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FROM CHAOS TO COMMUNITY

EARLY CHILDHOOD GROUPS FOR YOUNG CHILDREN WITH AUTISM

FROM CHAOS TO COMMUNITY
COURSE OBJECTIVES

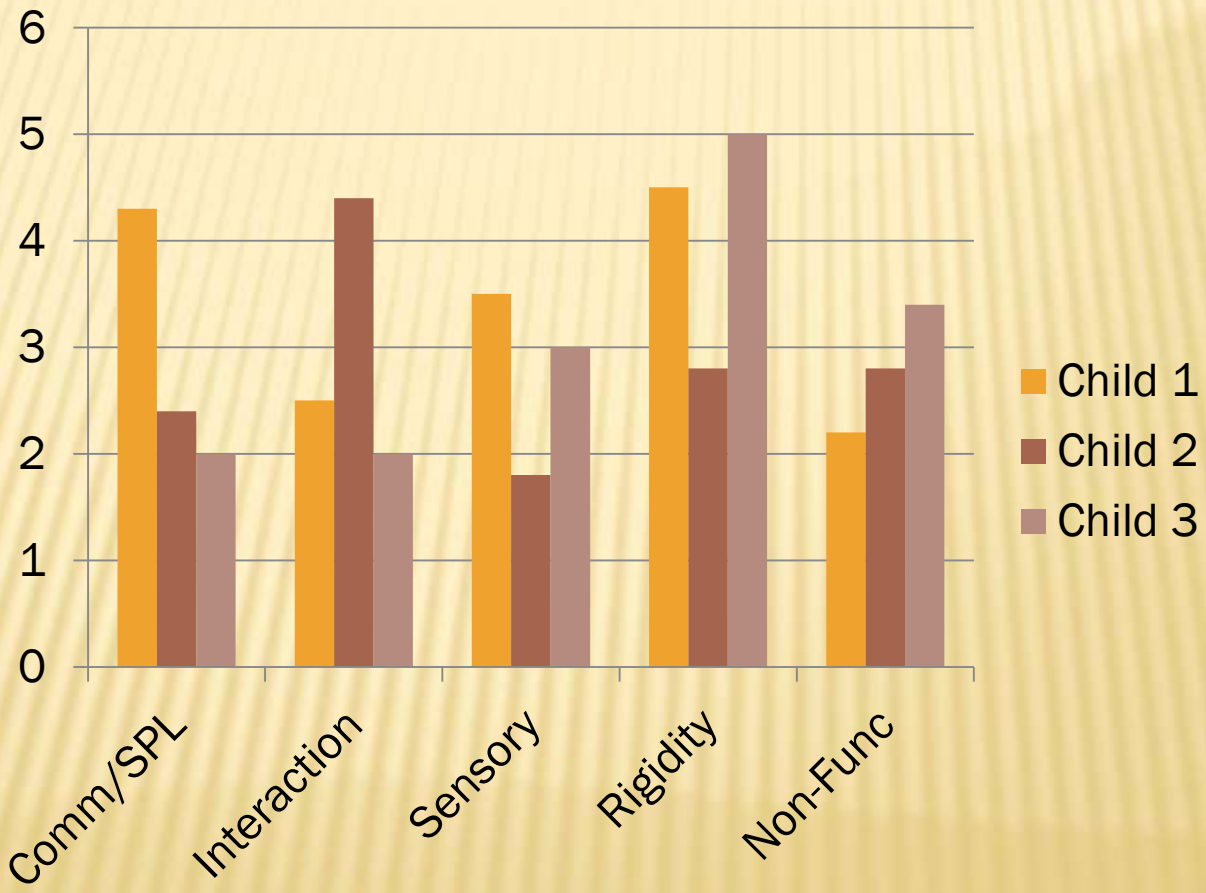
- Participants will identify key components of group process for young children with Autism
- Participants will learn music centered music therapy strategies and interventions that support group participation for young children with Autism
- Participants will identify outcomes to assess group participation for young children with Autism

