes, early childhood is an ideal time to provide children exposure to music from a wide range of genres, styles, and

cultures. She also states that researchers have found that children are able to perceive and respond to more sophisticated musical discriminations than can be documented using most assessment methods. Young children need to be provided with stimulating, appropriate experiences and opportunities to create a strong foundation for future music learning.

Also, Costa-Giomi (1999) believes that various experiences with music are good for developing music aptitude in young children. Costa-Giomi states that moving to music, dancing, playing instruments, and experimentation with materials that make sounds are all helpful to the development of toddlers. She believes that doing, in addition to listening, offers the greatest positive benefit in all aspects of learning, especially in music.

According to Neelly, musical experience affects children's overall development. Neelly (2001) proposes that, for young children, the greater the quality and frequency of the musical experience, the greater the gains in all areas of a child's learning. "Moving, singing, and listening experiences that provide interactive, success-oriented opportunities for children are avenues for children's overall growth and development. When planning these opportunities, we must remember that music is not just another part of children's day, it is an essential part of their makeup"(p.36).

Summary

Music is an essential part of childhood, and music education in early childhood is important to children. Musical play is a natural learning mode for children, and they should have opportunities to develop themselves through musical play. Experience with music has a variety of effects on children. Through experiencing music, children can

develop their intellectual, physical, emotional, and musical aptitudes. Also, when parents and caregivers become involved with children's experience with music, their children can more easily engage in music and parent/child bonds are reinforced.

Providing an appropriate music learning environment in early childhood is essential for music aptitude development (Gordon, 1997). Making early childhood music learning environments as appropriate as possible is also crucial in light of what is known about brain development and the development of music aptitude in early childhood. However, researchers have not investigated the reasons behind why their children in early childhood music programs. These reasons may shape the parent/child/teacher triangle in important ways. Because parents have a much deeper understanding of their child as an individual than a music teacher, who only sees the child once a week, they may have reasons that are not musically related for enrolling their child in music classes. For example, they may be concerned about the social, cognitive, or emotional development of their child more than their child's musical development. Also, the publicity surrounding the "Mozart Effect" over the past 10 years has trumpeted to the public that music can make children smarter. However, most music teachers have music goals as their primary focus. If teachers are made aware of the reasons for enrolling children in their music programs, the interactions between all of the participants in the early childhood music classroom might be made more rich and better meet of needs of the child. In addition, parents' expectations for the classes can be addressed, either through education or through adapting instruction to meet those expectations.

Purpose and Problem

Therefore, the purpose of this study is to provide information about parental expectations that can be used to improve the learning environment in early childhood music classes. The problem of this study is to identify the reasons parents pursue early childhood music instruction for their children.

CHAPTER 2

RELATED RESEARCH

Introduction

How teachers teach music to children is of central concern to the early childhood music profession. Several music educators and scholars have developed early childhood music programs for children, some of which have been the focus of research. However, this study will focus on the beliefs, expectations, and goals of parents rather than the goals and methodologies of teachers. This chapter contains a discussion of the few research studies that are related to the following topics in early childhood music education: musical play and parenting and expectations of parents of young children.

Musical Play and Parenting

Recently, musical play has become a common theme of discussion in early childhood music classrooms, as has parental involvement in the musical play with their children. The following studies focus on the effect of musical play and musical parenting in early childhood music instruction.

Berger and Cooper (2003) studied musical play in their case study of preschool children and parents. The setting for this study was a music education program called “Musical Play,” which consisted of 10 weekly classes for parents and preschool children at a major university in the southwestern United States. Primary participants were the 18

children enrolled in the Musical Play program. The researchers divided the children into two groups according to the children's chronological ages. The first group of nine children (ages two to three) included four girls and five boys; the second group of nine (ages four to five) included six girls and three boys. Secondary participants included the parents of the children, as well as visiting children and adults. The researchers divided the 45-minute sessions into four sections: opening free play, guided group activities, middle free play, and a closing group activity. During free musical play, children chose music centers for musical play alone and with others. Group sessions included singing, moving, listening, and readings of children's literature, with all activities involving both parent and child. The researchers observed the musical behaviors of preschool children in free and structured musical play environments to discover how children explore sound alone and with others. Analysis of the data revealed three themes: unfinished play, extinguishing play, and enhancing play. The children communicated their need for free musical play to adults and other children through statements, requests, gesture, and actions. The researchers identified conditions that interrupted, modified, or enhanced children's musical play. The researchers concluded that children needed extended, uninterrupted time for play episodes as well as appropriate materials in the environment. Adult valuing of all children's musical utterances and flexibility within structured lessons enhanced play.

