



MOPS Take 2 - Term 2 Music Matters @ MOPS

KEY:

ML: Music Leader

LS: Little Star Group Music Sessions

KW: Key Worker

The Term 2 report was completed by Kath Borer (Project Leader and ML) and reviewed by Kirsty Mees (Evaluation Officer)

OVERALL AIMS

For MOPS SEN/D children to engage & grow with high quality music, singing & sensory sessions and access live concerts & performances.

All sessions for Term 2 of the project resumed face to face. This marked a considerable difference in the children's participation and engagement. Sing and Sign also started their sessions as they were unable to start in Term 1 due to lockdown. Rainbow sensory sessions ran by the MOPS team also resumed.

Provide MOPS workforce with the tools to become self sufficient in music making sessions, using tuned percussion & ukuleles.

Formal training relating to musical skill development was again postponed in Term 2 due to COVID-19 restrictions. The practical nature of this training and the specific instrumentation needed requires these sessions to run face to face and with continued restrictions in place we decided to defer until Term 3.

Staff continued to develop their musical skills and understanding through practical engagement within each session, observation and consistent discussions and feedback with LS ML.

OUTCOME 1 - PERSONAL

To improve communication in a vocal, emotional or physical way in response to group music sessions & concerts.

The children had the opportunity this term to attend two musical concerts at the playgroup provided by professional musicians. These included;

Friday 21st May: Concertini - The Sandhurst Brass Quintet. Comprised of 5 professional military musicians performing Trumpet, French Horn, Trombone & Tuba.

Thursday 15th July: Kidz Live Ceilidh - Comprised of 3 professional musicians playing guitar, percussion, violin and vocals.

Both concerts were held during normal playgroup hours. COVID-19 restrictions meant families were not able to attend and therefore the MOPS team and children were only those present.

Long term COVID-19 restrictions have also resulted in some of the children not having experienced live music before. The ML was a little concerned that the Brass concert may be overwhelming for some of the children due to the volume and vibrating nature of brass instruments. However the children were completely captivated by the sounds and vibrations. Y was clearly moved by the music. She moved her body in ways we had not seen before, held her head up high to listen and watch and made lots of vocal interactions. Extracts from the Brass concerts can be seen on MOPS facebook page.

See links below.

[Brass Concert](#)

[Brass Concert Videos](#)

The Ceilidh was a fantastic interactive concert where the children and team were fully immersed in the experience. J and S immediately showed interest in vocalising and were given microphones to enable them to sing and vocalise with the group. S also wanted to be involved and pushed herself (in her chair independently) to the front of the stage to play percussion with the musician. All the children were eager to join in and have a go. The concert also provided moments of calm which some of the more sensory children really enjoyed. Extracts from the Ceilidh can be seen on MOPS facebook page.

See links below.

[Ceilidh - Dancing](#)

[Ceilidh - S playing - singing](#)

Observations from Group & Music Therapy Sessions for R and D.

The ML leader has noted that children who attend 1-1 sessions as well as group sessions, have made significant progress both musically, socially and vocally. Their confidence has developed and they are forming strong relationships with the ML. Bonding with the ML over a period of time has enabled the children to feel secure and develop trust which has supported the children to experiment, explore and develop new skills and confidence in their musical interactions.

Two case studies of children throughout Term 2 (R and D) clearly shows the children's determination to join in with music sessions even when at times they may be uncomfortable due to heightened sensitivity. Their progression in both group and 1-1 sessions in just a short space of time (12 weeks) is evident in the following observations.

VIGNETTE 1
Child: R
ML Observations

R: LICAM syndrome. Hydrocephalus - shunt in place. Visual impairment. Global developmental delay

Before lockdown R enjoyed music sessions and actively engaged.

R was visibly upset during music today. He made frequent cries and appeared uncomfortable. We tried a few alternatives e.g. saying his name, not saying his name, being near him, being further away. R's key worker Rachel suggested that it could be the anticipation of the drums. Next week we will play the drums earlier on in the session to see if this eases his discomfort.