AUTISM SPECTRUM DISORDERS

- The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention estimates that 1 in 88 children in the United States has been identified as having an autism spectrum disorder (ASD).
- Autism spectrum disorders are almost five times more common among boys than girls – with 1 in 54 boys identified.
  - Center for Disease Control Statement on Autism March 29, 2012

Communication- Language and Speech
Social Communication and Interaction
Sensory Difficulties
Rigidity
Non-functional Responses
AUTISM SPECTRUM DISORDER

AUTISM SPECTRUM



TREATMENT IN AUTISM

- Behavior and Communication Approaches
  - **Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA)**
  - **Developmental, Individual Differences, Relationship-Based Approach (DIR; also called "Floortime")**
  - **Treatment and Education of Autistic and Communication- Related Handicapped Children (TEAACH)**
  - **The Picture Exchange Communication System (PECS)**
- Dietary Approaches
- Medication
- Complementary and Alternative Medicine
  - http://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/autism/treatment.html

SUCCESSFUL STRATEGIES

- Individualized
- Developmental
- Predictable
- Opportunity for Practice
- Opportunity for Generalization

EARLY CHILDHOOD MUSIC GROUPS

- Benefits:
  - Socialization
  - Generalization of skills
  - Developmentally appropriate experiences
  - Community involvement
  - Family support

EARLY CHILDHOOD MUSIC GROUPS

- Challenges
  - Sensory sensitivity
  - Limited or specific skill set
  - Lack of exposure to varied environments
  - Community commitment to integration
  - Family needs

EARLY CHILDHOOD MUSIC GROUPS

- Why?
  - Supported by law and regulation
  - Allows for:
    - Individual goals, strategies, outcomes
    - Developmental
    - Predictable
    - Opportunity for Practice
    - Opportunity for Generalization

IDEA PART C - EARLY INTERVENTION

- Statute: TITLE I / C / 631
- (4) to enhance the capacity of families to meet the special needs of their infants and toddlers with disabilities;

- Statute: TITLE I / C / 632
- (G) to the maximum extent appropriate, are provided in natural environments, including the home, and community settings in which children without disabilities participate;

IDEA I / C / 632 / 1 / 4 / G
http://idea.ed.gov

CHILDREN WITH AUTISM MUSICAL CHARACTERISTICS

STRENGTHS

- Alert to auditory information
- Pitch accuracy
- Responsive to harmony
- Strong melodic memory
- Heightened response to music
- Music-based communicative language
- More appropriate functioning in music

CHALLENGES

- Hyper or hypo alert to sounds
- Inconsistent or scattered responses
- Sensitive to pitch and harmony
- Unusual movement patterns
- Rigidity toward structure or key or tempo
- Fascination with therapist's mouth
- Non-functional use of instruments

PLAY BASED GROUP BUILDING

- Unoccupied Behavior
- Onlooker Play
- Solitary Play
- Parallel Play
- Associative Play
- Cooperative Play

+ Parton, M. (1932). Social play among preschool children. *Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology, 27*, 243 – 269.