Levinowitz and Estrin (1996) studied parent-child interactions during a preschool music class. The purpose of this study was to explore parent-child interactions in a preschool music class environment in which parent education was a major component of

program. Specifically, the following questions were posed: (1) In what types of teaching do parents engage most often when participating in a music class environment? (2) What types of responses do children most often display toward their parents' teaching style? (3) How do parents respond to the child's feedback? (4) What are the styles of social/verbal interaction? Twenty-nine parent-child dyads participated in this study. "Music in Parent Child Relationships," the program in which the subjects were enrolled, was a family music experience for infants, toddlers, preschoolers, and their parents and /or caregivers. The Program consisted of a two-year cycle of three ten-week sessions per year. Classes, which were based on the *Music Together* curriculum, met for 45 minutes once a week. The emphasis of the program was twofold: (a) to nurture the musical growth of young children through developmentally appropriate music activities; and (b) to prepare parents and/or caregivers to foster an enriched music environment outside the music class. A critical tenet of this program was that parental involvement and support is key to the child's early success and enjoyment in music, regardless of parent's own musical ability. The researchers observed the parent/child interactions over a two-year period. Based on information collected during these observations, the researcher concluded that the interactions between parent and child in a music learning environment does assist parents in developing realistic expectations for their children's music behaviors. The researchers also concluded that such interactions contribute to and possibly enhance parent-child attachments and the child's self-esteem, which subsequently positively affects the child's performance and competence.

Custodero and Johnson-Green (2003) studied the musical parenting of infants. The purpose of this study was to investigate the possible influences of experience and media messages on musical parenting. Using data from a national survey of 2,250 parents, researchers examined the degree to which parents' musical experiences were associated with how often they themselves sing and play for their young infants. The researchers also examined differences in the degree to which experience was associated with musical parenting between those who received the *Smart Symphonies* CD at the time of their child's birth and those who did not receive the CD. The parents' Use of Music with Infants Survey was administrated through in-depth telephone interviews with a regional-focused national sample of English-speaking parents with children 4 to 6 months of age. The respondents ranged in age from 15 to 55 years, and the vast majority (90%) resided in two-parent households. Most participants were women (73%), and a similar majority was white. Respondents in this study tended to be more highly educated than the national average. On average, it took 22 minutes to conduct the interviews. The following questions addressed parents' musical experience: "Did your mother/father sing to you? Do you play a musical instrument? Have you ever sung in a choir or other musical group? Have you ever taken music lessons? Frequency of playing and singing music was determined by responses to the following questions: How often do you get a chance to play music for your child? How often do you get a chance to sing to your child?" The style of music played by parents for infants was addressed in this question, which allowed for multiple responses: "What types of music do you play when your child is around?" The type of musical literature sung by parents was addressed in this question,

which allowed for multiple responses: “What do you usually sing to your child?” The researchers found that experience matters; parents with specific music educational experiences as well as memories of being parented musically were much more likely to sing and play music with their infants than those without experiences. This differs from Illari’s (2002) findings that musical experience did not affect mothers’ listening or singing behaviors. Results of this study provide insight into which types of experiences may be most salient in the musical parenting of infants. The results support a systems view of the child in the context of families and society and have implications about indirect effects of music education.

Adachi (1994) studied the adult role as a practice partner. He lived with a preschool child and her family for three months. The child and he had an half-hour “music time” every morning. Activities included singing, chanting, body movements, playing instruments, listening games, and music reading. He also gave her a weekly music lesson with other preschool children. Music time was largely a spontaneous event, whereas the music lesson was conducted within an instructional framework. During these sessions, various musical signs were transmitted to the child, signs which the child subsequently transmitted from her to her parents, her nanny, and her friend. The researcher discovered that the musical interactions through which the child transmitted learned musical signs to others were not simple replications of what she had done with him. From this study, he concluded that the adult introduces and transmits musical signs through the adult-child interactions. Therefore, the adult’s role as a practice partner should be considered as important new cultural signs.

