

Why Learn to Play MUSIC?



Music Education Counts

“The arts are central to who we are as a people, and they are central to the success of our kids. This is not an afterthought. This is not something you do because it’s nice to do. It is necessary for these young people to succeed that we promote the arts.”

– PRESIDENT BARACK OBAMA



According to the results of a July 2014 Harris Poll®:

- Seven in ten Americans **(71%)** say that the learnings and habits from music education equip people to be better team players in their careers.
- Two-thirds **(67%)** of Americans say music education provides people with a disciplined approach to solving problems.
- Two-thirds **(66%)** of Americans say that music education prepares someone to manage the tasks of their job more successfully.
- Three in five Americans **(61%)** said it [music education] provided a disciplined problem solving approach and 59% said it prepared people to manage tasks more successfully.
- Four out of five Americans **(80%)** believe their music education has contributed to their level of personal fulfillment.

Educational Benefits

Learning to play music is a smart choice

- Rhythm skills and pre-reading abilities are linked in the development of toddlers.¹
- Everyday listening skills are stronger in musically trained children than in those without music training. Significantly, listening skills are closely tied to the ability to perceive speech in a noisy background, pay attention, and keep sounds in memory.¹
- A 2013 study published in *The Journal of Neuroscience* found that adolescent-centered studies show that even very basic rhythm abilities, such as tapping to a beat, relate with reading skills.²
- According to Dr. Nina Kraus’s work with the Harmony Project, students who are involved in music are not only more likely to graduate high school, but also to attend college as well.³



“I was twelve when I learned my first three chords on guitar and wrote my first song. My life changed forever... music became the way I told my stories.”

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“To be the next great inventor of something we haven't dreamed of yet, you need to have creative skills. Music really fosters those creative skills.”

– ILLINOIS LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR SHEILA SIMON



Cognitive Benefits

Musical experience aids in development

- A few years of musical training early in life improves how the brain processes sound, and the benefits of early exposure to music education last well into adulthood, years after the training has ceased.¹
- Research by Parbery-Clark, A., *et al.*, reveals that musical experience strengthens many of the same aspects of brain function that are impaired in individuals with language and learning difficulties, such as the neural timing precision which allows differentiation between speech syllables.⁴
- A study published in 2010 found that regular music making strengthens nonmusical brain functions.⁵
- According to research published in a 2014 article in *Parents* magazine, learning how to play percussion instruments helps children develop coordination and motor skills, because they require movement of the hands, arms, and feet.⁶

Social Benefits

Musical instruction improves social skills

- A 2014 Harris Poll® found that music education lays the foundation for individual excellence in group settings, creative problem solving, and flexibility in work situations.⁷
- Learning an instrument teaches children about delayed gratification.⁶
- Taking music lessons offers a space where kids learn how to accept and give constructive criticism, according to research published in *The Wall Street Journal* in 2014.⁸
- According to a German Institute for Economic Research study, teens who take music lessons outside of school score significantly higher in terms of cognitive skills, have better grades, and are more conscientious and ambitious than their peers.⁹

“Some people think music education is a privilege, but I think it's essential to being human.”

– JEWEL, SINGER, SONGWRITER, AND INSTRUMENTALIST



Music and the Arts are Vital Elements of the Core Curriculum

For more information on the benefits of music education, how to support music in your community, and to join a national network of music education advocates, visit www.nammfoundation.org.

Citations

1. Strait, D.L., Kraus N., (2014), "Biological impact of auditory expertise across the life span: musicians as a model of auditory learning," *Hearing Research*. 2. White-Schwoch, T., Woodruff Carr, Anderson, S., Strait, D.L., Kraus, N. (2013), "Older adults benefit from music training early in life: Biological evidence for long-term training-driven plasticity," *The Journal of Neuroscience*. 3. Kraus N., Slater J., Thompson E.C., Hornickel J., Strait D.L., Nicol T. & White-Schwoch T. (2014), "Auditory learning through active engagement with sound: Biological impact of community music lessons in at-risk children." *Frontiers in Auditory Cognitive Neuroscience*. 4. Parbery-Clark A., Anderson S., Kraus N. (2013), "Musicians change their tune: how hearing loss alters the neural code." *Hearing Research*. 5. Kraus N., Chandrasekaran B. (2010), "Music training for the development of auditory skills." *Nature Reviews Neuroscience*. 6. Kwan, A. (2013), "6 Benefits of Music Lessons," *Parents*. 7. The Harris Poll®, July 2014. 8. Lipman, J. (2014), "A Musical Fix For American Schools," *The Wall Street Journal*. 9. Hille, AI, Schupp, J., (2013), "How Learning a Musical Instrument Affects the Development of Skills," *SOEPpapers: The German Socio-Economic Panel at DIW Berlin*.

**Or contact the
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