

Start the Music: A Report from the Early Childhood Summit

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Developed by Bruce O. Boston, Wordsmith, Inc.

Introduction

The national “Save the Music” campaign as mounted and carried out by cable broadcaster VH1 has served as an outstanding example of what can be accomplished in raising public consciousness about the importance and value of music for young people, both as an art form and as an educational activity. But as valuable and important as the “Save the Music” campaign is, it is based on a premise that should not exist—namely, that the only workable option for those who care about music for young people is to mount a “rescue operation” for music education in the schools.

A New Premise. This Summit meeting was called because a new premise is needed. Instead of remaining on the defensive, advocates for music education and early childhood education—and the vital connection between them—can and should take a proactive approach to music education as both a worthy enterprise in its own right and as an essential educational component of early childhood development.

The National Association for Music Education (NAfME), the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC), and the US Department of Education came to the Summit determined to take seriously one core idea—that *music education is basic education* and is therefore integral to the education of children at any age. Both organizations hoped the Summit would broaden the base of the nation’s educational effort in a way that brings children together with music at the earliest opportunity, i.e., as early as possible in the developmental process. Both organizations desired, as well, to launch a systemic effort that would continue to foster the well-demonstrated benefits of experiencing, knowing, and understanding music as central to the learning capacities of young children.

The Value of Music for the Very Young. The idea that very early education provides great long-term benefits has been rendered incontestable by studies in cognition and early learning. Research in developmental psychology and commonsense observation underscore both the importance and the wisdom of making music an integral and overt part of the earliest education of young children:

(1) We know that music is among the first and most important modes of communication experienced by infants. The youngest children lack the gift of speech, but they are deeply responsive to the emotional ethos created by music. The lullabies sung by parents help children

to accomplish the fundamental developmental task of learning-to trust their environment as a secure one. Songs communicate adult love and the experiences of joy and delight; they teach children that the world is a pleasurable and exciting place to be. Music is essential to the depth and strength of this early foundation for learning and for connecting to life itself.

(2) As young children grow and develop, music continues as a basic medium not only of communication, but of self-expression as well. Through music, children expand their cognitive universe as they first experience-and later learn to produce-sounds organized to carry musical meaning within their culture. Music expands memory and assists in developing crucial language skills. Music exerts a multiplier effect on reasoning skills, especially on spatial reasoning-an effect that has been demonstrated experimentally. Music also reinforces such logical and perceptual ideas as beginning and ending, cause and effect, sequence and balance, harmony and dissonance, as well as arithmetic concepts such as number, enumeration, and timing. In addition, as centuries of tradition and modern vehicles such as *Sesame Street* have taught us all, music in the lives of young children is a highly effective means of delivering vital information about the world itself, as when it is used to teach such basic content as counting, colors, relationships among ideas, social skills, and the wonders of the natural world. Music is also a powerful tool for communicating the full spectrum of human emotion in ways appropriate to children's experience. Children who may not be able to express verbally their happiness, anger, or sadness can find in music the right outlet and mode for what they cannot yet identify or express clearly using the tools of language.

(3) As preschool children not only listen to and respond to music, but also learn to make music by singing and playing instruments together, they create important contexts for the early learning of vital life skills such as cooperation, collaboration, and group effort.

(4) Guided music experiences also begin to teach young children to make judgments about what constitutes "good" music, thereby developing in them the rudiments of an aesthetic sense.

(5) Music contributes strongly to "school readiness," a foundational education aim of the American people for all our children, as expressed in our National Education Goals. Music experiences can help children prepare to learn to become literate as it helps them become more aware of and focused on the phonemes that make up the language or languages they will need to excel in school. When children develop musical skill and understanding, they are developing basic cognitive, social, and motor skills necessary for success throughout the educational process. They are preparing skills that will apply to language, to literacy, and to life itself.

Those attending the Summit were unanimous in their belief that unless the positive learning engendered by music in the earliest years is nurtured by those in the best position to provide it, i.e., parents, music teachers, and professional caregivers, the educational power of music and its potential for sound development can be diminished and diluted.

At the Top of the Agenda. The June 14-16, 2000 "Start the Music" Summit, comprising some two dozen music educators, childhood development specialists, academics, government officials, foundation executives, and policy- and decision-makers, as well as representatives from the private sector, was thus a kick-off for a far broader effort. For the years ahead, the constituencies

represented at the Washington meeting expressed a strong desire to move music learning and music making closer to the center of their organizational lives and to the top of their own institutional agendas. In the main, those present agreed to the objectives and strategies outlined here as a way to pursue more-and better-education in music for preschool children. It is time, they agreed, to “Start the Music.”