Kelly and Smith (1987) studied the adult role as a transmitter of musical signs to the child. They observed the musical productivity of three female children in their homes from birth to the age of 2. One child's (Child A's) family consisted of professional musicians. The second child (Child B) was raised in a musical environment, although the family members were not professional musicians. The third child (Child C) was not raised in a musically oriented home. In the Child C's home, musical interaction between the child and any family member was not observed throughout the study, whereas in the other homes musical interactions were observed. In Child C's home, although the child produced standard songs, she did not produce spontaneous songs. The two other children produced spontaneous songs before standard songs, and the traits of spontaneous songs showed similar patterns in development: descending glissando, three-note contour, and alternating third intervals. By the end of two years, Child A and Child B became able to produce sung pitch in their singing, while Child C's singing was more spoken than sung. Thus, through early musical interaction with the adult in the family, a sung pitch was transmitted to the children as a musical sign to be used for singing. From this study, the researcher concluded that one of the keys for a child to become able to function musically is whether the adult introduces and transmits musical signs through adult-child interactions. However, little research has been conducted to determine whether this plays a role in parents seeking music experiences for their children outside of the home.

Although there is some research concerning musical play and parenting, none of this research focuses specifically on parental expectations and beliefs about early childhood

music instruction. There is only one study that specifically addresses the reasons parents pursue early childhood music instruction for their children.

Parents' Expectations

Hornbach (2003) investigated parental reasons for enrolling young children in early childhood music classes. The purpose of her study was to understand the reasons why a parent first enrolled and continues to enroll his/her child in early Childhood Music Classes for parents of infants/toddlers at Michigan State University's Community Music School. Because this was a qualitative study, the participants were limited to one parent with a previously and currently enrolled child in the Early Childhood Music Program and one of the administrators of Community Music School. Interviews were conducted with a parent/caregiver of an infant/toddler currently and previously enrolled in Early Childhood Music Program. The data was triangulated between an administrator and a parent, artifact collection, field notes, and personal experience as an instructor at Community Music School. From this study, she found that the parent enrolled as a result of the following goals: children's social development, knowledge or learning, musical development, play, providing environment-home and school, and interaction with parent or family.

Summary

Musical play and parenting in early childhood music programs are a common theme through the research literature. Through musical play, children can have extended and uninterrupted time for exploring music, which is enhanced by having appropriate materials in the musical environment. Parental involvement within structured music also can enhance children's music learning. Children learn musical signs from the adults.

Also, the interactions between parent and child in a music learning environment assist parents in developing realistic expectations for their children's music behaviors. Such interactions also contribute to and possibly enhance parent-child attachments and the child's self-esteem, which subsequently affects the child's performance and competence positively. Although these are documents benefits of early childhood music instruction, they may not be related to the reasons that parents have for enrolling their children in early childhood music classes. Hornbach's study shows that, the parent in her study enrolled her children as a result of the following goals: children's social development, knowledge or learning, musical development, play, providing environment at home and school, and interaction with parent or family. However, Hornbach's study was limited to one family because of her methodological approach and design. In this study, the author will gather information more broadly as to the various reasons parents pursue early childhood music instruction for their children. These reasons might be helpful to children, parents, and teachers. They may shape the parent/child/teacher instructional triangle. For example, if the teacher is aware of the parents' expectations for the music class, the teacher might be able to interact with the children and parents more meaningfully to fulfill parental goals, if appropriate, while continuing to pursue the fundamental goals in the view of the teacher, resulting in a better, richer learning environment for all involved.

CHAPTER 3

METHOD

Subjects

Subjects were 42 parents and caregivers who have children participating in Early Childhood Music Classes of the Community Music School of Michigan State University in East Lansing, Michigan. The Early Childhood Music classes offered through the music program at MSU are designed to create a rich music environment in which the child can interact with music in whatever way she or he feels most comfortable. There are two age-level groups: infant/toddler, for up to ten children from birth through three, and preschool, for up to twelve children from ages three to five. Each class of more than six children has one instructor and an assistant teacher. For classes with less than six children, there is a teacher and no assistant. Although classes differ according to the age level and readiness of the children, all classes include singing and chanting for the children in a wide variety of tonalities and meters. Many songs are performed in class without words, and the classes provide many opportunities for age-appropriate movement, with a focus on guiding children to move in a sustained, continuous, relaxed way. Children also are exposed to a vocabulary of tonal and rhythm patterns, which they may or may not perform in class or later at home. There is a limited amount of exploration of simple percussion instruments, but no expectations toward correctness.