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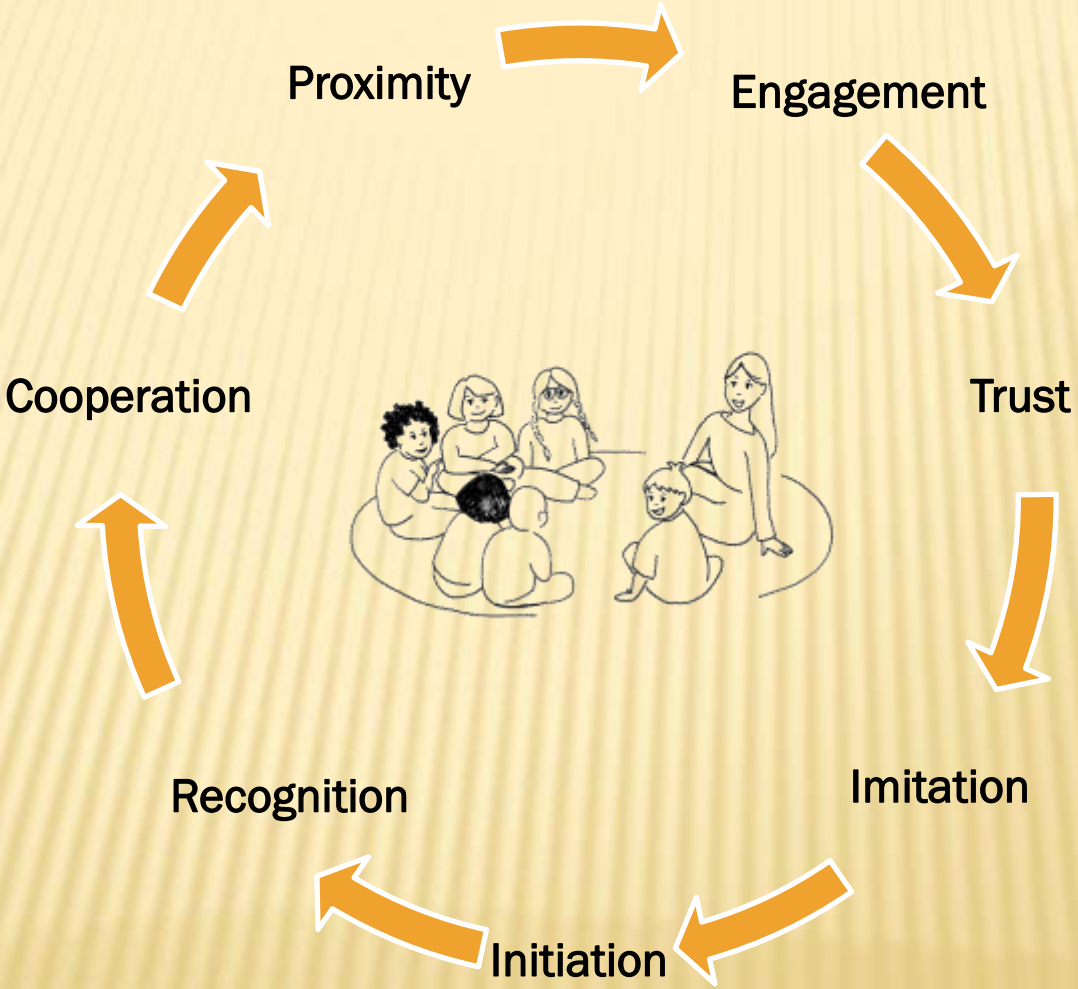
EARLY CHILDHOOD MUSIC GROUP PROCESS



Music

Child

Music

Other grownup

Parent

Music

Music

Peer

Music Therapist

Music

MUSIC THERAPY INTERVENTIONS

- Mutual Focus
- Movement Synchrony
- Rhythmic Synchrony
- Reciprocity
- Timbre Response
- Pitch and Melody Imitation
- Joint Referral
- Shared Structure
- Shared Meaning

MUSIC THERAPY STRATEGIES

- Unaccompanied Voice
- Movement
- Comfortable key for ‘grownup’ participation
- Responsive tempo
- Pitch exploration
- Repetition
- Functional language

Transition Songs:

Musical repetition

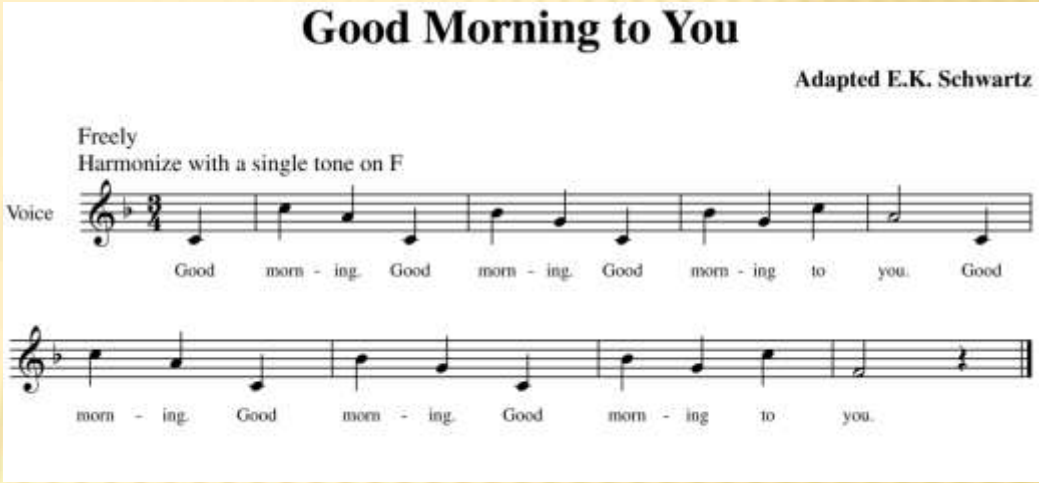
Pairing transition songs with transitions