Start the Music

“How do we make music as integral and embedded in early childhood education as blocks and the sand table?” – Donna Brink Fox, Eastman School of Music

I. THE SEARCH FOR OUTCOMES

From virtually the first words spoken it was apparent that the Summit participants, though drawn from many constituencies and with multiple agendas, were really asking only one question: What do we have to do to ensure that the best instructional practices-and the most effective delivery systems-are available to make music a core and continuing part of early childhood education in America? The words of Donna Brink Fox in the epigraph put the point directly and concretely. As her question is played out, however, it engages far thornier issues, for example:

- Can knowledge, materials, and resources be more effectively shared between the communities devoted to music education and early childhood education?
- Can we develop and implement for all children developmentally appropriate teaching and learning; with more sensitive attention to issues of diversity and cultural pluralism?
- Can the education community engage effectively with what Bob Bartman, Missouri’s Commissioner of Education, euphemistically called “the authorizing environment,” where decision makers gather around issues of policy, legislation, money, turf, and time?

But the sum and substance of the Summit’s core issue remains what actually happens wherever young children play amid the blocks and sand tables. And what happens there can be traced back to the institutional structures and practices needed to give every child in America that first taste of music, practices that will not only teach them in the present moment, but shape a lifetime of learning and pleasure.

What children are entitled to as part of an early childhood education, insisted Carol Brunson Day, Executive Director of the Council on Early Childhood Professional Recognition, is a set of “core competencies” in their teachers and caregivers. These competencies, she said, can and must be taught as part of the preparation of those who work with young children. They can be expressed (and in fact are now expressed) in the form of standards developed by the Council of Early Childhood Professional Recognition, by the National Association for the Education of Young Children, and by others. And they can be transmitted as part of a well-conceived and well-managed program of professional development for early childhood care providers. In addition, such competencies can and must be delivered in a context that is sensitive not merely to multi-cultural concerns but also to the development of our common culture-a culture that most definitely includes music. The presence of music, Day argued, sends supremely important messages to our youngest children: because you can own your own experience, you are

empowered; because you can make music, you are a builder and creator of your own culture; and as such, you are a maker of your own *meaning*. But, she reminded the gathering, these are all issues that have to be addressed systemically before they can be addressed programmatically.

Bartman also offered Summit participants a sobering reminder of the many obstacles between them and their goal. He warned that the participants could not take for granted the public's widespread acceptance of the idea that "music education benefits all children," that indeed, this was precisely the idea that had to be fought for, because what is taken for granted is not necessarily pervasive. In that light, he posited six "challenges" that the participants had to face as they sought to build the bridge between education at age 3 and the public schools:

1) Music education is not yet considered as "basic" to formal education, despite its having been included as a core subject in the nation's educational goals. Too often music is seen as no more than an optional form of educational enrichment. *Challenge: Continue to create more effective ways of convincing the public of the broader value of music for learning, as well as in its own right;*

2) We have learned much in recent years about the human brain and cognitive growth that has yet to be incorporated into educational offerings and planning-at all levels. The fact, for instance, that the "infrastructure" of the brain is already half developed by age 5 is rarely factored into the nation's educational planning. *Challenge: Narrow the research-classroom gap;*

3) Despite certification efforts, too much of early childhood education is still in the hands of people who are unprepared to meet the challenging learning needs of this age group. *Challenge: Devise better preparation and professional development programs to include music;*

4) Our engagement of stakeholders in the relationship between music education and early childhood education is still too narrow, especially in terms of the role of music in this critical period. *Challenge: Broaden and deepen the currently underdeveloped connections between the two fields;*

5) We continue to labor under the misconception that music education should basically be targeted toward performance, i.e., "finding the kids who are good at it and sticking them in the marching band," while ignoring the learning potential within music for building other areas of knowledge and skill. [See sidebar] *Challenge: Expand the "performance mentality" to make the public aware of the many benefits of music education; and*

6) Music education will always have a shortage of people trained to teach music. We have to find a different delivery system for music education than simply depending on college music majors. *Challenge: We need to find effective ways to train early childhood professionals in music.*

ANOTHER SECTOR HEARD FROM

A useful sidelight on Bartman's perspective was offered to participants by an observer from the private sector, Paul Chiaravelle, Director of Guest Talent and Education Programs for Disney. He pointed out that his employer, as a "consumer" of musical talent, had a vital stake in the kind

and quality of music education provided both by the schools and in early childhood settings. Already, he said, Disney is having difficulty in finding musicians enough to meet its needs, a problem that will be “much bigger in 15 years.” “Disney,” he said, “wants to work much more closely with education.”

Not all the ensuing discussion revolved around these challenges, but they did serve as a useful framing device for linking needs with strategies and actions, delivering training, teaching, devising institutional solutions, and defining needs for further research. Those topics provide the structure for the remainder of this report.

