

IFTE 2018
4th International Forum on Teacher Education

**THE INFLUENCE OF MUSIC THERAPY ON CHILDREN WITH
DISABILITIES IN EDUCATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS**

Svetlana N. Bashinova (a)*, Valentina A. Samsonova (b)

*Corresponding author

(a) Kazan (Volga region) Federal University, 18 Kremlevskaya Street, Kazan, 420008, Russia, +78432925161,
public.mail@kpfu.ru

(b) Kazan (Volga region) Federal University, 18 Kremlevskaya Street, Kazan, 420008, Russia, public.mail@kpfu.ru

Abstract

The article describes the results of the research into the use of music therapy for children with disabilities in state-maintained pre-school institutions. The purpose of the research is to describe the improvements required from pre-school educational organizations, so that the rehabilitation process for children with disabilities could be more successful.

The leading method to investigate this problem is observation and diagnostics. The approach, focused on the applied music therapy with children with disabilities was implemented in a number of pre-school educational organizations of Kazan and the Republic of Tatarstan, Russia. The study allowed to identify those changes that occur in these organizations, where disabled children appear in a new social environment, acquire a diverse, valuable experience of communicating with new people and significantly expand the range of their social ties.

The use of music therapy allows to systematically and purposefully overcome the randomness of sensory, cognitive, emotionally-volitional, motivational processes in disabled children, contributes to the increase in activity in the cognitive, playful, educational, communicative spheres of internal and external life.

The analysis of Russian and international best practices on applying music therapy in working with disabled children reveals its potential to provide for promotion of the results and introducing them into the practice of daily work with this category of children. The recommendations on the application of music therapy in pre-school educational organizations for children with disabilities developed by the authors can become the basis of the development of educational programs for the training and further professional development of teachers.

© 2018 Published by Future Academy www.FutureAcademy.org.UK

Keywords: Music therapy, development of preschool children, children with disabilities, rehabilitation.



This is an Open Access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial 4.0 Unported License, permitting all non-commercial use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original work is properly cited.

1. Introduction

The modern world is so changeable, and if a few decades ago a family with a child with disabilities remained alone with its problems, today we see changes that occur in our education. Children with disabilities and special educational needs can attend state-maintained pre-school educational organizations.

The Federal Law On Education in the Russian Federation defines a student with disabilities as an individual with physical and/ or psychological development impairments that are confirmed by a psycho-medical-pedagogical commission and do not allow them to receive a formal education unless special conditions are created (Law of the Russian Federation, 1992).

The introduction of a unified concept of Federal State Educational Standards for preschool education (Order of Ministry of Education and Science of the Russian Federation, 2013), including the development of a state Standard for Children with Disabilities, has identified the need to create various forms in pre-school educational organizations, such as short-term playgroups, *Lekoteka*, early development groups and others.

The main diagnoses of the children that go under this category are complex cerebral palsy, the Down syndrome, autistic syndrome, mentally retarded children, and in many cases this is a complex of various diagnoses. Teachers face the problem of how to correctly introduce this category of children into the pre-school educational organizations space, create an optimal development situation for children with disabilities to be fully included in the society.

The modern teacher is simply lost in the variety of methods and techniques for providing assistance and support for children with disabilities. Naturally, teachers understand that when working with special children, integrative methods of restoring and improving the physical and psychological state of the child are needed. The author considers music therapy to be such a powerful and effective tool for today.

Now we consider the interpretation of the collocation “music therapy” in the psychological dictionary (Kondakov, 2000). The term comes from the Greek *therapeia* – that stands for “treatment”. It is based on the healing effect of music on a person's psychological state. The choice of these or other musical compositions can be carried out on the basis of different criteria: in the so-called *American School of Music Therapy* (Illing & Benedict, 1958) parts that cause a very wide range of emotional states (joy, sadness, sympathy, etc.) are offered; in *the Swedish School* based on in-depth analysis, the presentation of music is individualized to respond to certain hidden complexes.

The researcher V. Oaklender emphasizes the importance of musical means for expressing feelings (for example, aggression with the help of percussion instruments), for the development of the sensory sphere (which is necessary for improving the sense of self, taking care of oneself) (Schwabe, 1972).

Music therapists tap into the power of music to arouse emotions that can be used to motivate and engage clients. People can sense the difference between the feelings produced by an upbeat marching band song and the gentle sway of a children's lullaby. The speed and intensity of the musical beat creates the different feelings in each type of song (Pellitteri, 2000). Research into the music psychology generally supports the theory that music affects heart beat, pulse rate, and galvanic skin responses (Schwabe, 1972).