R was upset again today (crying, uncomfortable, shying away from sounds) but an improvement on last week. Not as frequent. R was able to sign that he did not want to play any instruments when asked. Rika (his KW today) also stroked his legs throughout the session to ground him which he seemed to respond positively too.

MUSIC THERAPY SESSIONS

The guitar seemed to upset R instantly today. Very unsettled and lots of crying at the beginning of this session. ML put the guitar away and worked with different instruments to determine his preferences to sound and texture.

ML placed the tongue drum on R's tray and played gentle notes but again R became upset with lots of loud vocal cries.

ML then gave R the shaker and sang "lets play the shaker R". This seemed to sooth R as a simple hushed sound with no other instruments distracting him. R picked up the shaker many times and banged it on his tray or shook it in one hand. R was calm, content and following instructions.

ML then put the tongue drum back on his tray. We did the same as before but this time ML gave R a beater. He was in control this time. He tapped the beater on the drum. His preference was him playing rather than ML. When ML would play he would start to cry but as soon as ML stopped playing and let him play solo he tapped the drum, followed instructions and shared his engagement through consistent eye contact and exploration.

ML then moved onto the triangle. R held the beater and ML held the triangle. R was most content and happy when he was playing the triangle in his own way. They sang two songs with call and response cues. He played both times with ease and without becoming upset.

R wanted to play the guitar and moved his fingers to the strings but it quickly become overwhelming for him as the sound and vibration from the strings passed through his body.

From todays session it was clear that R has sensory sensitivity to certain musical sounds and dynamics and too many sounds together (e.g. guitar, voice and shaker). He becomes frustrated and appears to need time to process the sounds in his own way. Slow and steady is the ML's approach for the music sessions with R, adapting experiences in the moment based on his responses. Some instruments R immediately liked the sound and texture, others he clearly conveys his current aversion. ML will try over the weeks to work out his preferences and work on slowly introducing the instrumental sounds that are more difficult for him to process.

GROUP MUSIC SESSIONS

Rachel (R's KW) shared that R had, had a lovely week during "music week" exploring lots of different instruments. The instrumental sounds had not upset/distressed him (as they sometimes do in group/1-1 music). Rachel anticipated improvement in today's music session.

R was visibly more comfortable in today's session. Lots of smiles and eye contact and appeared calm. There was one moment during the 'HiYa' song where he was overwhelmed (squeezing eyes closed, holding breath, making himself smaller) but after this song had passed he was able to sit and join in throughout. When asked if he wanted a bell by his key worker he indicated by moving his hand no. He had clearly chosen for that song he just wanted to listen and observe rather than use an instrument. For all other songs he choose to play along with instruments by singing yes.

R was calm and engaged throughout today's session, without any signs of being upset. He shared his engagement through eye contact, smiles, signing yes, wanting to play his instruments. R seemed to have more movement in his hands today and played the chime bar holding the beater and could tap with ease.

R actively participated for every section of todays group music. R even played the drum with his feet and enjoyed the sensation and rhythm. Huge progress!

SING & SIGN GROUP SESSIONS

R joined in with assistance from his carer clapping along and participating.

R liked the Lion in the warm up song and really smiled. A Lion also appeared in the Jungle song, which he also appeared to enjoy.

VIGNETTE 2

Child: D

ML Observations

D - Chronic lung disease. Congenital heart disease. Brain injury. Developmental delay.

GROUP MUSIC SESSIONS

Consistent eye contact observed today. D watched ML as she moved around the space. D really enjoyed playing the drums today. Focused playing and lots of little smiles. She also lay on the drum to the side and appeared to enjoy feeling the vibrations as her peers played around her.

D was very calm throughout the session today. Lots of eye contact and using her instruments to play/shake/tap rather than focusing on tactile exploration with mouth.

ML sang "Let's go fly a Kite" today with lots of up and down actions and vocal pitch going up and down. D banged her hands on the parachute in excitement. D was calm throughout today and tracked where ML was walking. She shared her eagerness for ML to get to her with an instrument by raising her voice.