II. DEFINING NEEDS

Summit participants identified three sets of needs as requiring urgent attention.

(1) Music educators and providers of early childhood education need to identify and create ways that enable music to be treated as a basic and integral part of every young child’s education. Participants noted that this general need makes its presence felt in many early childhood education contexts, and can be met via a number of strategies. For example:

- It is imperative that we discourage passivity while simultaneously encouraging children to be makers of their own music, as well as active bearers of their distinctive cultural traditions. This kind of music education requires, however, that care providers will have received a basic education in music, accompanied by professional development in ways to teach young children to appreciate, participate in, and make music themselves.
- In general, preschool learning environments should be structured to be rich in opportunities for creative expression, and should therefore include music. Meeting such a need does not require extensive equipment or elaborate technology. Tapes, CDs, and simple instruments are often all that are required.
- Unless the quality of musical experiences and instruction is supported by standards and guidelines, they can often be pedagogically misdirected. The work of providing young children with appropriate musical experiences and education therefore needs to be guided from several directions.- First, early childhood educators can make use of three NAFME publications directed at instructional quality and program effectiveness: (1) Pre-kindergarten Music Education Standards, which provides standards for curriculum, scheduling, staffing, and equipment; (2) The School Music Program-A New Vision: The K-12 National Standards, PreK, and What They Mean to Music Educators, which can help both music educators and early childhood education providers to interpret what standards mean in practice; and (3) Strategies for Teaching Prekindergarten Music, which provides principles and examples of developmentally appropriate learning activities for use with pre-K children.- Second, music educators working with very young children can make use of NAEYC publications such as Guidelines for Appropriate Curriculum Content and Assessment in Programs Serving Children Ages 3 Through 8 to sharpen their own understandings of the special learning and instructional needs of pre-K learners.- Third, both groups can be guided by several sets of standards for the preparation of Early Childhood specialists: Child Development Association Assessment

System and Competency Standards, which explains the Association’s national credentialing program for early childhood caregivers, based on six broad competency goals; and NAEYC’s Guidelines for Professional Preparation, which describes standards for the preparation fo early childhood teachers at the associate degree, baccalaureate, and advanced levels. Knowing what the standards are is the first step in meeting them

- Instructional techniques may vary, but might profitably include those described in various additional publications, e.g., NAFME’s Promising Practices: Prekindergarten Music Education, and Music in Prekindergarten: Planning and Teaching. All instructional techniques, participants agreed, should be consistent with the broader standards for early childhood education developed by NAEYC.
- Children with special needs, e.g., those with disabilities, should be provided with appropriate adaptations in the instructional environment as well as the physical environment.

A different way of looking at ways of meeting the needs that arise when integrating music into the education of young children is provided by the matrix below, as constructed by the Summit participants. It identifies four key factors present in the educational “mix” and suggests an emergent hierarchy of strategic needs that attend those four factors.

NEEDS AND STRATEGIES MATRIX

<u>Music</u>	<u>Teaching</u>	<u>Children</u>	<u>Alliances/Collab.</u>
Fully integrate into the curriculum	Prepare teachers at all levels	See children as culture makers	See educators and caregivers as partners
Move beyond music as specialization to music as a basic staple	Tap other resources	Use music as a way to empower children	Achieve broader buy-in by parents/media
Use music to achieve host of instructional ends	Use music to create learning bridges to grades K and higher*	Exploit music as cognitive tool for developmental gains*	Encourage communities more broadly
			Identify power & leverage points for change

* Participants heard a caveat on this point from Susan Kenney of Brigham Young University, who noted that “advocates for music education often bark

up the wrong tree on this issue. It is not music's contributions to other subjects that makes it so valuable; it is valuable for learning in its own right. We can promote that idea, but we also need to do what the science and math people do—point to poor performance and make noise.”

(2) Both teachers and care providers must be encouraged to provide quality music instruction to *all* children. Although the point seems obvious, participants noted that the mere presence of high-quality music in early childhood education facilities can by no means be taken for granted, and their very presence in every child care venue is currently well beyond the current reach of providers. In order to begin to meet this need, participants said, at least the following conditions or requirements have to be met:

- **Materials.** High-quality materials are as important to an early childhood education environment as they are to a high school chemistry or physics laboratory. These include not only books, equipment, toys, instruments, recordings, manipulatives, and other materials, but also the teaching ideas and pedagogical skills of teachers and aides. Music materials need to be of good musical quality, readily available, and reasonably priced. Such materials should be available to all care providers, including those based in centers, family providers, and parents. As suggested by Liz Armistead of the Settlement School in Philadelphia, a NAFME or NAEYC “seal of approval” on a product line of instruments or song books for very young learners, for example, would be a way ensuring higher quality materials.
- **Training and Professional Development of Teachers.** All participants agreed that music specialists in early childhood education settings should be well educated and well trained in the developmental issues particular to young learners. But the issue here is strategic: How do you make that happen, not merely as a goal but as condition of early childhood education? This issue is more directly and more fully addressed below in the section on Delivering Professional Development.
- **A Culturally Responsive Pedagogy.** A nettlesome point for participants was the issue of a perceived “elitism” that is often attached to providing educational experiences and/or direct education in the arts, and therefore in music. As participants pointed out, however, those most unfamiliar with the arts are often the ones who cry “elitism” the loudest. It is a sentiment, as Carol Brunson Day pointed out, that follows socioeconomic lines. If we want all children, everywhere, to have a music education, then we have to change public attitudes about “who benefits” if we are to change people’s perceptions. That shift begins, Day insisted, with a “fundamental reevaluation of children in our society and a clear understanding of how our society expresses that value.” For this enterprise, she argued, we already have highly successful models. Several national campaigns have profoundly changed public perceptions and behaviors in key areas, e.g., the anti-smoking campaign, the pro-seatbelt campaign, and the campaign to provide accessibility in public facilities for persons with disabilities. What made these efforts successful, Day pointed out, was that they were firmly grounded in hard data; they elicited a long-term commitment from people who cared about the issues in question; and they had the support of policymakers at all levels. Music education for *all* the very young as a *non*-elitist enterprise must

generate support in the same way and with the same totalist objectives. In all, we have to begin to see our children in a new light-as culture creators and culture bearers. In this regard, the Internet is woefully underused, not only as a deep reservoir of materials and resources but as a communications medium stakeholders can use to work early childhood and music education issues.

- **Nonspecialist Educators.** Educators who are neither specialists in music education nor in early childhood education, who nonetheless find themselves providing music instruction and early childhood educational services, have a steep hill to climb. But their lot is not Sisyphean, nor their task so onerous as his. There is the potential for help-in the form of preparatory courses in community colleges, professional development opportunities, mentors and mentor modeling, and long-term, collegial contact with genuine specialists in those areas where either training or education is lacking. By the same token, however, it was agreed that all caregivers for young children should be encouraged to transmit a love of music to their charges, and to that end should be led to value and evaluate their own abilities, with a view to providing the most accurate modeling of music for the children in their care, whether by singing, playing, moving, or in other ways.
- **Better Role Models for Providers.** Teaching, like any profession, is nourished most deeply by the mentors and role models each new generation finds in the one that preceded it. Here, Norma Abdul-Rahim of Sligo Creek Elementary School in Silver Spring, Maryland, asked a question that helped frame participant thinking. “What role models do we really have for music education [that can help us sway public opinion]?” The general culture, she argued, is woefully lacking in compelling role models for music and music education, especially in the media. While such resources as the Discovery Channel and the History Channel provide ample resources and role models for general education and the humanities, “the music channels are terrible.” What is needed, she argued, is serious attention to alternative media sources-provided in the early childhood education context-for both music and music and music education. One might dare to image imagine, for example, music that has a qualitative dimension that eschews the vapidness of “Barney” and rejects the not-so-implicit values exhibited by MTV.
- **Professionalism via Certification.** It seemed to come as a surprise to some of the Summit’s music educator participants that the early childhood education movement is as highly committed to credentialed providers as it is. These were not glorified baby-sitters with an educational veneer but professional educators, people with degree specializations, a deep knowledge of childhood development, and a commitment to learning. The need for professionalization in both music education and early childhood education was deftly summed up by Artie Almeida of Bear Lake Elementary School in Altamonte Springs, Florida: “Professional credibility is rooted in accountability.” The formulation has implications for both fields. Almeida argued that, at present, the field of music education lacks accountability to anyone but itself, in part because of the “elitism” issue referred to earlier and in part because a shortage of music specialists, especially in the elementary grades, leads to too many persons teaching music who are not well equipped to do so.
- On the other hand, the effort to uphold standards can run into a serious obstacles in early childhood education. As Liz Armistead noted, “the idea of standards and accountability to them runs into a serious obstacle in early childhood education. You just can’t move ideas about elementary school teaching to the earliest years. Pedagogies and the results

you get from them don't necessarily transfer." It was agreed, however, that the long-range objective should be to aim for significant professional development for all caregivers at all levels; development leading to all credentials should include significant experience in providing music across the early childhood age spectrum.