It is not easy to help children release the hidden feelings and teach them healthy ways of expressing emotions. This is helped with various creative, expressive and projective techniques based on drawing,

creating collages, working with clay, fantasizing and imagining, drama, music classes, movement and play, storytelling, sand games, photography, inventing metaphors and numerous games.

Most of these techniques have been used for centuries by representatives of different cultures for the purposes of communication and self-expression. We can say that we return the inherent ways of self-expression to children. They are transformed into powerful projections that can awaken deep feelings. Everything that a child creates is a reflection of a particle of his/her inner world, or at least something interesting for the child.

The researcher Petrushin (2004) noted that most of the musical rhythms are stemming from the natural basis of the rhythms of the human body. This is, above all, the rhythm of walking, running, breathing, heartbeat. The slowest pace and rhythm, the reflection of which we meet in music is the rhythm of breathing, the typical form of which is one quarter for inhaling and three quarters for exhalation.

Considering the concepts of "music therapy" and "musical education" we understand that they are quite different. They are similar in methods, but differ in the purpose of application, in relation to the specialist for children. In music therapy, the paramount task is connected with the development of the basic mental functions necessary for general development and adaptation, and is also a means of expressing emotions and coping with the situation the child might find themselves in.

In some countries there is a specialization "music therapist specializing in music, psychology, medicine and education", which is included in the list of additional occupations of medical sphere (allied health professions). In Russia this activity is carried out by psychologists, defectologists, music teachers. The assistance they provide by means of music therapy presupposes knowledge of the peculiarities of development of a particular child, of his/her abilities and limitations, medical diagnosis and prospect for the future.

When applied to the musical education of children with developmental problems, the term "rehabilitation" becomes the formation of lost opportunities in the development of musical abilities of children with disabilities aimed at solving health-improvement, educational, correctional tasks. "Rehabilitation (in the medical-psychological-pedagogical meaning) is the restoration of functions, the inclusion of the child with impairments in the social environment ..." (Medvedeva et al., 2002).

"... Music therapy is based primarily on the perception of music, which has its own peculiarities in children with different impairments. Therefore, the analysis of the possibilities of preschoolers in the perception of music, the ability to respond emotionally to music is an important diagnostic indicator determining the effectiveness of the use of music therapy in correctional work with preschoolers with a violation of speech, sight, a delay in mental development, mentally retarded children suffering from infantile autism (the Kanner Syndrome), cerebral palsy.

Music therapy, especially receptive, is associated with the development of visual-figurative thinking, imagination, the ability to act mentally, to feel in an imitated imagined situation, to feel like themselves, to evaluate their condition. And these processes are formed in a child with special needs, provided that the general corrective work is done only by the end of the older age. In this regard, the most sensitive period for the use of music therapy in correctional work with preschool children with special needs is the age of 6-7 years old, and in some cases 5-6 years old.

2. Problem Statement

The urgency of the problem stated in the article is determined by the fact that there is a substantial request from teachers of pre-school educational organizations to work with children with disabilities to provide for the rehabilitation of such children.

If children with disabilities attend pre-school educational organizations of Kazan and the Republic of Tatarstan, where music therapy is applied, the rehabilitation process will go faster.

3. Research Questions

Thus, the following questions are presented for discussion: how much the use of music therapy in a pre-school educational organization creates the conditions for the development of a child with disabilities, the development of his/her musical activity, the manifestation of initiative and the development of independence.

The research issue is to determine how much different kinds of musical activity applied in music therapy affect the child with disabilities; to evaluate the importance of music therapy as a health-securing process for children with disabilities.

4. Purpose of the Study

The research goal is to show the changes that are required in pre-school educational organizations so that the children with disabilities could experience a faster and more effective rehabilitation process.

