

Teaching Early Childhood Music in the Time of COVID-19

Addendum to the Early Childhood Music Position Statement

NAfME Position:

As the National Association for Music Education, we believe all young children have the capacities for music learning. Thus, each has the right to a musical childhood that includes play-based, developmentally appropriate musical engagement that is responsive to gender, ability, and culture, and provided, guided, or supplemented by a professional early childhood music educator.

As stated in the [original position statement](#): *Children use music and music ideas in both observable and unobservable ways—in their routines, play, and relationships—that contribute positively to their aesthetic, expressive, emotional, intellectual, social, physical, spiritual, and creative development. Interacting with adults who notice, affirm, scaffold, and extend children’s musicking can foster young children’s learning about themselves and others, as well as their overall development.*

*Musicking*¹ refers to the myriad ways people engage in musical life, from performing music, to being audience members, to composing music or producing music, and everything in between. Broadening our ideas about musical interactions can help educators and families recognize the many ways musicking can help us during this time of COVID-19. During this time of social distancing, increased concerns about children’s *aesthetic, expressive, emotional, intellectual, social, physical, spiritual, and creative development* are valid, and music experiences, therefore, are especially critical. However, children primarily learn through their interactions with others, and COVID-19 has affected those interactions—whether by limiting the number of people a child encounters or by changing how caregivers and other children may interact with a child. It is imperative that children still have access to a wide variety of play-based music experiences, both unstructured and structured, incorporated into various types of learning opportunities such as one-on-one, choice time, integration with other areas of the curriculum, group music-making with appropriate physical distancing, and music listening. It is still possible to offer intentionally responsive, play-based, developmentally appropriate music engagement with modifications to protect the health of children and their families and in compliance with local directives for various contexts—in person, using hybrid models, and virtually.

Working in collaboration with the Early Childhood Music and Movement Association, the NAfME Early Childhood Special Research Interest Group and General Music Council have created guidance for educators who work with children ages birth to elementary school. This consists of: (1) [General guidance regarding coping with changes brought by COVID-19](#) such as information on setting students and families up for success and tips for technology use with young children; (2) [Context- and activity-specific guidelines and activities suggestions](#), including suggestions for parent/child music classes; and (3) [Standards-based guidance](#) for elementary-aged students including a focus on social and emotional learning. We will update this information periodically as new information emerges.

Recommended citation:

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¹Small, C. (1998). *Musicking*. Wesleyan University Press.