(3) Those with “authorization authority” i.e., legislators and politicians, school board members, state- and district-level administrators, principals, and in the end, the general public, are a target for the Summit’s messages. Decision-makers need to become more aware of the importance of high-quality care and educational experiences for all children. Persons with the power to decide about budgets, curriculum, standards, and educational delivery systems need to understand what is at stake in early childhood education and the role music can play in making learning in the early years more effective. But leaders are not likely to reach such conclusions on their own; they have to be led to them. Only then can they be counted on to make certain that all children have access to high-quality music experiences as part of child care. If such an end is to be realized, it will happen only when key organizations in both music education and early childhood education form the linkages to assure that end.

III. GETTING TO A DELIVERY SYSTEM

Given general agreement across these three broad areas of need, participants turned their attention to the major areas where strategic action was called for to meet the needs. They identified five: (1) agreeing on a shared message for both music educators and early childhood educators, (2) improving teacher preparation and professional development, (3) delivering instruction, (4) creating institutional solutions, and (5) identifying research needs. As one participant put it, “Remember, there is no ‘system’ out there. The only thing we can assume is that there are existing networks of people and resources than can be drawn on to create change.”

Overall, participants agreed that the fundamental objectives of a strategic delivery system for music education in the early childhood years should include these elements: (1) music’s use both as a learning device and as basic knowledge source in its own right; (2) the need for more and better trained music teachers; (3) the use of music throughout the early childhood curriculum and throughout the day; and (4) the need for trained music teachers to train child care workers to use music as part of their education and care-giving activity. As Jan Wolf of the Kent State (Ohio) University Childhood Development Center observed, while many NAEYC members may be very capable in terms of basic music skills, their capabilities do not necessarily extend to musical repertoire or to the ability to model skills and practices.

(1) Agreeing on a Message. Both music educators and early childhood educators agreed strongly that music is a valuable part of every child’s experience and learning, and that it can and must include strategically valuable information emerging from recent research. One example of where this message is not being communicated to the general public lies in creating clear understandings of such findings as Howard Gardner’s work on music as a specific form of intelligence and the value of music as a teaching tool across the learning spectrum. The reporting on the so-called “Mozart effect” was pointed out as a particularly flagrant example of how the media have distorted research on the relationship between music and intelligence, as many

popular articles and TV segments have sought to create overly simple cause and effect relationships between listening to classical music and academic achievement.

Participants agreed that music needs to be looked on-and communicated about-in the context of the child's entire life. One overlooked implication of this perspective in terms of delivery systems is the use of faith-based centers for imparting music experiences (e.g., many early childhood education venues are offered under the auspices of churches, synagogues, and mosques). A further implication for delivering music experiences and instruction is that music cannot be rightly thought of as a teaching/learning specialty, sequestered from the rest of learning or from the remainder of a child's life. Just as music has to be understood as integral to learning, so must it also be considered as integral to life, as an activity in which every child can participate fully.

The broader communications context here is, of course, the lack of general public support for music education. As Carol Brunson Day put it: "If the public thought that child care needed to be better, and that music would improve child care, then politicians would vote the money for it." As noted above, the compelling models of anti-smoking and anti-drunk driving campaigns demonstrate that when the available data are convincingly communicated to the public, change happens. We need to use available data on the value of music education for young learners as the basis for public relations efforts.

Barbara Andress, Professor Emeritus at Arizona State University, argued from a different perspective. One of the most powerful agencies for crafting and delivering a message, she said, is "do-able programs." In the difficult environment of early childhood education, she explained, people who are not necessarily well trained are not the best messengers, but when capable people deliver good programs, the very success of those programs breeds their own advocacy; parents see what is happening to their children and bear witness to the difference music education can make.

(2) Improving Teacher Preparation and Professional Development. Here, it was generally agreed, is the real crux of the matter-not only getting more and better teachers for young children but also more and better trained music teachers. Many colleges, both two- and four-year institutions, have strengths in both music education and early childhood education. They should be urged to combine these emphases, with a view to creating specialized degree programs.

In the minds of many participants, the place to begin this process is by developing and strengthening Associate degrees in music in two-year institutions, and attaching to them an early childhood credential. Head Start will soon be requiring an Associate's degree for providers working in its programs, providing a needed impetus for such an effort. High school students can be attracted to such programs by encouraging them to use jobs in early childhood education as a way of discharging community service requirements.

Marilou Hyson, Associate Executive Director for Professional Development of NAEYC, cautioned, however, that getting new courses added to a community college's Associates' curriculum that could support an early childhood education credential is difficult. Rather than specify particular courses, she suggested that early childhood education degree providers specify

more closely the competency outcomes they would like to see in students preparing for a career in the field. Thinking about teacher preparation in this way would place the burden on teacher training institutions to decide whether they should seek to infuse music into existing curriculum or to institute new courses-or even new degree programs. In a partnership between NAEYC and ACCESS, a plan for performance-based approval of Associate Degree early childhood programs is under development. Under the plan, approval would not be dependent on courses or on credit hours, but on demonstrated competency on the part of graduates, Hyson reported.

