

**Why Teach Music To Babies?**

Thanks to recent research we now know that musical aptitude (music potential), like intelligence, is equally given to all of us when we are born. We also know that this music aptitude significantly diminishes if it is not nurtured by early and repeated experiences.

We also know, thanks to the work of Dr. Gordon, that music is learned the same way we learn language so with this information in mind we can guide these early-childhood music experiences appropriately. If we look at how a baby simulates language, we know that he/she is hearing and responding to sounds as early as in the mother's womb. This means that babies are being bathed in the sounds and rhythms of language for over a year before they begin to speak. Then they will spend much time experimenting with isolated words and eventually after even more time, the child will combine those words into phrases and then into sentences. It is the fact that we continue to talk to them, regardless of their ability to respond, that allows children to become fluent in their language. So it is safe to say that children are not taught language, they acquire it. With this knowledge, our job as educators is not to teach babies music but rather to guide parents and children through musically rich experiences, and to bathe the babies in the sounds and rhythms of music of our culture.

Some of the goals of musical development for babies/toddlers with Musikgarten are:

 To offer adults opportunities to play musically with their babies so their well-being and total development might be served.

 To provide an enriched environment which engages infant’s musical aptitude and intelligence from birth.

 To offer infants listening and sensory stimulation during the most receptive period of neurological development and networking.

 To awaken baby’s natural curiosity and response to music.

 To engage in appropriate music and movement activities which encourage infant participation and motor response such as songs for rocking, bouncing, and dancing to express the joy of playing together. This interaction stimulates the baby in integrating movements and thus promotes cognitive learning

 To develop aural perception, a musical sense, and a sense of beat, skills needed to later build upon.

 To lay the groundwork for singing and speech so that children learn to sing at the same time that they learn to talk. Repetition and patterns help shape listening and oral language. Repetition enhances memory, oral expression, and later written language.

 To help adults learn traditional songs and rhymes in order to communicate cultural traditions to a new generation.

 To nurture the infant’s inherent need to interact with significant others in a mode of love, support, and encouragement.

 To encourage pleasure in listening and making music at home. Music that helps baby to calm him/herself.

 To offer a music environment rich in songs that help baby learn about the body and build body awareness as well as explore and discover new patterns of movement as well as manipulate objects such as simple instruments.