Parents or caregivers accompany their children to the classes and participate as musical role models for their children. Each class meets for 45 minutes once a week.

Procedure

All subjects received a survey (see Appendix A) and were asked to complete it. The researcher distributed the survey to each subject during the subject's regularly scheduled music class. Each survey was collected by the researcher at class the following week. Return of the survey constituted agreement to participate in the study, as approved by University Committee on research Involving Human Subjects. The survey was given again to subjects who do not return the survey for collection the following week. Finally, those who still did not return the survey were given a third survey and an addressed, stamped envelope in which to return their completed surveys.

Analysis

Data were collected and analyzed for the reasons parents pursue early childhood music instruction for their children. The reasons were classified according to importance as reported by the parents. Also, the results were examined according to age group, education level, and musical background of the parents/caregivers. Results were not examined according to gender, as all but three of the respondents were female.

CHAPTER 4

RESULTS

Of the 60 surveys that were distributed, 42 were returned. This is a 70% response rate. All but one of the 42 respondents were parents, with the other respondent being a grandparent. Thirty nine respondents were female (mothers and one grandmother) and three male (fathers). Respondents were grouped four age groups: 15-30, 30-40, 40-50, and 50+. See Table 1 for the results of this grouping. Most parent/caregivers were in the 30-40 age group, with the other groups consisting of few subjects.

Table 1

Age Groups in This Study

Age group	Number
15-30	3
30-40	31
40-50	6
50 +	2

Respondents in this study tended to be highly educated. Eighteen respondents had graduate degrees, seventeen respondents had undergraduate degrees, one respondent had a high school degree, and six respondents had post-graduate degrees (see Table 2).

Table 2

Highest Completed Levels of Education

Levels of Education	Number
High School Degree	1
Undergraduate School	17
Graduate School	18
Post Graduate	6

The survey contained the question, “Do you sing or play a musical instrument?” Sixteen respondents had no musical background, and twenty-six respondents had at least some musical background. Subjects who responded that they had musical background reported singing in choir, taking instrument or voice lessons, or playing an instrument in band at some point. No respondents reported participating in informal music settings, such as in a folk music community or a garage band. Some of the respondents reported that they can play several kinds of instruments. Also, two respondents studied music education as their major. Thirteen respondents clearly reported that they did not have any musical background. However, two respondents reported no musical background but reported that they had played flute or violin briefly when they were very young. Another respondent answered, “No, I just took accordion lesson forty years ago.” Because these respondents did not consider their music participation as meaningful, the researcher considered these three respondents as having no musical background, which is what they themselves reported (Table 3).

Table 3

Each Respondent's Musical Background (Sing or Play an Instrument)

Musical Background	Number
Yes	26
No	16

The subjects were also asked to respond to “What other musical backgrounds are represented in your family?” Thirty-one respondents had others in their families with musical background. Most of them said that their husbands, wives, grandparents, their siblings, or their other children played or have played music instruments, or sing or have sung in choir. Eleven respondents did not have any other musical background in their family (Table 4).

Table 4

Other Musical Background in Each Respondent's Family

Other Musical Background	Number
Yes	31
No	11

The subjects were asked, “What are your reasons for enrolling your child/children in an early childhood music program? List five reasons in order of importance.” Six respondents answered all five reasons in order of importance, and thirty four respondents listed three or four reasons for enrolling their child/children. There were twenty two

identifiable reasons for enrolling their children in the Early Childhood Music Program. These are listed below, along with samples of responses representative of that category of response. As respondents were asked to list, the sample responses are often brief.

1. Brain development: responses in this category related to musical experiences facilitating the natural wiring of the brain.

Sample response: “Affecting positively brain development.”

2. Building foundation for future music learning: these responses centered on the importance of early childhood music experiences as the foundation of future music learning.

Sample response: “To help set the foundation for future music learning.”