5. Research Methods

Music therapy is the most ancient and natural form of correction of emotional state that many people use to relieve the accumulated mental stress, calm down, and concentrate. There are different approaches to music therapy. Karl Koenig's approach to music therapy is the following: in order to achieve a profound influence of music on the body, the child must himself/ herself actively act (sing, play a musical instrument, embody music in movements). The essence of music therapy is seen in the ability to evoke positive emotions in a "special" child, which have a therapeutic effect on psychosomatic and psychoemotional processes, mobilize the reserve abilities of the child, and condition his/ her creativity in all areas of art and in life as a whole (Hodges, 1980). The use of the techniques of M. Montessori and K. Orff have an effective corrective-developing effect. The essence of Montessori's pedagogy lies in the motto: "*Help me to do it myself*," where the emphasis is laid on the individualization of teaching and educational activities. And the system of K. Orff his system of musical education is completely built on the development of creative abilities, skills of the child "*Learning, doing and creating*" and includes the following elements:

- speech exercises;
- poetic music making;
- musical-motor exercises;
- games with the instruments of K. Orff;
- introduction to musical theater.

The researcher and therapist Moreno (2009) assigns a great role to musical improvisation, both in individual therapy and in small group therapy, to increase the degree of non-verbal communication. He

tries to adapt the principles of the approach developed by Nordoff and Robbins, who were engaged in key improvisation, for a wider circle of both clients and therapists, and sees the possibility of applying the method of musical improvisation in group therapy (as cited in Oklender, 2012).

After analyzing the author's study of E.N. Kotasheva, we came to the conclusion that it provides for the development and successful implementation of a musical psycho-correctional program for children with disabilities (children with autism) "*We Are Glad to See Each Other!*" (Kotysheva, 2005). All approaches highlight that musical therapy develops the child, helps to find a way to the heart of the child. It is important, that the genuine character of music and its accessibility helps improve the psychological health of children.

Over 20 pre-school educational organizations of Kazan and the Republic of Tatarstan participated in the study. The study made it possible to identify those changes that should occur in pre-school educational organizations, so that children with disabilities could experience a faster and more effective rehabilitation process.

This work involved a close relationship with the parents of children with disabilities. Only parents know everything about their child and can help launch the rehabilitation process. The authors summarized the developmental issues raised by the parents:

- 1) avoidance of eye contact;
- 2) lack of understanding of speech;
- 3) no or minimum speech production;
- 4) general speech deficiently;
- 5) dysarthria;
- 6) violation of phonemic hearing;
- 7) obtrusive speech;
- 8) indifferent behavior;
- 9) stereotyped behavior;
- 10) aggressive and chaotic behavior;
- 11) attacks of anger, irritability and hysteria;
- 12) ignoring other people;
- 13) difficulties with social adaptation;
- 14) difficulties in group activities;
- 15) withdrawal from the outer world;
- 16) disobedience, impoliteness;
- 17) unawareness of social situation;
- 18) inability to dress;
- 19) violations of acts of defecation and urination;
- 20) apathy;
- 21) hyperactivity;
- 22) sleep disturbance;
- 23) sensitivity to sounds;
- 24) manifestation of anxiety, fear;
- 25) need for monotony of action;
- 26) concentration on certain subjects, topics;

- 27) repeated movements;
- 28) insensitivity to pain;
- 29) convulsions;
- 30) learning disability;
- 31) violation of sensory functions (vision, hearing);
- 35) emotional instability;
- 36) restlessness.

The next step in our study was to develop close cooperation of all specialists in the pre-school educational organizations, for introducing music therapy into everyday work with children with disabilities.

In the specialist team, after diagnosing the child, each specialist is able to develop his/ her own program for working with children. The psychologist acts as a consultant for other specialists. The result of all this work is the creation of an individual educational plan for each child with disabilities.

The teachers and child-minders were suggested the following forms of music therapy in working with children with disabilities. They are divided into two main types:

- group music therapy that is crucial for the rehabilitation of children with disabilities as a means of emotional impact on the child in order to correct the existing physical and mental disabilities, as a means of non-verbal communication, as well as one of the possible ways of understanding the world. Music therapy is also used both individually and is a tool able to help children with disabilities to see, hear, feel all the diversity of the environment, to help them to learn their "self", enter into the adult world, to fully exist and interact in it.

- musical accompaniment. It is also possible to complement the musical accompaniment of other corrective techniques to enhance their impact and increase their efficiency.

Different genres of music have different impact on people. Some music carries energy, but some lifts mental tension, helps to relax.

a) Vocal therapy is aimed at forming an optimistic mood with the help of the child's vocal activity. Songs and formulas used to harmonize the child's inner world are used: "*I'm good - you are good.*" b) Instrumental music therapy is aimed at developing an optimistic attitude with the help of playing musical instruments.

b) Kinesitherapy allows children to train in the technique of expressing emotions with the help of expressive body movements, relaxation skills. Great attention is paid to the correction of communicative, psychological disfunctions.