Several participants noted that distance learning is among the most underdeveloped strategies for delivering both teacher preparation and professional development. This tool, they stressed, is most successful when it is interactive (either directly through satellite technology or by using trainers based in the field) and provides for integration, not just one-way delivery of content. As a successful example of such efforts, Diane Whitehead drew the attention of participants to a newly inaugurated instructional delivery system from Head Start, focused on reading skills, that uses satellite technology to reach early-childhood programs-both those connected to Head Start and other programs. The training is supported by the Carnegie Corporation and is broadcast to child-care centers via subscription; fees run about \$600 for the initial hook-up plus a \$50 per month fee for continuing the service. In addition to regular instruction, the service also provides specialized in-service training and technical assistance, complete with training guides. The same delivery network could be readily adapted to deliver a *Heads Up* music course or other professional development materials.

(3) **Delivering Instruction.** Participants agreed that the ideal for helping develop musical competencies was that regular class teachers infuse music throughout the early childhood education curriculum, and that pedagogically trained musicians should be teamed with early childhood education specialists as resource persons and co-instructors. Such an ideal creates a staffing resources issue, however, the only practical answer to which is the itinerant music specialist. In this model, itinerants would be available to several early childhood education venues, sharing music curriculum ideas, conducting demonstrations, and instructing permanent staff. Visitation by such specialists should be done with sufficient frequency if it is to be effective, not only instructionally but in terms of building musical self-confidence in class teachers. Music educators among the participants agreed that turf issues can become a problem here. They suggested that one possible solution was to seek ways to help itinerants to think in terms of “role release,” i.e., to think of their jobs as sharing expertise, not as sharing professional territory.

In general, music education practitioners need to know what goals for music instruction are developmentally appropriate (see sidebar), what strategies can be invoked to meet those goals, and how those goals serve the whole child. The identification of developmentally appropriate instructional strategies can be especially valuable for early childhood educators who are not specialists in music, in that the availability of these strategies can mitigate the uneasiness of those who feel uncertain about their music skills. Providers who cannot really sing well can use movement, rhythm instruments, and recordings as bases for their instruction.

DEVELOPMENTAL APPROPRIATENESS

Understanding whether a musical activity is “developmentally appropriate” takes a considerable knowledge of child development and learning. Liz Armistead provided an example of how one aspect of choosing what is developmentally appropriate plays out in working with children. Activities designed to teach a child how to follow a steady beat are generally appropriate children who have the motor skills and cognitive development to be able to keep a simple beat. But some children at the same developmental stage are unable to “get” the difference between a high and a low pitch, and thus cannot reproduce the difference. Important parts of developmentally appropriate music education include matching children’s interests with their environment, using resources from the child’s culture, and the consideration of differences stemming from ability and disability. Achieving developmentally appropriate music education, therefore, requires mature judgment and access to a considerable base of knowledge on the part of the educator. Some of this knowledge is collected in NAEYC publications.

In a repeatedly stressed theme of the Summit, many of the comments about instructional delivery pointed up the importance of sensitivity to diversity issues among the early childhood population. These include such characteristics as cultural affiliation, age, sex, race, and socio-economic status. In this context, a number of participants derided the “tourist approach” to diversity issues, which “visits” various cultural and ethnic backgrounds without taking them seriously as contexts that shape children’s lives daily. The observation of differences is not the same as understanding them and benefiting from them.

Except for these general guidelines, however, participants declined to specify or recommend instructional approaches, preferring to leave these choices with early childhood teachers.

(4) Creating Institutional Solutions. Participants were of a single mind in insisting that institutional linkages among their various organizations were crucial to moving forward. The general solution proposed was not to seek to establish new structures but to use existing networks of relationships as “carriers” for the message about the value and use of music in early childhood education. The following lists provide a starting place for potential networking:

National Music Education Organizations

NAfME
Orff
Kodaly
Delacroze
Suzuki
Early Childhood Movement and Music Association

Parent Organizations

PTA and PTO

Education/Educators' Associations

American Association of Community Colleges
American Federation of Teachers
National Education Association
Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development
Center for the Arts in the Basic Curriculum
Galef Institute
National Head Start Association

Private Sector

National Association of Music Merchants
American Music Conference
Very Special Arts
Musicgarten
Kindermusic
Waldorf Schools

Professional Credentialing

Nat'l Board for Professional Teaching Standards
National Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education
Council on Early Childhood Professional Recognition
NAEYC