3. Child shows musical response: the caregivers who responded in this way had noticed the child responding musically at home. As a result, they wanted to encourage this type of response by enrolling their child in a music class.

Sample response: “My child shows musical response.”

4. Complement of Suzuki program: in these responses, a child was in both Suzuki instrumental instruction and early childhood music classes. The respondents believed that the two programs supported one another educationally.

Sample response: “Good complement to Suzuki program.”

5. Development of music aptitude: responses in this category related to music aptitude development in early childhood. Respondents enrolled their child/children in order to develop the music aptitudes the child.

Sample response: “To encourage musical abilities.”

6. Enjoy class: responses in this category came only from those who had been enrolled in a class in the past. The respondents stated that their child enjoyed the class, so they continued to enroll.

Sample response: "My child really enjoys class."

7. Enjoy music: for this category, the respondents reported that they want their child to enjoy music. They enrolled the child because of this enjoyment.

Sample response: "He loves music and loves listening and singing."

8. Expand horizons: these responses related to wanting children to have as broad a range of opportunities in early childhood as possible and included music classes as such an opportunity.

Sample response: "Expand horizons."

9. Exposure to music: these responses related to the parent wanting their children to be exposed to music as a young child.

Sample response: "Exposure to the musical environment."

10. Explore emotions through music: the responses in this category related to music as a means through which to feel and express emotions. Parents/caregiver enrolled the child/children so that they could learn to use music as an expressive tool.

Sample response: "Explore emotions through music."

11. Facilitates cognitive development: the responses in this category related to enrolling a child in early childhood music classes to make them smarter in other non-defined areas of achievement.

Sample response: "Stimulate mental development."

12. Facilitates language development: these responses focused on using music to improve skill in language learning.

Sample response: "Promote speech."

13. Family time: responses in this category centered on the importance of members of the family participating in music class together as a means of bonding and deepening personal relationships.

Sample response: "To provide and enjoyable time for us to share outside of our everyday routine."

14. Finding interest in/ability toward music: these responses centered upon music class as a means of identifying musical talent and interest.

Sample response: "See if he has any interest/ability toward music."

15. Friend enrolled: responses in this category referred to a preexisting personal relationship outside of class as the reason for enrolling.

Sample response: "A friend was enrolling her child."

16. Improve math skills: these responses focused on using music to improve skills in math learning.

Sample response: "The link between math skills and appreciating sound/tonal combinations."

17. Learn to play musical instrument: these responses centered on early childhood music classes as readiness for instrumental music learning.

Sample response: "learn to play a musical instrument."

18. Meet other parents: responses in this category related to a parent's desire to meet other parents with children of similar ages.

Sample response: "Meet other parents."

19. Music appreciation: these responses focused on the parent/caregiver wanting their child to appreciate music in the future. They are enrolling their child/children to lay the foundation for this appreciation.

Sample response: "Music appreciation."

20. Parents enjoy class: these responses centered on the parent/caregiver enjoying the class as a reason for enrolling a child.

Sample response: "I, as a parent, enjoy attending classes too."

21. Philosophy of program: these responses referred to a congruence between the educational philosophy of the program and that of the person enrolling the child.

Sample response: "MSU music school program philosophy."

22. Social development: these responses centered on enrolling children in the class so that they have contact with other children, which facilitates social development.

Sample response: "Interact with other kids."

After all of the responses were identified according to category, the researcher gave a score to each reason in order of importance. The reason listed first received a 5, the reason listed second received a 4, and so on. Then the total number of points in each category was calculated to determine the salience of the reason for enrollment.

Table 5 shows reasons in order of importance for enrolling the early childhood music program, using the point totals in each category. In the list of the five reasons, 21

respondents included 'Exposure to Music', 24 respondents included 'Social Development', 20 respondents included 'Music Appreciation', 16 respondents included 'Enjoy Class', and 13 respondents included 'Brain Development.' Other categories all received fewer than 10 responses. Although Social Development was referred to most preferred lists, it was prioritized to a less degree than Exposure to Music and Music Appreciation.