Repetition and practice

Reliable structure and time

Use of scales, harmony, timbre, tempo and dynamics to mirror emotions

Regularity of patterns



You and Me Makes...We: A Growing Together Songbook
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EARLY CHILDHOOD MUSIC GROUP PROCESS PROXIMITY

Embedded Songs:

Transitory matching actions of child.

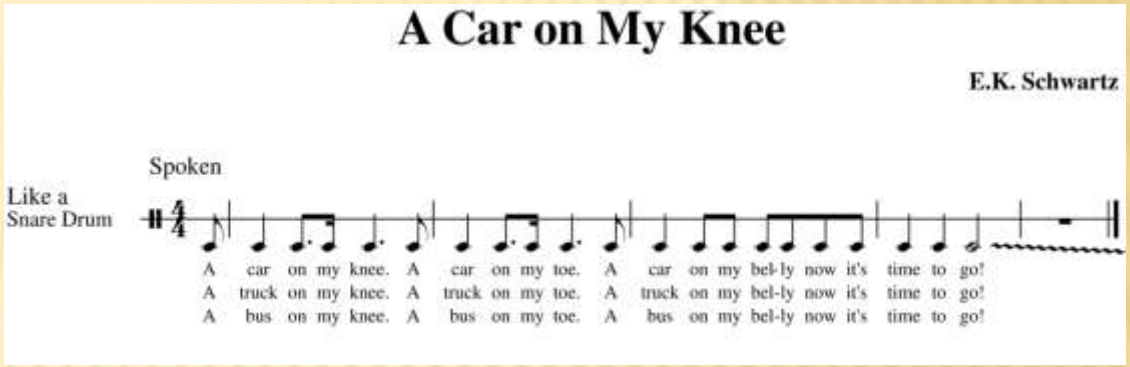
Short and very spontaneous

Musical structure less important

The rhythm and meter stretch and shrink

Melodic contour complements the ebb and flow of the activity.

Harmony or interesting scales are used to mirror and explain



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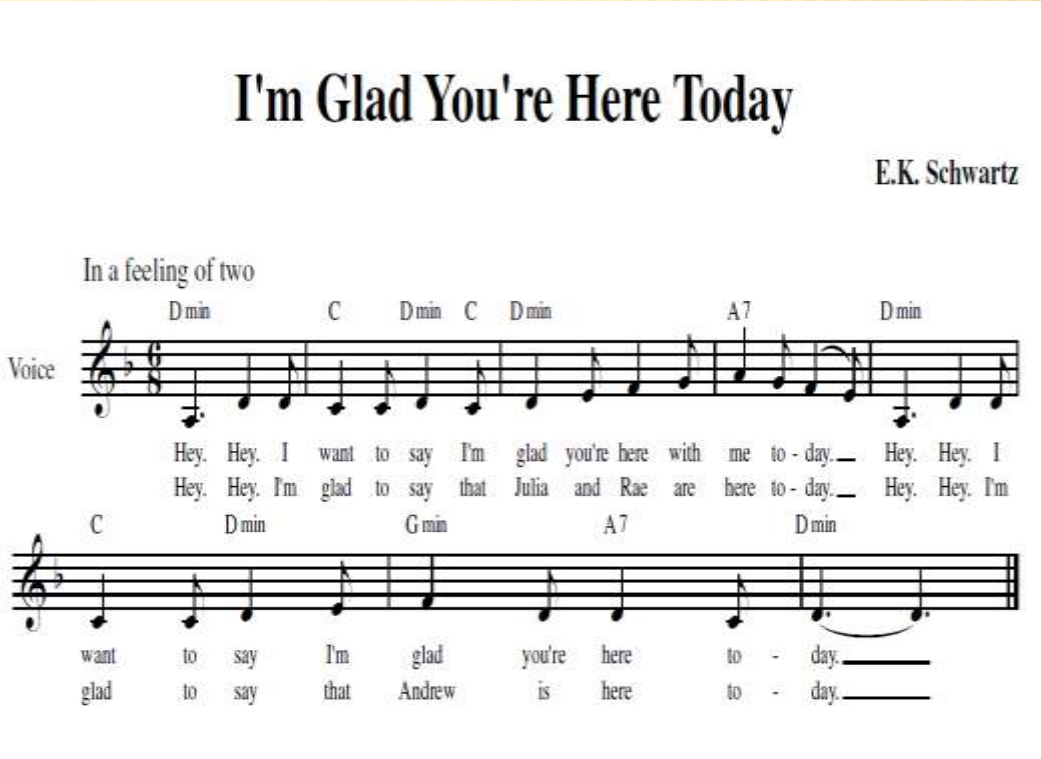
EARLY CHILDHOOD MUSIC GROUP PROCESS ENGAGEMENT

