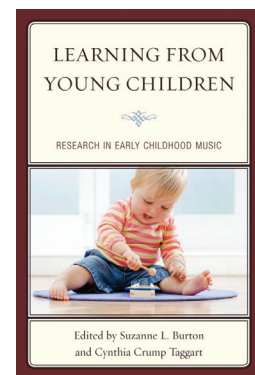


## Learning from Young Children: Research in Early Childhood Music

Edited by Suzanne L. Burton and Cynthia Crump Taggart  
Rowman and Littlefield (in partnership with NAFME), 2011



**M**usical experiences in preschool allow young children to express themselves, discover their own musical skills, and understand music's prevalent role in our society. Yet providing instruction that is meaningful and developmentally appropriate in early childhood is a challenge for many music educators, preschool teachers, early childhood caregivers, and parents. This challenge exists in part due to inconsistencies in the quality, availability, and content of musical instruction in preschools today.

Fortunately, there is a strong and growing community of practitioners and scholars in both music education and early childhood education committed to addressing the musical needs of young children. At a conference held by MENC's Early Childhood Special Research Interest Group at the University of Delaware in 2009, many of these individuals worked together to create what is now a valuable collection of new research studies entitled *Learning from Young Children: Research in Early Childhood Music*.

Edited by Suzanne L. Burton and Cynthia Crump Taggart, this text presents early childhood music research studies in four parts:

- (1) Understanding Musical Characteristics
- (2) Creating Rich Learning Environments
- (3) Musical Parenting
- (4) Benefits of Early Music Instruction

By including studies within these four distinct areas of interest, the editors have made this publication valuable not only to music educators, but also to early childhood teachers,

The book addresses topics such as parental involvement, language acquisition and development, brain research, students with special needs, music listening centers, musical engagement, and school readiness.



parents of young children, researchers, and teacher educators in both music and early childhood education. The studies' results can teach music teachers the musical capabilities of young children, as well as best practices in early childhood music instruction. In addition, results can support music educators and preschool directors in advocacy efforts to include more consistent music instruction in early childhood settings. The diversity of research design within this collection also provides graduate students and developing researchers with models for replication and complementary future studies.

The book addresses topics such as parental involvement, language acquisition and development, brain research, students with special needs, music listening centers, musical engagement, and school readiness. While authors include elements commonly found in research studies (such as related literature, method/procedures, results, discussion, and implications for the profession), they also provide rich descriptions of teaching techniques, interactions with children and parents, and challenges associated with carrying out their research. All is written in a conversational style that is easy to understand. Readers can become familiar with both formal research results and the nature of musical instruction within a variety of settings. Research participants range from disadvantaged preschoolers to middle-class children, as well as parents from a variety of backgrounds. Urban settings, private schools, and community music programs are also represented.

When considering the foundations of Orff Schulwerk, a number of studies may be of interest to AOSA members, including "The Impact of a Music and Movement Program on School Readiness" by Lili M. Levinowitz, and "Tonal Patterns: Providing a Vocabulary for Comprehensive Vocal Improvisation" by Krista N. Velez. For those interested in developing a better understanding of issues relating to students with special needs in early childhood music settings, "Examining Music Experiences with Anthony, a Child Who Has Autism" by Wendy Valerio, Annabel Sy, Hannah Gruber, and Claire Griffith Stockman, and "Elementary Music Teachers' Role-Iden-

tities In and Perceptions of Teaching Prekindergarten Students with Special Needs” by Julie Derges Kastner will be helpful. Additional studies, all written by respected researchers in the field of early childhood music education, address other timely topics. Music educators at all levels, from those teaching infants and toddlers, to early childhood music methods instructors in higher education, will surely find something of interest after a quick perusal of this fine collection’s table of contents.

Early childhood educators and parents are often at the center of a child’s musical world. Music educators must provide developmentally appropriate musical activities to children in early childhood settings. While many certified music educators do not currently work with preschool-aged children, they firmly believe in the importance of including music in these early years to provide a solid foundation for life-long musical engagement. Music educators, then, need to collaborate with early childhood educators and

parents to fully understand the unique challenges inherent in providing music instruction within early childhood settings, and assist in the process of bringing music to daily preschool instruction. *Learning from Young Children: Research in Early Childhood Music* creates the perfect opportunity for all parties to engage in a meaningful dialogue that will allow for more consistent offerings in early childhood music. ■

*Rachel Whitcomb, Assistant Professor of Music Education at Duquesne Univer-*

*sity, teaches undergraduate and graduate courses on the topics of early childhood music, elementary general music, and creativity. She recently created the Early Childhood Music Initiative, which allows undergraduate music education students to teach music in underserved preschools in Pittsburgh. Her work has been published in Music Educators Journal, Teaching Music, The Kodály Envoy, and General Music Today. She currently serves on the Editorial Board for Music Educators Journal.*

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