MUSIC THERAPY SESSIONS

1st Session

Consistent eye contact and interaction with ML observed throughout the session today. D very much indicated by tapping ML face shield that she could not see the ML properly. ML removed the shield and the eye contact improved further. D held eye contact for whole songs (2-3mins) at a time. Previous to this it has been fleeting. The connection between ML and child was strengthened when the face shield was removed and trust in the musical interactions was increased. D then played her instruments without distress. She was joyful playing the chimes and once laughed which had not been observed before during music. Her focus was stretched out for longer periods of time as she comfortably and confidently played the cabasa for wheels on the bus for 2-3mins.

2nd Session

Amazing! Eye contact held for most of the session. Huge improvement in connecting with ML. D also brought humour to the session today which she has not done before. We played a game of pushing the instrument away (led by her) and bringing it back. She thought this was very funny and played this game for 2-3mins. She held eye contact, made sounds, and clearly intended to participate in this way.

Wheels on the bus is a song which appears to soothe, calm and maintain D's attention. ML played the song in various ways for most of the session. The Cabasa was used for wheels. ML left gaps for D to fill but this time instead of filling with her sound or moving the cabasa she would touch ML face. She did this about 10 times. She clearly wanted ML to sing the song rather than vocalise herself.

She also really enjoyed playing the tongue drum. She held her hands on top of ML's and moved ML hands to bang it. This was repeated many times and D maintained strong eye contact, smiles, sounds and reactions.

As the ML and D's relationship strengthened, D's confidence in the music sessions appeared to grow as well as her engagement and musical, communicative and interactive responses. When the connection between music therapist and child is consistent and familiar, the child feels secure and is able to explore confidently, express ideas and preferences, and move in different directions.

3rd Session

D attended independently with ML today. KW stood out of sight.

D held ML hand for many of the activities today. She held ML hand and moved it onto the instrument following the musical cues to make the sound together. She was very forceful and deliberately moved the ML's hand in time backwards and forwards. Wheels on the bus was used to calm when she started to get a little distressed. Immediately she would stop, maintain eye contact with ML and calm down.

D forcefully played the guitar today along to the Hello Song for 5 rounds. She played the strings with power and enjoyed the resonance of the strings. She deliberately moved ML's hand out of the way during this song. She wanted to play independently.

"Rain is falling down" she held onto ML hands up high tightly and dropped them down onto the drum in time. Her power and determination to explore and respond to the musical cues and activities was evident throughout.

[Video evidence of D playing the guitar](#)

SING & SIGN GROUP SESSIONS

D had been upset and a little unsettled prior to the start of music session but once ML began singing she really calmed down and begun participating and engaging in the songs.

Using the Sounds of Intent Framework music leaders & MOPS staff will document individual communicative responses and engagement and track how children interact/progress/learn in a group setting and how this effects them individually.

ML and MOPS staff have started the process of logging data captured onto the Sol framework. It has been noted how time consuming entering the data is due to the amount of additional information required. We will draw upon our findings in Term 3 as again due to restrictions the team have only just begun this process.

Families will report on communicative responses developed as a result of music sessions through informal discussion at sharing sessions / concerts.

It was wonderful to hold our first sharing concert of the project on Tuesday 20th July in the garden at MOPS. The session was well attended by parents, siblings and the broader family. Little Star and Sing & Sign led the session. Parents were happy to join in and also the children participated in their own way often with a sibling or family member. At this concert we were able to chat to parents informally about their children's progression. It was noted by ML and staff comments and feedback that overall in Term 2 the children appeared were more confident, socially aware, vocal, tuning in to others e.g. ML, peers or MOPS team, vocalising considerably more than in lockdown, excited/happy about music sessions and enjoyed moving their bodies to music.

Music leaders will document the development of communication responses within the group and individually.