GATHERING SONGS:

SYNCHRONOUS MOVEMENT
COMPELLING BEAT
SIMPLE RHYTHMIC PATTERNS
CLEAR STRUCTURE
SOCIAL LANGUAGE



EARLY CHILDHOOD MUSIC GROUP PROCESS TRUST

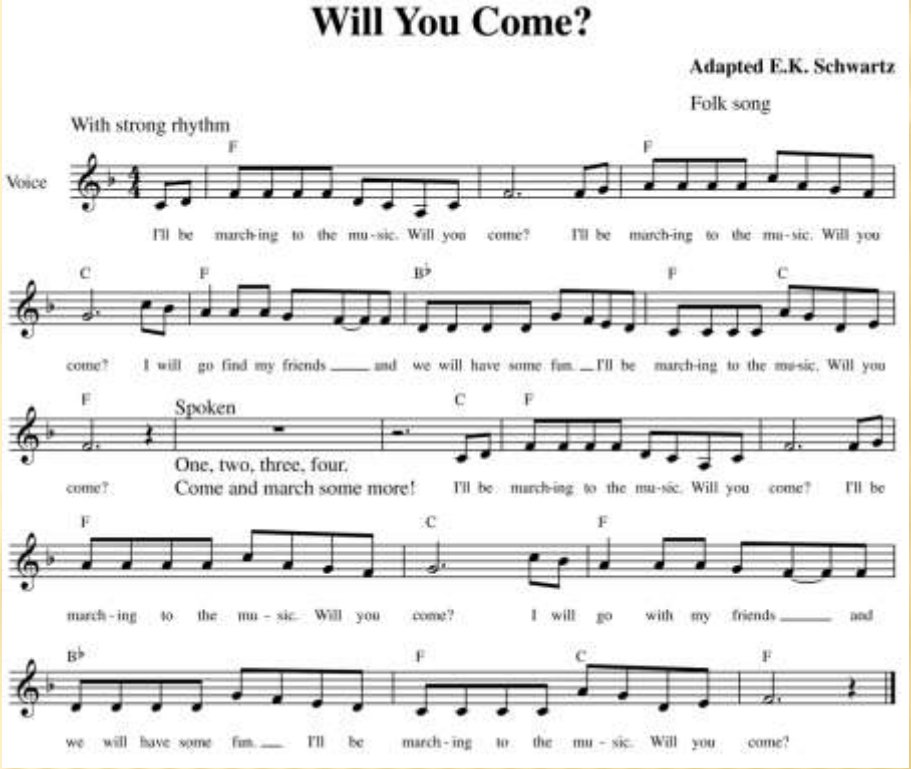
Movement Songs:

Connect movement contour to contour of musical melody

Movement has duration just as music does.