With disabled children, the following methods and techniques of musical therapy tend to be most effective: kinesitherapy, rhythmotherapy, vocal therapy, choreotherapy, psychodrama, game psychotherapy, psycho-gymnastics, children's musical orchestra with disabilities, bell therapy, ornithotherapy.

6. Findings

The results of the study made it possible to formulate the following conclusions.

The implementation of music therapy as one of the ways of rehabilitation and integrated approach in the development of children of the category under study, contributes to the harmonious development of the child with disabilities. It develops imagination, musical abilities, enables to transfer the experience of communication received during music therapy sessions to other spheres of life.

Music influences the development of hearing, attention, memory; a certain metrical pulsation, with which the movements of children are associated, causes a concerted reaction of the whole organism (respiratory, cardiac, muscular activity), and also has an emotionally positive effect on the state of the psyche, which contributes to the overall improvement of the organism.

Thus, all children gradually master the skills and abilities of musical activities, successfully realizing themselves in dances, songs, games, celebrations, entertainments, developing their abilities and engagement. This is the main task of music therapy providing a harmonious physical and mental development of the individual as a foundation for the future of the child's intellectual and physical growth. Listening to music creates good working atmosphere and activates the work of the brain, since the rhythm of the melody coincides with the biorhythms of the nervous system.

Playing musical instruments, the child develops his/her mathematical abilities due to the need to understand the rhythm and feel the pace of music. While engaged in music, the child's mental development is accelerated, expanding a spectrum of emotions, making an idea about the world around more sophisticated. Finger games to music contribute to the development of fine motor skills in children, thus preparing the child for writing and drawing. The performance of a musical piece stimulates the development of neural connections in the areas of the brain involved in speech production.

7. Conclusion

When children with disabilities find themselves in a new social environment, they acquire a diverse, valuable experience of communicating with new people, significantly expanding the range of their social ties. Music therapy provides for the development of aesthetic taste in children with special needs. The implementation of music therapy makes it possible to systematically and purposefully overcome the randomness of sensorimotor, cognitive, emotionally-volitional, motivational processes in children with disabilities, contributes to an increase in activity in the cognitive, playful, educational, communicative spheres of internal and external life.

Acknowledgments

We express our deep appreciation and gratitude for the support in the publication of the results of the scientific research to the Director of the Institute of Psychology and Education of the Kazan Federal University, Doctor of Education, Professor A.M. Kalimullin and the Head of the Department of Preschool and Primary Education of the Institute of Psychology and Education of the Kazan Federal University, Doctor of Education, Professor V.G. Zakirova.

The authors thank the teams of preschool educational institutions of Kazan and the Republic of Tatarstan who took part in the scientific research. The work is performed according to the Russian Government Program of Competitive Growth of Kazan Federal University.

References

- Hodges, D. (1980). Neurophysiology and musical behavior. *Handbook of music psychology*, 195-223.
- Illing, H. S., & Benedict, I. (1958). *Entwicklung und Stand der amerikanischen Musiktherapie. Musik in der Medizin*. Stuttgart.
- Kondakov, I. (2000). *Dictionary of psychology*. Moscow.
- Kotysheva, E.N. (2005). Musiac a as therapy element in rehabilitation of children with communication impairments. Retrieved from <http://festival.1september.ru/authors/104-012-143>
- Law of the Russian Federation. (1992). No. 3266-1 of July 10, 1992. On education in the Russian Federation.
- Medvedeva, E. A., Komissarova, L. N., Shashkina, G. R., & Sergeeva, O. L. (2002). *Music education of children with developmental problems and correction rhythmic. Manual for college students*. Moscow: Academia.
- Moreno, J. (2009). Listening to your inner music. Music therapy and psychodrama. Moscow: Kogito-Tsentr.
- Oklender, V. (2012). Hidden treasures. Moscow: Kogito-Tsentr.
- Order of Ministry of Education and Science of the Russian Federation. (2013). No. 1155 of October 17, 2013. On the confirmation of Federal State Education Standard of pre-school education.
- Pellitteri, J. (2000). Music therapy in the special education setting. *Journal of Educational and Psychological Consultation*, 11(3-4), 379-391.
- Petrushin, V. I. (2004). The big city neuroses. Moscow: Akademicheskyy Projekt.
- Schwabe, C. (1972). *Musiktherapie bei Neurosen und funktionelln Storungen*. Zurich.