

# Researchers from Cambridge want to learn more about music therapy for autistic children.

## Can you help?



### Who are we looking for?

We are looking for children with an autism diagnosis, aged 7 – 11 years, to take part in a music therapy research study.

### What would happen if my child and I took part?

Each child that takes part will have a baseline assessment, which will take place in school for up to 1 hour, and online from home for up to 1 hour and 20 minutes.

After the assessment, your child will be randomly allocated to one of two groups. One group of children will receive 2 sessions of music therapy per week for 12 weeks. The other group will not receive music therapy. At week 13 and at week 39 we will do another assessment of both groups, which will take up to 30 minutes in school and up to 1 hour and 10 minutes at home.

### What are the possible benefits of taking part?

It is possible that social and communication skills will improve in some of the children in this study, but we cannot promise the study will help you or your child.

### To take part or to find out more:

Please contact the researcher Dr. Artur Jaschke: [aj723@cam.ac.uk](mailto:aj723@cam.ac.uk) for more information or let your school contact know that you would like a follow-up phone call from the researcher.

### Location

- The study can be completed at your child's school or at the Autism Research Centre in Cambridge, whichever is more convenient for you.

### Is my child eligible?

- 7 – 11 years old
- Has received a diagnosis of autism
- Has not received any music therapy in the last year.

### Who is Conducting this study?

- Researchers from the University of Cambridge and Anglia Ruskin University.

The principal investigators for this study are Prof. Simon Baron-Cohen at the University of Cambridge and Dr. Jonathan Pool at Anglia Ruskin University. This study has been approved by the University of Cambridge Psychology Ethics committee.

# Music Therapy for Autistic Children

## What is Music Therapy?

Music therapy is a treatment that uses music as the primary means of interaction between the child and the therapist. Music therapy allows children to use instruments, their voice and movement so that they can communicate in their own musical language, whatever their level of ability.

## How Could Music Therapy Benefit Autistic Children?

Music therapy specifically addresses three main aspects:

- **Social Interaction:** music therapy is based on forming a child-therapist relationship through the enjoyable sharing of music.
- **Communication:** music is an accessible mode of communication. The therapist is closely attuned to the child's music and responds in a way that encourages further communication.
- **Imagination:** music-making is a fun and rewarding way to encourage creativity and imagination. Children can often move away from ritualistic use of instruments to a more flexible and creative playing style, which may also lead to less rigid thought and behaviour patterns.

## What is Improvisational Music Therapy?

Improvisational music therapy is a form of music therapy that focuses on improvised music created by the child and the therapist. This can be through singing and/or instrumental improvisation, and tailors each session to the child's musical strengths and preferences.

You can expect to see lots of different melodic and percussion instruments and hear a variety of sounds and music in sessions. An improvisational music therapy session will never be the same twice, but may incorporate elements from past sessions depending on the child's musical likes and dislikes.

## Where Can I Find More Information on Music Therapy ?

For more information on music therapy, please see the website for the British Association of Music Therapy: [www.bamt.org](http://www.bamt.org)

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