Table 5

All Reasons in Order of Importance for Enrolling Early Childhood Music Program

Reasons	Rating
1. Exposure to music	95 (n=21)
2. Music Appreciation	72 (n=20)
3. Social development	71 (n=24)
4. Enjoy Class	50 (n=16)
5. Brain Development	45 (n=12)
6. Building foundation for future music learning	43 (n=11)
7. Enjoy music	29 (n=6)
8. Child shows musical response	22 (n=6)
9. Development of music aptitude	19 (n=6)
10. Family time	18 (n=5)
11. Facilitates language development	18 (n=4)
12. Learn to play musical instrument	13 (n=3)

Table 5 (cont'd)

13. Facilitates cognitive development	6 (n = 2)
14. Expand horizons	6 (n = 2)
15. Finding interest in/ability toward music	5 (n = 1)
16. Improve math skills	4 (n = 1)
17. Complement of Suzuki	3 (n = 1)
18. Explore emotions through music	3 (n = 1)
19. Friend enrolled	3 (n = 2)
20. Meet other parents	2 (n = 2)
21. Parents enjoy class	1 (n = 1)
22. Philosophy of program	1 (n = 1)

The researcher also compared the most salient five reasons for each of the three highest completed levels of education: Undergraduate, Graduate, and Post Graduate Levels (see Table 6). Because only one respondent had a high school degree as the highest completed degree, that level was not included in this analysis. Exposure to music, Music appreciation, and Enjoy class appeared in all three lists. Social development, Brain development, and Building foundation for future learning appeared in two of the three lists, and Music aptitude appeared only on the list of those with post-graduate degrees. Overall, the lists were similar.

Table 6

Five Reasons in Order of Importance by Highest Completed Levels of Education

Undergraduate		Graduate		Post Graduate	
Reasons	Rating	Reasons	Rating	Reasons	Rating
Exposure to Music	50(n=11)	Brain Development	34 (n=9)	Enjoy Class	16 (n=5)
Social Development	33(n=12)	Music Appreciation	33(n=10)	Exposure to Music	14 (n=3)
Music Appreciation	29 (n=7)	Exposure to Music	31 (n=7)	Music Appreciation	13 (n=3)
Building foundation for future learning	17 (n=5)	Social development	26 (n=9)	Building foundation for future learning	10 (n=3)
Enjoy class	13 (n=4)	Enjoy class	21 (n=7)	Music Aptitude	6 (n=2)

The researcher compared the five most salient reasons in order of importance according to the musical backgrounds of the respondents (Table 7). Exposure to music was the most salient factor, regardless of the musical background of the respondent. Social development, Music appreciation, and Brain development also appeared prominently in both lists. Enjoy class only appeared on the list of those who had musical

background, whereas Enjoy music only appeared as one of the five salient reasons for those with no musical background.

Table 7

Five Reasons in Order of Importance by Respondents' Own Musical Background

Musical Background		Non-Musical Background	
Reasons	Rating	Reasons	Rating
1. Exposure to Music	55 (n=12)	1. Exposure to Music	40 (n=9)
2. Music Appreciation	39 (n=6)	2. Social Development	39 (n=13)
3. Social Development	32 (n=10)	3. Music Appreciation	36 (n=10)
4. Enjoy Class	30 (n=11)	4. Brain Development	25 (n=7)
5. Brain Development	20 (n=5)	5. Enjoy Music	24 (n=5)

Also, the researcher compared the five most salient reasons according to respondents' family musical background (see Table 8). Exposure to music, Music appreciation, and Social development appeared on both lists. Building a foundation for future learning and Enjoy class appeared only on the salience list for those with musical background, whereas Enjoy music and Brain development appeared only on the list of those with non-musical backgrounds.

Table 8

Five Reasons in Order of Importance by Respondents' Family Musical Background

Musical Background		Non-Musical Background	

Table 8 (con'td)

Reasons	Rating	Reasons	Rating
1. Exposure to Music	75 (n=16)	1. Music Appreciation	2 5 (n = 7)
2. Social Development	49 (n=15)	2. Enjoy Music	2 0 (n = 5)
3. Music Appreciation	47 (n=13)	3. Brain Development	2 0 (n = 6)
4. Building Foundation	41 (n=11)	4. Social Development	2 5 (n = 7)
For Learning			
5. Enjoy Class	35(n=12)	5. Exposure to Music	2 0 (n = 5)