Family Service Agencies (state, regional, local)

National Association of Child Care Resource
and Referral Agencies

Arts Organizations

Arts Councils/Arts Alliances (State & Local)

Policymakers and Governmental

Each state governor's office
National Conference of State Legislatures
National Governors Association
Each state's OMB
U.S. Department of Education
National School Boards Association
National Science Foundation

Early Intervention Agencies Researchers and Institutes

NAfME Early Childhood Special Research Interest Group

Other Potential Partners

La Raza, National Latino Health Alliance, Healthy Child Care America, the American Academy of Pediatrics, National Black Child Development Institute, the Council for Exceptional Children, Educators for Social Responsibility, Physicians for Social Responsibility, American Public Health Association, National Association of WIC Directors, National Urban League

Among the most important issues to network about is “best practices” (or as some prefer, “exemplary practices”) in the use of music in early childhood education. Getting at these, participants agreed, required both the ability to work with personal and institutional flexibility regarding what is customary in one’s own organization and to maintain a healthy respect for the competence of persons working on other areas of education. Lab schools based in universities are one place to look for exemplary practices because they are by definition places where experimentation is going on, though they may be limited as models because they may not mirror the cultural or economic diversity of the general population. Typical areas in which to look for new ideas include such activities as singing circles, patterning activities, melodic and rhythmic activities, and movement pieces.

The most effective way to proceed with a networking effort, it was agreed, is on a peer-to-peer contact basis. This approach shows respect for the various institutional structures and can involve both subject matter practitioners and organizational leaders. When networking to achieve Summit aims, participants agreed that support from other organizations should be sought not only on cause-related marketing issues, which have a short “half-life,” but also on long-term issues related to philanthropic support and long-term systemic organizational growth. Further aspects of networking efforts should include, but not be limited to:

- Local-level networking modeled on existing alliances at the national level. This can bring together early childhood educators, care providers (who may not have much knowledge of educational methodology), music teachers, policymakers, arts education supporters, and others;
- Working together to achieve such goals as meaningful standards and certification for early childhood teachers as is done, for example, in Head Start Quality Improvement Centers;
- Ensuring that the materials that are used by or published by childhood development organizations include music;
- Developing cooperative relationships and offerings of professional development;

- Trading speakers or providing joint presentations at professional conferences;
- Working toward the placement of work by established music education authors in early childhood journals, and vice versa, to expand the Summit message to new; and
- Mounting a conscious effort to track on and promote Summit issues and initiatives in newsletters and at organizational meetings.

Participants were quick to realize that suggestions for institutional solutions that posited requirements only for others could readily become exercises in buck-passing. Individuals therefore committed themselves to taking specific steps to advance the agenda of the Summit once back on their home ground. The following activities seemed particularly appropriate to the representatives from the organizations noted below, who agreed to take the suggestions up with their parent organizations:

For NAFME

- NAFME should treat early childhood education as an independent strand of its organizational activity and should reflect this status as part of its organizational framework, e.g., in its convention structure, publications program, and staffing. This initiative could become a model for NAFME state-level chapters.
- NAFME should encourage specialist members to connect with Child Development Associates' training in local communities, attend sessions, and offer themselves as resources.
- NAFME should assist in the revision of the Council on Early Childhood Professional Recognition's document, *Essentials for Child Development Associates Working with Young Children*, now underway.
- NAFME should expand distribution and marketing to continue its encouragement of the flow of materials on early childhood among the music and arts community, and in particular the materials developed by its Summit partner, NAEYC.
- NAFME should explore establishing and developing a relationship with the Head Start Bureau to help Head Start centers become better purveyors of music education, and should work with associations of institutions of higher education (especially community colleges) to encourage them to strengthen their preparation programs in child development as support for Head Start.
- NAFME should work to become a more active partner with child care resource and referral agencies (existing in 40 states and responsible for much community-based training), as a resource for training and consultation in music education.

The opportunity to align NAFME and NAEYC standards should not be allowed to fall by the wayside. Elements of that process should include: developing a collection of NAEYC materials and publications related to music and music education; a review of current NAFME publications for articles, etc. suitable for early childhood education practitioners; and, a joint institute or conference on professional development issue that have valence for both organizations.

For NAEYC

Marilou Hyson noted that NAEYC has already produced guidelines, aimed at two- and four-year institutions of higher education, for preparing early childhood educators at the AA and BA levels. It is revising its guidelines for certification programs and will invite comment from NAFME and other Summit participants as a part of that process.