Movement also has dynamics and articulation

Movement, like music, has tempo



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EARLY CHILDHOOD MUSIC GROUP PROCESS IMITATION

Instrument Songs:

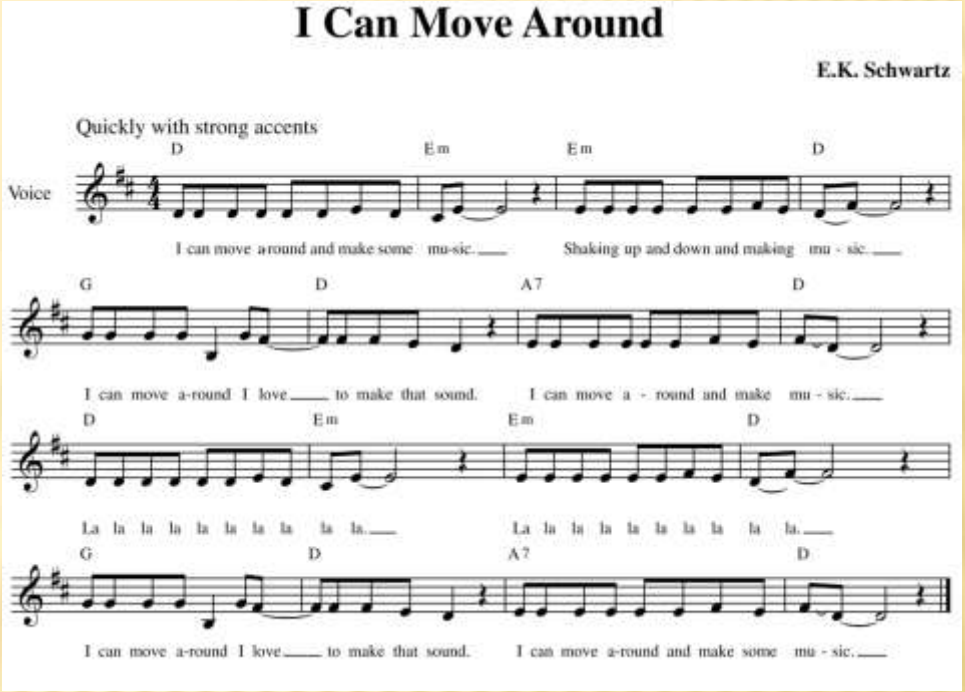
An instrument is something outside of the child, but also something a child can use or transform

Instruments give a clear and immediate response to an action

Provide for curiosity and exploration

Become an object of focus

Can be shared



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EARLY CHILDHOOD MUSIC GROUP PROCESS INITIATION

Songs About Me:

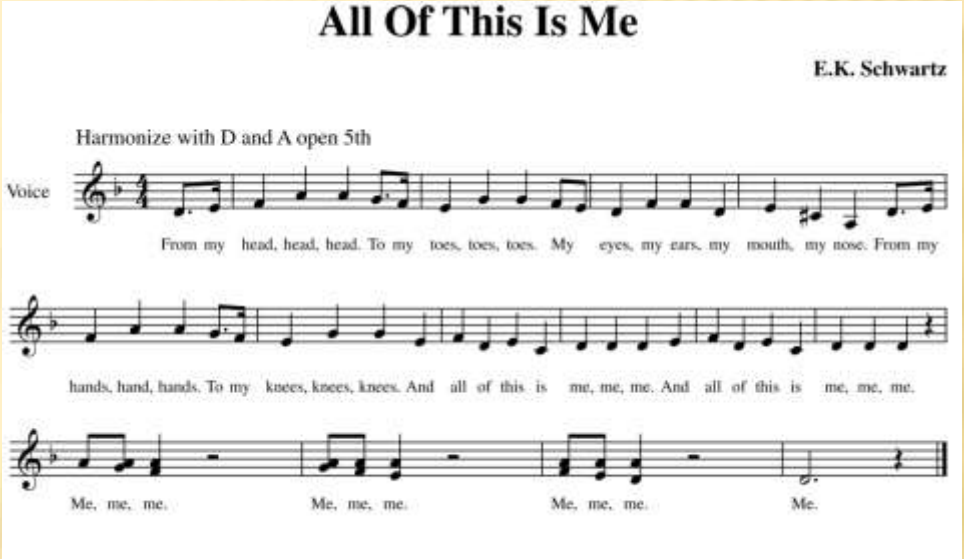
Every musical element can be adjusted to echo what it is about 'me' that is special

