



## Music Together® Aligns with Early Head Start

The Music Together program uniquely and comprehensively aligns with Early Head Start and can serve as an integral part of the program by supporting its goals while providing families and service providers with engaging and enjoyable activities.

### **A Multigenerational Approach**

Music Together understands the importance of promoting the parent-child relationship and believes that fostering this relationship by working with children and adults together is the best way to ensure children have the positive and nurturing relationships that best support healthy development. Both the in-class experience and the supportive take-home materials (CD and songbook) provide caregivers, classroom teachers, parents, and other family members with the tools and knowledge necessary to foster children's growth in multiple domains while also having fun through music play.

### **Flexibility in Program Delivery Model**

The Music Together program has had success in a variety of settings and, depending on a community's needs, can be used in the home, center/school, or a combination of the two.

### **Serving the Needs of the Community**

Music Together can respond to the diverse needs of a variety of communities and populations. With the belief that music is an international language, the Music Together program has served families from many countries and cultures and incorporates a rich array of songs in each collection to represent the diversity in music and culture that exists across the globe. Translations of parent education materials are available in several languages.

### **Full Alignment with the *Four Cornerstones of Early Head Start***

#### **1. Child Development**

With the belief that music learning supports all learning, Music Together supports the physical, social, emotional, cognitive, and language development of each child, all while having fun with engaging music and movement activities.

- **Physical:** Guided and child-initiated music, movement, and instrument activities provide opportunities for children to use their bodies in various ways, supporting the development of body awareness, coordination, and fine, gross, sensory, and oral motor skills.
- **Emotional:** Children's development of emotion-regulation abilities occurs through activities that foster the adult-child attachment relationship and help preverbal children learn to use the facial, vocal, and emotional responses from an adult to interpret the surrounding world. Through the activities, children and adults engage in reciprocal affective attunement, which promotes intersubjectivity (shared attention and experience between an adult and child) and secure adult-child attachment relationships. Lullabies also provide an opportunity for infants and toddlers to practice self-soothing.
- **Social:** Children's self-regulation capacities and emerging executive function skills of inhibitory control, attention, and working memory are developed through songs, rhythm and movement activities that involve children's own initiation and ceasing of behaviors. Solo, dyad, and group activities also support children's turn-taking skills and growing self-concept.

- Cognitive: Songs and rhythmic chants in varied meters familiarize young children with concepts of proportions, patterning, and simple counting, supporting their emerging math skills. Through instrument play and movement with props, children have the opportunity to explore cause-and-effect.
- Language: Music supports emergent language and literacy development through songs with rhymes and songs without words (sung on specific vocables or phonemes) that expose children to the basic structure and sequence of sounds involved in language, including phonological awareness and alliteration. The adult-child dyad element also supports joint attention (shared attention between an adult and child), which fosters language development through the benefits of a parent's verbal response to a child's focus of attention.

*Children with Disabilities.* The Music Together community is firmly committed to its mission to serve all children, including children with special needs. Music Together's International Headquarters supports its licensees with on-staff assistance in the form of a board-certified music therapist and the Special Needs Program Development Workgroup.

*The Power of Music.* Active engagement with music can have powerful positive effects on children's personal and social development that go beyond what can be measured. All children are musical, and being given the opportunity to participate in music at an early age and develop basic music competence allows children to experience the rewards of exceling in something early in life, nurturing their self-esteem and motivation to learn. Particularly for children with special needs or at-risk academically, this experience can foster in them a more positive outlook on their future.

*Supporting Transitions.* As Music Together has program models that serve children birth to 8, it can also support the EHS goal of helping young children transition between early care and education programs by being a constant in children's lives in school and at home.

## **2. Family Development and Engagement**

Music Together views parents, family members, and extended family members as a child's first, and strongest, educational influence, and supporters of ongoing learning and development. Therefore, parents are essential partners in a comprehensive collaboration to build and sustain a dynamic and rich learning and development environment for their own children. The Music Together program can also support the goals and strategies of your program's Parent, Family, and Community Engagement (PFCE) framework.

## **3. Community Building**

The Music Together program is a service that supports families with young children yet also builds community by providing a platform for mutual and equitable support among all participants – children, teachers, parents, caregivers, and family members. Occasional large family and community events are encouraged as a natural extension of the music experience.

## **4. Staff Development**

As a developmentally appropriate and research-based early childhood program, Music Together is grounded in established "best practices" in the areas of child development and early education and can therefore be an integral element of professional development efforts and an enjoyable tool for educators and service providers to use to create and enhance quality relationships with children and their families. Music Together Specialists may hold in-service trainings for all interested staff, or individuals can take part in partial or full program trainings.