Weekly observations and written notes have been documented throughout Term 2 by ML and KW's. The MOPS team and ML have also started to utilise the SOI framework by capturing data from the children's communicative and musical achievements, although this is in its early stages.

**VIGNETTE 3
Feedback from MOPS Team**

'Overall I think the children really enjoyed the face-to-face sessions and as the term went on they became more focused and engaged in the sessions.'

'The sing and sign sessions started off with the children not always being fully engaged but as the term went on and it became more familiar to the children there was a lot more focus. Several of the children would be distracted by Jess the cat in the box and would get up and try and take it out.'

'BB has I think been really well engaged with all singing sessions and will often be seen signing along to all sessions.'

'Little Star session continues to be the session I think the children engage the best with. They understand the routine of the session even though the songs change, for example the pattern of the drumming will on occasion spur a child to start banging the rhythm out as they are put down on the floor.'

Rainbow Sessions (led by the MOPS team) - 'We took these back to the basic songs we had started out doing with this group as we felt the children didn't engage so well with unfamiliar songs where we had tried to link them to the planning theme. The basic songs engage the children much better, but I feel that the session worked better when we used our sensory props which due to covid has not been happening and I think this means the children don't engage as well as they did. Towards the end of the term, we started putting the mats on the floor for the non-mobile children to stretch out on and the mobile children interact with them - this worked much better, but I feel that the dynamic of the group isn't the same without the props. During the Rainbow session, we have always had good engagement from SB, AB and BB who join in with signing and actions and making a choice if they want to hear the song again. Our roly poly song usually has AB very excited!'

OUTCOME 2 - WORKFORCE

To develop MOP's Workforce musical skills to enable them to become a self sufficient music making setting.

Trainers will document workforce/leaders progress through written reports, evaluations and video/photographic evidence.

MOP's workforce will report on each other's achievements progress & improvements after they have used their skills in group music sessions through informal discussion and note taking.

Music Leaders will report on improvements in MOP's workforces ability, to develop music making opportunities for the children.

Due to COVID-19 the ML was unable to deliver face to face training for MOPS workforce focusing on music skill development and practical elements of delivering music making opportunities. Two training events exploring these areas have been scheduled for Term 3. In Term 2 training focused on the SOI framework with MOPS team capturing individual child data and inputting this onto the SOI framework. We will discuss this more in the Term 3 report.

Staff continued to reflect on individual children's achievements as well as the impact of each of the music sessions through informal feedback and discussion with the ML. These reflections will become the basis for developing and adapting practises in Term 3 as opportunities for practical training resume.

CONCLUSION

Due to the nature of the setting and medical vulnerability of the children attending, many COVID-19 restrictions have continued to be in place, which has meant a return to more typical session structures and activities has not been possible. This has impacted some of the experiences provided, resources utilised and the project itself, particularly relating to training opportunities and skill development. Despite these continued restrictions many of the activities have been able to resume in some way including concerts with professional musicians, sharing concerts with families and additional music sessions. This continuation has been so beneficial to the children and staff at MOPS.

The musical experiences in Term 2 have both highlighted examples of the negative impact of COVID-19 restrictions on the children's confidence, communication and musical interactions as well as provided many examples of significant improvement in these areas as things have started to recommence in some way. In Term 2 we see children connecting with staff and ML's, resulting in increased confidence to explore and engage in a variety of ways.

The Term 2 data suggests that new connections as well as reconnections with staff and peers through music, have guided the children and extended their learning, social interactions and communication. Consistent and familiar interactions with staff and ML's have supported the children to feel secure, calm and motivated, resulting in new responses and confident expressions of musical ideas and preferences. In Term 2 we see many examples of children's responses moving away from distress and being unsure how to engage and interact, to confident, communicative expressions of musical choice (both wanting to be involved and not wanting to explore at that time) and extended learning.

As the children and staff continue to explore music together and training opportunities resume we will see further examples of musical, social and communicative achievement and can continue to explore how the project supports long term music making opportunities, and tracks impact and progression for both the staff and children at MOPS.