CHAPTER 5

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

Forty two parents and caregivers from the Michigan State University participated in this study by completing a survey about their reasons for enrolling their child in the program. In addition, they provided information about their levels of education, their musical background, and the musical background of other family members. Twenty-two reasons emerged for enrolling children in the Early Childhood Music Program in this study. These are listed below: 1. brain development, 2. building foundation for future music learning, 3. child shows musical response, 4. complement of Suzuki program, 5. development of music aptitude, 6. enjoy class, 7. enjoy music, 8. expand horizons, 9. exposure to music, 10. explore emotions through music, 11. facilitates cognitive development, 12. facilitates language development, 13. family time, 14. finding interest in/ability toward music, 15. friend enrolled, 16. improve math skills, 17. learn to play musical instrument, 18 .meet other parents, 19 .music appreciation, 20. parents enjoy class, 21. philosophy of music program, 22. social development. The five reasons in order of greatest salience were: exposure to music, music appreciation, social development, enjoy class, and brain development.

Also, the researcher found that there are small differences in the salient reasons when the respondents were grouped by highest completed levels of education, with

undergraduate degree, graduate degree, and post-graduate degree as grouping categories. Exposure to music, Music appreciation, and Enjoy class appeared in all three lists. Social development, Brain development, and Building foundation for future learning appeared in two of the three lists, and Music aptitude appeared only on the list of those with post-graduate degrees. Overall, the lists were similar.

The researcher compared the five salient reasons when the respondents were grouped according to musical backgrounds, with musical background and no musical background as the categories. Exposure to music was the most salient factor, regardless of the musical background of the respondent. Social development, Music appreciation, and Brain development also appeared prominently in both lists.

Also, the researcher found that there are some differences in order of importance by respondents' family musical backgrounds, with no musical background and musical background being the two categories. Exposure to music, Music appreciation, and Social development appeared on both lists. Building a foundation for future learning and Enjoy class appeared only on the salience list for those with musical background, whereas Enjoy music and Brain development appeared only on the list of those with non-musical backgrounds.

The researcher concludes that there are many reasons parents and caregivers have for choosing to enroll their children in early childhood music programs. Some of these are intrinsically musical, such as development of music appreciation and understanding, and others are non-musical, such as social development and development of cognitive

skills. Teachers and administrators of early childhood music programs should be aware of this when planning their interactions with parents and children in the program.

Implications for Early Childhood Music Instruction

Results regarding the reasons parents pursue early childhood music instruction for their children revealed five primary reasons for enrolling in the music program: exposure to music, music appreciation, social development, enjoy music, and brain development.

Many early childhood music programs have become available to very young children, and many parents have chosen to enroll their children in these programs. Providing an optimal environment in which young children can experience music is an important responsibility of parents and music educators. For teachers, especially, knowing reasons parents pursue early childhood music instruction for their children is essential. Perhaps parent orientations prior to beginning instruction would be helpful to facilitate communication between teachers and parents regarding their expectations for the class. Also, channels of communication between parents and teachers should be built into the educational structure of such programs. The interactions between all of the participants in the early childhood music classroom might be made richer and better meet of needs of the child when the reasons are shared and possibly addressed.

Suggestions for Future Research

In this study, subjects were 42 parents and caregivers who had children participating in Early Childhood Music Classes of the Community Music School of Michigan State University in East Lansing, Michigan. Future research is needed that includes a larger number of subjects. In this study, the researcher hoped for 100 subjects, but the survey

was distributed and completed during one of the three summer sessions, in which fewer children were enrolled, so there were fewer subjects than expected. If future research has a greater number of subjects, better generalizability of the results will be possible. Also, replicating this study with other populations would increase its generalizability.

Further, future studies might compare the expectations of teachers with those of parents. If there is a large disparity between these two sets of expectations, the instructional process may be compromised for all.

Finally, once sets of expectations are established for both teachers and parents, researchers might investigate the effect of sharing these expectations on the educational environment in terms of student learning, parent satisfaction, student engagement, and teacher satisfaction.

APPENDIX A

MICHIGAN STATE
UNIVERSITY

Revision
Application
Approval

December 7, 2004

To: Cynthia Taggart
209 Music Practice Bldg.

