
EDITORIAL

By

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This issue of *Visions of Research in Music Education* presents a focus on early childhood music. Hailed as the most important time for musical growth, early childhood is the developmental period from before birth through age 7. In the first article, esteemed music education scholar, Dr. Edwin Gordon discusses the musical development of the very young child, based upon his extensive research. After establishing the basis for informal music guidance in early childhood, Gordon issues a summons for music teacher preparation and the music education profession at large to take notice of the optimal time for musical growth and make programmatic changes that place importance on fostering the musical development of young children.

Cynthia Taggart, noted early childhood music expert and pedagogue, operationalizes the points made by Gordon in her response to his essay. Here, Taggart discusses the implications of the information that Gordon presents. Furthermore, she draws attention to the many possible applications for practice and proposes a well-defined research agenda for early childhood music.

While visiting Reggio Emilia, a highly celebrated system of municipal preschools in Reggio Emilia, Italy, Amanda Page Smith questioned how to facilitate the musical development of children in a manner that would honor Reggio principles. For this action research, Smith created and implemented a Reggio-inspired early childhood music curriculum. She found that through a developmentally appropriate, emergent music curriculum, young children could be agents of their own music-learning, act as co-researchers, and joyfully engage in spontaneous song creation.

Lisa Huisman Koops examined how parents' perception of their children's musical development effects their involvement in early childhood music class. Koops conducted interviews with five parents who, with their children, were involved in her early childhood music classes. Through her analysis, Koops concluded that parents marked their involvement in music class through (a) modeling, (b) exploring the roles between parent and child, and (c) interacting within a cohort of parents and children. Parents' enjoyment of music class, their recognition of the multiple roles of music in their children's lives, and understanding of music acquisition as developmental led to greater involvement in music class.

In a study on the broader cognitive development of young children, Kim Holland searched for clues to young children's understanding of melodic construction. Four children, 3 through 6 years of age were asked to construct a melody on Montessori bells, and subsequently create a representation of their work. While no cross-case findings were established, Holland discusses how each child approached the tasks and provides recommendations for future research.

John Flohr, Diane Persellin, Daniel Miller, and Harry Meeuwsen contribute a study on the relationships among music listening, temperament, and cognitive abilities of 4-year-old children. One conclusion of their research was that children who scored high on a visual closure test were more outgoing and that this temperament interacts with the music and social climate of the classroom. The results of this study provide a fascinating look into the EEG responses of 4-year-old children to two contrasting styles of music as well as the relationship between listening to recorded music and the children's cognitive abilities.

A historical reprint, written by the late Marilyn Pflederer Zimmerman, closes this special issue on early childhood music. As many readers know, Dr. Pflederer Zimmerman was a pioneer in the area of early childhood music research and deftly made connections between research and practice. In this issue, a compilation of her groundbreaking work entitled, *Musical Characteristics of Children*, is presented, compliments of MENC: The National Association for Music Education.

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