Timbre is very important

Different keys, modes and scales create different moods

Music can also be used to examine and explore abstract concepts of 'me'

The words set the stage, but the musical elements are used to replicate the feeling



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EARLY CHILDHOOD MUSIC GROUP PROCESS RECOGNITION

Bonding Songs:

Singing voice

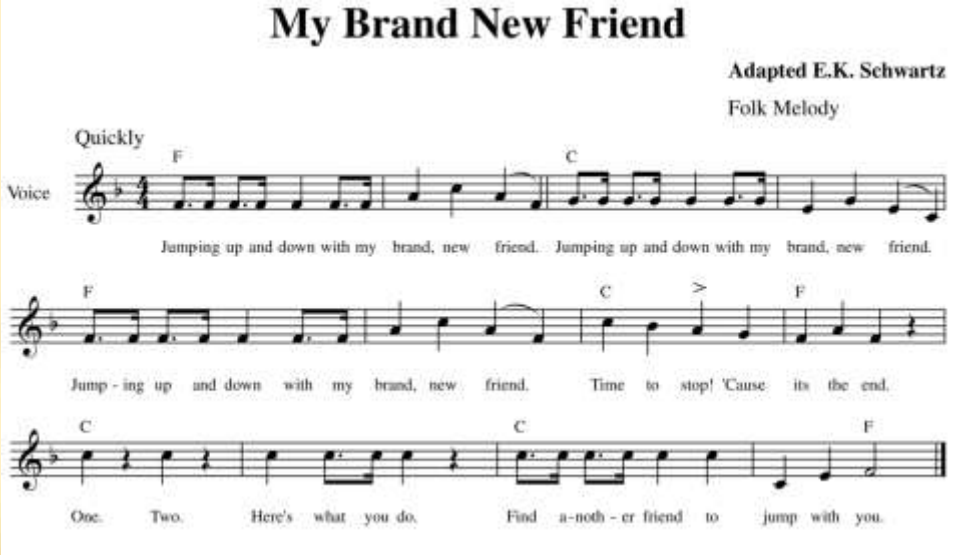
Simple, repeated intervals

Warm, perhaps ‘cooing’ timbre

Rhythms are free

Meter often mimics rocking

Comfort to tension to comfort



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EARLY CHILDHOOD MUSIC GROUP PROCESS
COOPERATION

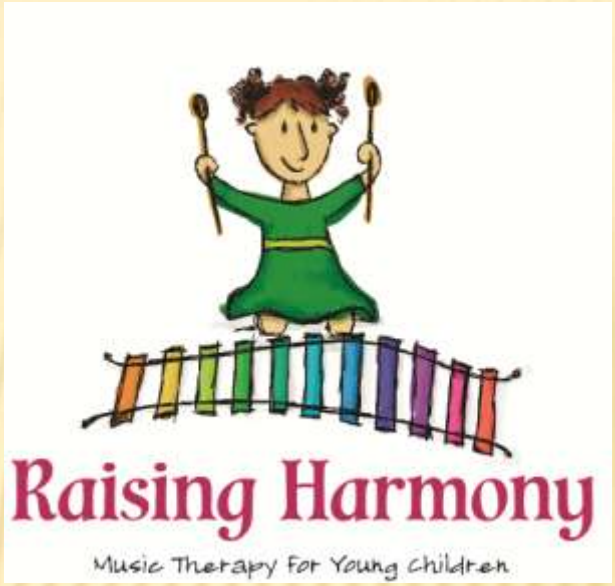
FAMILY OUTCOMES

- Models of musical play interaction
- Movement synchrony
- Understanding of vocal/verbal communication
- Reciprocal communication
- Repetition and Practice
- Joint attention
- Community support

CHILD OUTCOMES

- Engagement
- Community acceptance
- Opportunity for practice
- Opportunity for generalization of skills
- Peer to peer reciprocity
- Expansion of experiences
- Motivation

GO GREEN
Request Full Presentation Handout



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Thank You!

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