



## KMC Philosophy

Children's brains grow at their fastest rate during early childhood. During this rich learning time multi-sensory experiences in movement with music can establish musical skills. The musical experiences can also be a powerful vehicle to develop skills in all the essential learning areas.

### A Vehicle for Learning

Children experience the world in a practical way when engaging in music and movement activities. Young children learn through doing, and whole-body activities which engage all the senses feed huge amounts of information into the brain simultaneously. Through these activities children develop motor skills (coordination of large and small muscles), focused listening (auditory) and visual strength (essential for reading). Language understanding is developed by tying song lyrics with actions which illustrate them, memory is developed through sequences, while social confidence grows in a setting where cooperation is more important than competition.



Musical foundations are established and developed through a combination of listening, language and motor skills, and surrounding the whole experience is a freedom and encouragement to think laterally, creatively and with imagination.

Foundation skills in these areas are essential for a child to be successful in school and in life.

### Establishing Musical Skills

We develop essential learning areas through music and movement experiences. It makes sense then, that children will develop skills to sing in tune, move in time and play instruments. Ours are not formal lessons but a holistic experience. We aim to meet children at their own level and create activities where they can be successful through singing, listening, moving and playing. The classes for 1-3 year olds are designed to involve the child in as many musical experiences as possible, to establish music foundations for later development.

As children acquire basic musical skills, and are maturing to around four years of age, they need space to use these skills in their own creative way. We encourage improvisation (children creating their own rhythmic pattern, melody or movement) in a structured piece of music. As these skills progress, children become their own composers and enjoy the satisfaction of their own music. This may be as simple as choosing an action in a circle dance to playing an improvised melody on a xylophone while others play an accompaniment.

We use the Sol-fa system of relative pitch developed by Zoltan Kodaly in Hungary. This system uses the doh-re-mi-fa-soh-la-ti-doh positions, with hand signs. Children therefore, can get a visual representation of the pitch and this helps them to sing in tune. The soh-mi interval is the natural playground chant of children throughout the western world and is a logical starting point for pitching children's voices. (Remember "I'm the king of the castle"?) As a step into the sol-fa system we use our own Kids Music Company Body scale where each note is represented on the body, giving a tactile pitch message to the child as well as physical, aural and visual ones.

As children mature through school years, and with the acquisition of skills and creative development, they are able to hold independent parts, singing, playing or moving. At this time, we use more of the Orff approach.

This way of teaching is also holistic. It was developed by a man named Carl Orff in the 1920's and 1930's and is widely accepted throughout the world from Germany to China, America and beyond. Basic materials such as songs, rhymes, dances and games can be developed and accompanied by body rhythms, movement, non-melodic percussion instruments such as bells, drums, and melodic percussion instruments such as wooden xylophones and metal glockenspiels.

Orff uses the body and voice as the first instruments. Patterns are established on the body and melodies are sung before playing them. This way, children are secure and more likely to succeed when transferring patterns to instruments. Patterns are short and repetitive, therefore easy to learn.

These types of activities use both sides of the brain, logical and creative. Their benefits flow on into all other areas of learning.

When children create music together in groups they become sensitive listeners and considerate participants. They also develop a sound basis for further musical development. Children are stimulated intellectually and are emotionally satisfied with being successful in a non-threatening setting.

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