



## FACT SHEET #66

projectaccess.missouristate.edu  
 projectaccess@missouristate.edu  
 866-481-3841



### PROJECT ACCESS

Missouri's educational  
 leader in autism support

## Music Mediated Instruction

The evidence-based practice of Music-mediated intervention is used by teachers, caregivers, and therapists. It encourages incorporating songs, melodic intonation, and/or rhythm to support learning or performance of skills/behaviors. It includes music therapy, as well as other interventions that incorporate music to address target skills.

What is the concept behind Music-mediated intervention? Music-mediated intervention (MMI) uses music as a key feature of the intervention delivery. While this includes music therapy which occurs in a therapeutic relationship with a trained music therapist, there are interventions that can be used by anyone. Think back to elementary school. Do you remember learning songs to help you remember the states and their capitals, or the colors of the rainbow? For years, we have used music to aid in learning, in this example, to help with memorization. But music has been proven to improve outcomes in several areas, including: communication, social skills, play skills, school readiness, adaptive self-help skills, challenging/interfering behavior, and motor.

A trained music therapist must have a bachelor's degree or higher in music therapy from one of American Music Therapy Association's 72 approved colleges and universities, including 1200 hours of clinical training. For a trained music therapist it may look like the following:

- Working with congresswoman Gifford's to regain her speech after surviving a bullet wound to her brain.
- Working with older adults to lessen the effects of dementia.
- Working with children who have ASD to improve communication.

A trained and certified music therapist may not always be available. However, there are still things teachers, caregivers, and advocates can do to use this EBP with children with ASD. These may include but are not limited to:

- Advocating for your student to participate to the full extent with music programs offering in your district.
- Incorporate rhythms with instruction in routine activities in your schedule. Clap your syllables while you introduce yourself during the morning meeting. Or tap the table matching the rhythm of their rocking during one-on-one instruction or homework time at home.

- Be open and aware of this EBP, and dig deeper into ways you can apply it at school or at home.

Like many of the evidence-based practices in the field of ASD, two or more work in combination provide maximum results. When considering which EBP's to use with Music-mediated instruction, consider the use of prompting, reinforcement, and modeling.

**References:**

American music therapy association. (2020, August 8). American music therapy association. Retrieved August 8, 2020 from [musictherapy.org](http://musictherapy.org).

Ghasemtabar, S. N., Hosseini, M., Fayyaz, I., Arab, S., Naghashian, H., & Poudineh, Z. (2015). Music therapy: An effective approach in improving social skills of children with autism. *Advanced Biomedical Research*, 4(157). <https://doi.org/10.4103/2277-9175.161584>

Srinivasan, S. M., Park, I. K., Neelly, L. B., & Bhat, A. N. (2015). A comparison of the effects of rhythm and robotic interventions on repetitive behaviors and affective states of children with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD). *Research in Autism Spectrum Disorders*, 18, 51-63. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.rasd.2015.07.004>

Steinbrenner, J. R., Hume, K., Odom, S. L., Morin, K. L., Nowell, S. W., Tomaszewski, B., Szendrey, S., McIntyre, N. S., Yücesoy-Özkan, S., & Savage, M. N. (2020). Evidence-based practices for children, youth, and young adults with Autism. The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, Frank Porter Graham Child Development Institute, National Clearinghouse on Autism Evidence and Practice Review Team

© Project ACCESS - April 2017 \*Project ACCESS is a collaboration among the Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, Missouri State University, and Missouri's public schools.