



THE ARTS AND MENTAL WELLBEING

Mental disorders are among the most common health conditions affecting children today. In fact, research shows that one in seven young people aged 4 to 17 years experience a mental health condition in a given year.(1) Research also shows that there is a strong positive relationship between engagement in the arts and mental wellbeing.(2) We firmly believe in this correlation, and put the wellbeing and mental health of young children at the very centre of all the services we provide.

Consequently, we have developed a range of arts experiences which include: music concerts, themed storytelling musical performances and creative workshops, providing opportunities for children to engage in the arts and express themselves creatively. Alongside the pure entertainment value provided, we also believe these activities provide children with a vital creative outlet to support their mental wellbeing.

Sources:

(1) Lawrence, D., Johnson, S., Hafekost J., Boterhoven De Haan, K., Sawyer, M., Ainley, J., & Zubrick, S.R. (2015) The Mental Health of Children and Adolescents. Report on the second Australian Child and Adolescent Survey of Mental Health and Wellbeing. Department of Health, Canberra.

(2) Davies, C., Knuiman, M. & Rosenberg, M. The art of being mentally healthy: a study to quantify the relationship between recreational arts engagement and mental well-being in the general population. BMC Public Health 16, 15 (2015).

THE VALUE OF MUSIC

J.M. Barrie, creator of Peter Pan, once declared 'if you cannot teach me to fly, teach me to sing'. In this simple statement Barrie touched on the magical power of music to transport us to another place. It is obvious for all to see the joyful exuberance music brings to the individual or the group. There are also numerous educational and developmental benefits to be gained from active participation in music.



CHILD DEVELOPMENT & LEARNING EXPERIENCES

Recent research emphasises the value of music participation throughout childhood and identifies these benefits:

- Language and Literacy: Singing assists the development of speech, and contributes to a child's reading skills.
- Mathematics: Music can promote an intuitive understanding of essential mathematical concepts.
- Intellectual: Music can help improve a child's ability to reason abstractly by increasing the interconnections between brain cells.
- Social: Participation in music helps children to develop higher levels of social cohesion and understanding of themselves and others, including the development of empathy.
- Emotional: Music encourages self-expression and self-confidence.
- Creative: Music stimulates a child's imagination.

OUR APPROACH

Singing:

Children are actively encouraged to sing during the show. Our original compositions are highly melodic, lyrically inspiring and encourage movement. Our use of repetitive refrains facilitates participation by enabling children to easily sing along.

Movement and Music:

Our shows are energetic, and children are encouraged to dance and perform actions to the songs. Such active participation harnesses creative energy enhancing social, physical, cognitive and language development.

Listening:

Changes in the tempo of the music, the pitch and the volume create the necessary dynamics to encourage the development of listening skills. The use of sound effects, and open-ended questions further serves to facilitate concentration skills and deep learning

Playing instruments:

Simple percussion instruments are provided to promote active participation and assist in the development of fine motor skills.

Sensory stimulation:

Our shows are highly visual. The use of brightly coloured costumes and props, together with high-energy movement, provides an exciting aesthetic setting to ensure children are fully engaged

In the final analysis:

The ancient Greeks believed music should be at the centre of any serious education. Whatever the educational benefits of music, we must also never lose sight of the fact that the simple joy of music is enough in itself. As the rock musician Sting so eloquently put it – 'music brings its own rewards'.

