

# Elements of Lil Bird Music Classes

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The most important thing for a young child's musical development is musical immersion, but the kind of immersion that is developmentally appropriate for their age, and also attuned to the variety of learning styles that different children have. In Lil Bird Music Classes, I aim to offer children and their bright, flexible minds, and their big open hearts a wide variety of musical experiences. And I support them in learning, without forcing, in a way that is suited to each of their particular styles of learning.

While it would not be developmentally appropriate at this young stage of learning to focus on formal music lessons, there are hidden elements of music theory & music learning strategically embedded in the PLAY and JOY of every music class, to assist leading a child to Basic Music Competence (the ability to hold a simple steady beat, and sing a simple melody in key) by the age of 6.

Primarily what is being expressed is Rhythm and Melody. Each category has many angles and modes that they get expressed through:

## **Rhythm:**

- **Different rhythmic meters** meaning:
  - **6/8** (feels like waltz or swing),
  - **4/4** (most standard rhythm of much of western music, &
  - **odd meters** such as 5/8, 7/8, 10/8 (which is more typical of world music, such as Mid-Eastern, or Indian)
- **Keeping the BEAT** - the steady rhythmic pulse of any music
- **Rhythm Patterns** - an easy pattern of beats that play on top of the rhythmic pulse mentioned above
- **Levels of Beat** - Macro, Micro and extended Macro, (the big, medium-paced beat, the little, fast-paced beat, and the REALLY big, super slow-paced beat)

## **Melody:**

- **Melody is made up of scale, key, pitch & tone**

- **Major Key** - Has a bright, up feel to it
- **Minor Key** - typically has a lowered 3rd and feels more moody, and sometimes even sad
- **Unusual keys such as Phygian or Dorian** - sometimes used in western music, but more often common to music from other cultures
- **Tonal Patterns** - patterns of notes played after a song, picked from the melody to help the child learn by ear the building blocks of melody which are 'note intervals' (how two notes relate to each other) and 'harmony' (how two notes sound when played at the same time)

### **Other Elements common to most Lil Bird Music Classes:**

- **Chant** - a song which has words but is only rhythmic and does not have a melody
- **SWOW** - or Songs Without Words, can be song on "La la la" only (as an example) this helps a child's mind be able to absorb and focus on the melody more specifically
- **Instrument Play** - teaches beginning of learning to make music with something outside of ourselves, expresses rhythm and sometimes pitch, melody and key
- **Vocal Play** - Singing in more expanded ways with the use of 'Ostinato' or parts-singing, harmony, & singing in rounds
- **Large Movements** - get the children up off of their feet and experiencing the beat with their whole bodies
- **Small Movements** - usually sitting in place, focusing perhaps on learning melodies or how to use your hands with the song
- **Finger play** - small movements done with the hands and fingers to help develop fine motor skills
- **Contrast** - Children learn by sensing one thing different than another, so we are always putting fast next to slow, high next to low, Quiet/loud, etc.
- **Audiation** - Being able to hear a melody, or phrase of music in our heads when it's no longer being played is a part of music learning. Sometimes the music teacher will leave a word or phrase off and let the children finish it from what they hear in their head

- **SQ - Silly Quotient** - There must be a certain amount of silliness in every class because children learn best by Play, Laughter and FUN!!
- **Oopsie!** - Oopsie can be a part of every class. Its when we make a mistake, and we want to acknowledge it without shame or judgment. A way of normalizing the benefits of trial and error. That its ok to take risks and its ok to make mistakes. Mistakes are a part of any great learning
- **World Music** - When children are young, they have no preconceived notions of what makes “good” music. At this stage it is great to introduce children to all flavors cultures, rhythm, scales, keys and melodies so they can grow up with a rich musical context and be at choice about what they love and the music they want to make in the future. Sometimes this aspect gets expressed by bringing in a piece of recorded music for a free dance, so children can just absorb this rich offering.

### **Different Learning Styles of Children:**

I respect that there are different learning styles such as, audial, visual, & kinesthetic. These different styles all require the child to follow their natural impulses for learning.

- **The Visual Learner** - takes in everything visually. They might sit really close to the teacher or grown-up and watch your mouth really closely and engage in finger play a lot.
- **The Auditory Learner** - might, in class, be wandering around looking at different things but taking things in with their ears, being very quiet in class, but blossom in singing and expressing at home, or once class is over.
- **The Kinesthetic Learner** - might be running around during classes, bouncing and jumping up and down but taking everything in through their bodies.

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Each of these learning styles are completely appropriate for your child’s age.

### **Benefits of Learning Music at a Young Age:**

Just a few of the many....

- Brain growth. ...

- Language skills. ...
- Maths skills. ...
- Memory, attention and concentration. ...
- Increased coordination. ...
- Achievement and discipline. ...
- Social skills. ...The joy of music.

#### Benefits of SINGING:

- Relieves Stress
- Stimulates the Immune System
- Increases Pain Threshold  
(endorphins)
- Develops a sense of belonging & connection
- (to name a few)