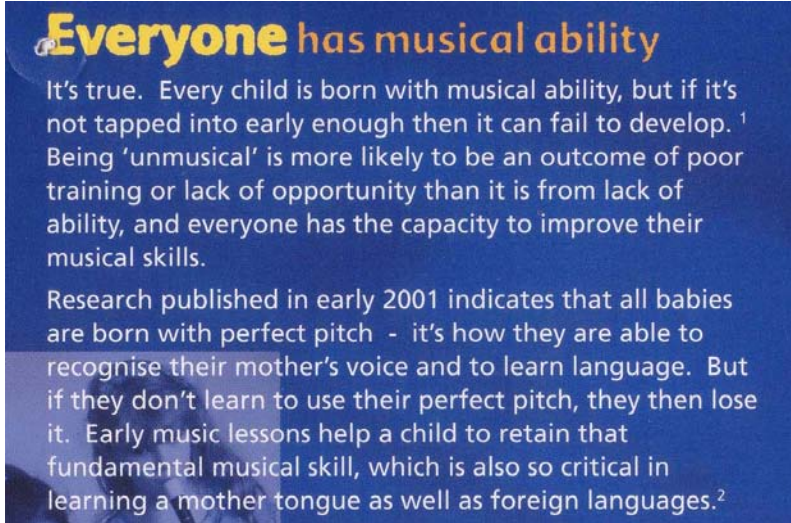


The Educational Benefits of Music

The following points were listed by the Australian Music Association and clearly illustrate the benefits of music in education:

- Everyone has musical ability

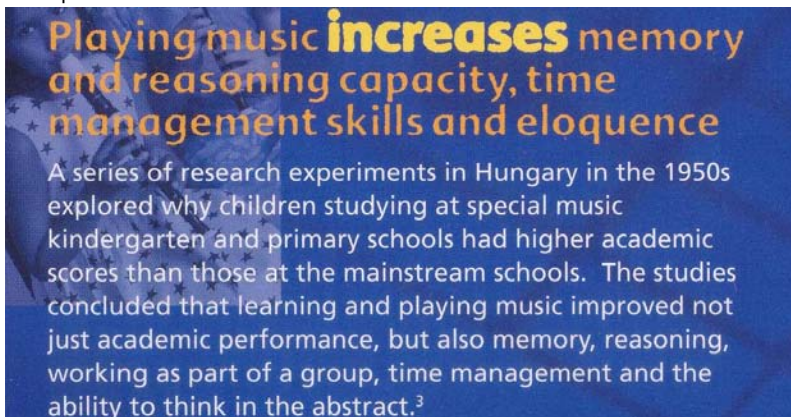


Everyone has musical ability

It's true. Every child is born with musical ability, but if it's not tapped into early enough then it can fail to develop. ¹ Being 'unmusical' is more likely to be an outcome of poor training or lack of opportunity than it is from lack of ability, and everyone has the capacity to improve their musical skills.

Research published in early 2001 indicates that all babies are born with perfect pitch - it's how they are able to recognise their mother's voice and to learn language. But if they don't learn to use their perfect pitch, they then lose it. Early music lessons help a child to retain that fundamental musical skill, which is also so critical in learning a mother tongue as well as foreign languages.²

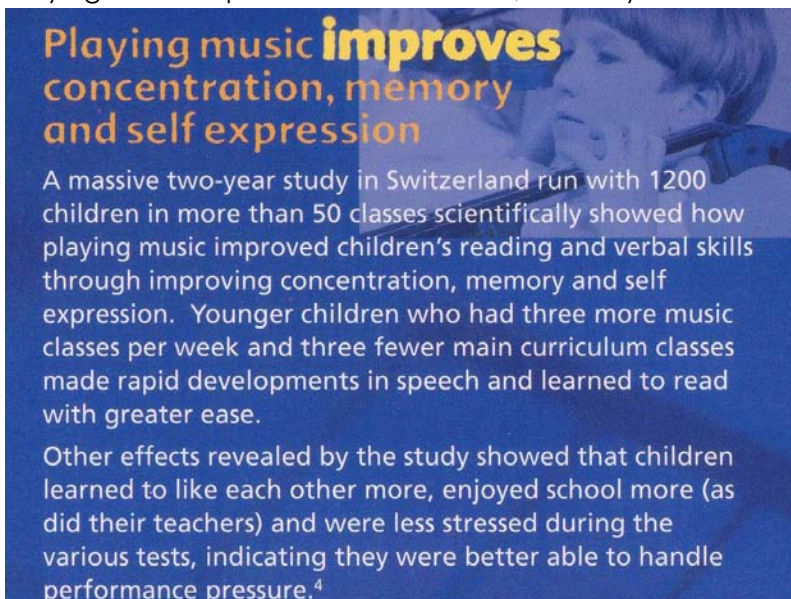
- Playing music increases memory and reasoning capacity, time management skills and eloquence



Playing music increases memory and reasoning capacity, time management skills and eloquence

A series of research experiments in Hungary in the 1950s explored why children studying at special music kindergarten and primary schools had higher academic scores than those at the mainstream schools. The studies concluded that learning and playing music improved not just academic performance, but also memory, reasoning, working as part of a group, time management and the ability to think in the abstract.³

- Playing music improves concentration, memory and self expression



Playing music improves concentration, memory and self expression

A massive two-year study in Switzerland run with 1200 children in more than 50 classes scientifically showed how playing music improved children's reading and verbal skills through improving concentration, memory and self expression. Younger children who had three more music classes per week and three fewer main curriculum classes made rapid developments in speech and learned to read with greater ease.

Other effects revealed by the study showed that children learned to like each other more, enjoyed school more (as did their teachers) and were less stressed during the various tests, indicating they were better able to handle performance pressure.⁴

- Playing music improves the ability to think

Playing music **improves** the ability to think

Ongoing research at the University of California-Irvine and the University of Wisconsin-Oshkosh⁵ demonstrate that learning and playing music builds or modifies neural pathways related to spatial reasoning tasks, which are crucial for higher brain functions like complex maths, chess and science. The first studies showed that listening to a Mozart sonata temporarily improved a child's spatial abilities. Further studies compared children who had computer lessons, children who had singing lessons, children who learned music using a keyboard and children who did nothing additional. The children who had the music classes scored significantly higher - up to 35% higher - than the children who had computer classes or did nothing additional.⁶

- Music training improves verbal memory

Music training **improves** verbal memory

A preliminary study at The Chinese University of Hong Kong has shown that adults who had music training before the age of 12 years had an improved ability to recall spoken words - ie. verbal memory. The study tested 60 adults of which 30 had six years or more of training with a Western musical instrument, and the balance had some training through to none.⁷

- Learning music helps under-performing students to improve

Learning music **helps** under-performing students to improve

Researchers at Brown University in the US discovered that children aged 5-7 years who had been lagging behind in their school performance had caught up with their peers in reading and were ahead of them in maths after seven months of music lessons. The children's classroom attitudes and behaviour ratings had also significantly improved, and after a year of music classes were rated as better than the children who had no additional classes.⁸

- Music students are more likely to be good students

Music students **more likely** to be good citizens

High school students who participate in the performing arts, including the school band program, are far less likely to be involved with drugs, crime or have behavioural problems, according to a longitudinal study being pursued in the US. Called Champions of Change, the study is being undertaken by a number of researchers including those at Harvard, Stanford and Columbia. This finding is supported by the Texas Commission on Drug and Alcohol Abuse which reported in 1998 that 'secondary students who participated in band or orchestra reported the lowest lifetime and current use of all substances' (alcohol, drugs, tobacco).