Re: **IRB # 04-419** Category: EXEMPT 1-2
Revision Approval Date: December 7, 2004
Project Expiration Date: June 9, 2005

Title: ASSESSMENT OF PARENTAL MOTIVATION FOR ENROLLING A CHILD IN EARLY
CHILDHOOD MUSIC INSTRUCTION

The University Committee on Research Involving Human Subjects (UCRIHS) has completed their review of your project. I am pleased to advise you that **the revision has been approved**.

This letter also acknowledges the request for a title change.

The review by the committee has found that your revision is consistent with the continued protection of the rights and welfare of human subjects, and meets the requirements of MSU's Federal Wide Assurance and the Federal Guidelines (45 CFR 46 and 21 CFR Part 50). The protection of human subjects in research is a partnership between the IRB and the investigators. We look forward to working with you as we both fulfill our responsibilities.

Renewals: UCRIHS approval is valid until the expiration date listed above. If you are continuing your project, you must submit an **Application for Renewal** application at least one month before expiration. If the project is completed, please submit an **Application for Permanent Closure**.

Revisions: UCRIHS must review any changes in the project, prior to initiation of the change. Please submit an **Application for Revision** to have your changes reviewed. If changes are made at the time of renewal, please include an **Application for Revision** with the renewal application.

Problems: If issues should arise during the conduct of the research, such as unanticipated problems, adverse events, or any problem that may increase the risk to the human subjects, notify UCRIHS promptly. Forms are available to report these issues.

Please use the IRB number listed above on any forms submitted which relate to this project, or on any correspondence with UCRIHS.

Good luck in your research. If we can be of further assistance, please contact us at 517-355-2180 or via email at UCRIHS@msu.edu. Thank you for your cooperation.

Sincerely,



Peter Vasilenko, Ph.D.
UCRIHS Chair

42

c: Namsoon Park
801 Cherry Lane #201
East Lansing, MI 48823



OFFICE OF
**RESEARCH
ETHICS AND
STANDARDS**

**University Committee on
Research Involving
Human Subjects**

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APPENDIX B

The Reasons Parents Pursue Early Childhood Music Instruction for Children

Written Consent Form

The purpose of this study is to gain information about the reasons parents pursue early childhood music instruction for their children. We hope that by gathering this information, we can better meet the needs of families who enroll in early childhood music program. This survey will take ten to twenty minutes. Participation is voluntary, you may choose not to participate at all, or you may refuse to participate in certain procedures or answer certain questions or discontinue your participation at any time without penalty or loss of benefits. Your privacy will be protected to the maximum extent allowable by law. Your responses will be confidential; no identification of respondents will occur in any written or oral form of the report. If you have any questions about this study, contact Dr. Cynthia Taggart by phone: (517) 432-9678, fax: (517) 432-2880, e-mail: taggartc@msu.edu, or regular mail: 209 Music Practice Building, East Lansing, MI 48824. If you have questions or concerns about your rights as a research participant, please feel free to contact Peter Vasilenko, Ph.D., Michigan State University's Chair of the University Committee on Research Involving Human Subject (UCRIHS) by phone: (517) 355-2180, fax: (517) 432-4503, e-mail: <UCRIHS@msu.edu>, or regular mail: 202 Olds Hall, East Lansing, MI 48824.

Your responses will be very helpful in improving music instruction for children in the future.

Sincerely,
Namsoon Park
Cynthia Taggart

**UCRIHS APPROVAL FOR
THIS project EXPIRE ..**

JUN 9 2005

**SUBMIT RENEWAL APPLICATION
ONE MONTH PRIOR TO
ABOVE DATE TO CONTINUE**

APPENDIX C

APPENDIX C

SURVEY FORM

1. What is your gender?

☐ Female ☐ Male

2. What is your relationship to the child who you accompanied to music class?

☐ Parent ☐ Grandparent ☐ Other _____

Please specify

3. What is your age group?

☐ 20-30 ☐ 30-40 ☐ 40-50 ☐ 50 +

4. What is your highest completed level of education?

☐ High School Degree

☐ Undergraduate School

☐ Graduate School

☐ Post Graduate School

5. Do you sing or play a musical instrument? Describe your musical background.

6. What other musical back grounds are represented in your family? Please describe.

7. What are your reasons for enrolling your child/children in an early childhood music program? List the reasons in order of importance.

1)

2)

3)

4)

5)

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