

33 Ways Your Child Can Benefit From Music Lessons

Implications on Primary/Secondary Education

- A University of California (Irvine) study showed that after eight months of keyboard lessons, preschoolers showed a 46% boost in their spatial reasoning IQ.¹
- In a study of Kindergarten students, children who were given music instruction scored 48 percent higher on spatial-temporal skill tests than those who did not receive music training.²
- Young children with developed rhythm skills perform better academically in early school years.³
- First-grade students who had daily music instruction scored higher on creativity tests than a control group without music instruction.⁴
- A research team exploring the link between music and intelligence reported that music training is far superior to computer instruction in dramatically enhancing children's abstract reasoning skills, the skills necessary for learning math and science.⁵
- Research shows piano students are better equipped to comprehend mathematical and scientific concepts.⁶
- Researchers find music is a superior way to teach elementary students the concept of fractions.⁷
- A 1997 study of elementary students in an arts-based program concluded that students' math test scores rose as their time in arts education classes increased.⁸
- Students in two elementary schools who were given an enriched, sequential, skill-building music program showed marked improvement in reading and math skills. Students in the enriched program who had started out behind the control group caught up to statistical equality in reading, and pulled ahead in math.⁹
- In a study of elementary students, one group received musical training, while another group received an equal amount of discussion skills training. After six (6) months, the students in the music group achieved a significant increase in reading test scores, while the reading test scores of the discussion skills group did not change.¹⁰
- U.S. Department of Education data on more than 25,000 secondary school students found that students who report consistent high levels of involvement in instrumental music over the middle and high school years show "significantly higher levels of mathematics proficiency by grade 12."

- Studies find a link between music instruction and academic achievement as measured by standardized tests.¹¹ Regardless of socio-economic background, music-making students get higher marks in standardized tests.¹² In both verbal and math scores, high school student musicians outpace peers.¹³
- A McGill University study found that pattern recognition and mental representation scores improved significantly for students given piano instruction over a three-year period.¹⁴
- Data from the National Education Longitudinal Study of 1988 showed that music participants received more academic honors and awards than non-music students, and that the percentage of music participants receiving A's, A's/B's, and B's was higher than the percentage of non- participants receiving those grades.¹⁵
- In an analysis of U.S. Department of Education data on more than 25,000 secondary school students (NELS:88, National Education Longitudinal Survey), researchers found that students who report consistent high levels of involvement in instrumental music over the middle and high school years show "significantly higher levels of mathematics proficiency by grade 12." This observation holds regardless of students' socio-economic status, and difference in those who are involved with instrumental music vs. those who are not is more significant over time.¹⁶

Implication of Musicality on Higher Education

- College admissions officers continue to cite participation in music as an important factor in making admissions decisions. They claim that music participation demonstrates time management, creativity, expression, and open-mindedness.¹⁷
- The College Entrance Examination Board has found that students in music appreciation scored 63 points higher on the verbal and 44 points higher on the math sections of the SAT than students with no arts participation.¹⁸
- Music majors are better readers, and make more successful medical school applicants.¹⁹
- Physician and biologist Lewis Thomas studied the undergraduate majors of medical school applicants. He found that 66% of music majors who applied to medical school were admitted, the highest percentage of any group. 44% of biochemistry majors were admitted.²⁰
- The College Board identifies the arts as one of the six basic academic subject areas students should study in order to succeed in college.²¹
- The U.S. Department of Education states, "Many colleges view participation in the arts and music as a valuable experience that broadens students' understanding and appreciation of the world around them. It is also well known and widely recognized that the arts contribute significantly to children's intellectual development."²²
- College-age musicians are emotionally healthier than non-musician counterparts.²³

Music's Effect on Behavior and Self-Image

- In a 2000 survey, 73% of respondents agree that teens who play an instrument are less likely to have discipline problems.²⁴
- Secondary students who participated in band or orchestra reported the lowest lifetime and current use of all substances (alcohol, tobacco, illicit drugs).²⁵
- According to a 1991 study, students in schools with arts-focused curriculums reported significantly more positive perceptions about their academic abilities than students in a comparison group.²⁶
- Students who are rhythmically skilled also tend to better plan, sequence, and coordinate actions in their daily lives.²⁷
- Researchers find arts training not only raises scholastic performance, but also improves student behavior and attitude.²⁸
- An Auburn University study found significant increases in overall self-concept of at-risk children participating in an arts program that included music, movement, dramatics and art, as measured by the Piers-Harris Children's Self-Concept Scale.²⁹
- In a 1999 Columbia University study, students in the arts were found to be more cooperative with teachers and peers, more self-confident, and better able to express their ideas. These benefits exist across socioeconomic levels.³⁰

Career Implications

- The very best engineers and technical designers in the Silicon Valley industry are, nearly without exception, practicing musicians.³¹
- "Studying music encourages self-discipline and diligence, traits that carry over into intellectual pursuits and that lead to effective study and work habits. An association of music and math has, in fact, long been noted. Creating and performing music promotes self-expression and provides self-gratification while giving pleasure to others."³²
- "The nation's top business executives agree that arts education programs can help repair weaknesses in American education and better prepare workers for the 21st century."³³

Endnotes and Citations

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