- As above, the opportunity to align NAFME and NAEYC standards should not be allowed to fall by the wayside, so that both associations use their key roles as standard-setting institutions for the good of children in all childcare and educational settings.
- Hyson also indicated that NAEYC would be revising its website with Summit issues in mind, installing hyperlinks to other Summit participants and music education sites related to early childhood education.
- ON a larger scale, NAEYC will soon be revising its curriculum and assessment guidelines with the music education/early childhood education interface in mind.

For the National Association of Child Care Resources and Referral Agencies (NACCRA)

- NACCRA needs to notify its members and contact concerning issues related to the Summit and alert them to possibilities for tying NACCRA resources to music education and early childhood education initiatives at the local level.
- NACCRA should invite participation by music interests in its regional conferences in spring and fall, which focus on local issues. NACCRA contacts in each state will be encouraged to offer reciprocal exhibit opportunities to music education groups.
- NACCRA also declared an interest in developing a joint position paper with NAFME, to be distributed to both its constituencies.

For Ohio Participants

Jan Wolf of the Kent State University Child Development Center and Marcia Humpal of the Cuyahoga County Board of Mental Retardation and Developmental disabilities saw an opening to focus state interest on Summit issues. They proposed to create a special educational strand on music education at an upcoming “Early Childhood Music Day” which would plan for statewide activities. Humpal also indicated she was working on publishing an article on music and early childhood education in a journal not related to music.

For the Colorado Music Educators Association

Joyce Culwell reported that the Colorado Music Educators Association has begun restructuring the organization and its priorities. She said she would work to make sure early childhood education is included among them.

Roles for Individual Participants

Linda Page Neelly, an independent early childhood education consultant in Rochester New York, reported that she intends to continue her own professional emphasis on the relationship between early childhood education and music education. All present were also encouraged to use e-mail to stay in touch and to share ideas.

(5) Identify Research Needs. Participants were in strong agreement that a great deal more research needs to be conducted on both theory and practice on how to relate music education and early childhood education. Among the high priority topics for more research are:

- Garnering usable data to convince the general public of the benefits of music experiences for young learners;
- Conducting research on how family day care centers can best meet the developmental needs of young children, and what steps need to be taken to equip them to improve the ways they meet those needs. As one participant noted, “service delivery systems may find it easier to change in the direction of meeting this need than in the direction of specific music activities. It would be a step in the right direction”;
- More research is also need to uncover how the arts empower the way teachers teach; and
- Research models are needed to investigate the impact of including a music component in two-year training programs for early childhood educators.

Concluding Questions: Connecting the Dots:

At various points throughout the Summit, Mary Luehrsen of the TEXACO Foundation repeatedly encouraged participants to “connect the dots,” by which she meant not building a post-Summit agenda merely by concentrating on isolated points, but by constructing relationships between specific issues and factors. To a large degree, her urgings for the Summit were accomplished, as the lines of connection between desired outcomes, what was needed to achieve them, the delivery system required for accomplishing them, and the roles institutions had in carrying out that system became progressively clearer.

Nevertheless, and not unexpectedly, the Summit concluded with questions to accompany the action steps participants declared they were eager to get started with. Among them were these:

- How can we continue to ensure that music education in early childhood context is treated and understood as valuable in its own right and for its own sake, while deriving the full benefits of music as a means to prepare young children for K-12 schooling?
- How can practitioners of early childhood education work with music educators to preserve the cross-disciplinary character of early childhood education while retaining the distinctive contributions that music education has to make?
- How can we make sure that high-quality teaching materials (e.g., manipulatives, instruments, and lesson ideas) get into the hands of parents, teachers, and other care providers? One suggested possibility was working more closely with industry associations such as the National Association of Music Merchants and the American Music Conference, as well as with leading companies that have a stake in providing

music experiences and education to young learners, e.g., Disney, or whose businesses provide a high exposure to young learners, e.g., McDonalds.

- How can we address employment problems in early childhood education, where there is chronic high turnover, to ensure that care providers have regular access to professional development, mentor modeling, and collegial consultation with specialists in music education who are trained in the issues particular to early childhood education?
- What are the best ways to encourage culturally responsive pedagogy as integral to developmentally appropriate practice in early childhood education?

While these and other questions remain, participants expressed the conviction that their idea sharing had been not only worthwhile but productive. New “cross-cultural” understandings had been achieved between music educators and early childhood educators. New avenues of action had opened up, and a new spirit of cooperation had been kindled. “Systemic disconnects” had been identified and the first steps toward establishing new connections had been made. For many it felt as if, for all the coverage of familiar territory, they saw what they only thought they had known, now in a new light. It felt like coming home. Perhaps, then, the words of T. S. Eliot express best what happened:

“We shall not cease from exploration
And the end of all our exploring
Will be to arrive where we started
And know the place for the first time.”
—*Little Gidding*