

GOLD

Question	Answer - No
<p>1. Are there a range of musical environments created, e.g., are instruments displayed and presented on a range of levels both inside and outdoors?</p>	<p>Often instruments and sound makers are kept on trolleys, in baskets, in or on top of cupboards and are considered to be part of the continuous provision. The same is not typically applied to other resources such as clay, play doh, pencils, paintbrushes. Have a play with creating Musical environments that invite children to play.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Placing shakers on top of a table is potentially more inviting and easier for children than having to rummage through a box. • ‘Noisy’ and ‘loud’ are often words used to explain the reason that instruments are not visible and accessible to children. Carefully consider the instruments that you offer, e.g.: • cymbals do not necessarily need to be offered all of the time • wooden beaters used on wooden xylophones often creates a fairly harsh/loud sound, changing beaters to felt or rubber beaters can make a huge difference • drums played with hands, not beaters, creates a softer sound. Taking away beaters from children once they have started playing with them can be hugely upsetting. Carefully consider when beaters are available and when they are not, to prevent taking beaters away from children. <p>You can have a look here for ideas around musical environments.</p>
<p>2. Is music included in the planning? Both adult led activities and musical environments/activities to support child-initiated music making?</p>	<p>Planning for music is often challenging in terms of where within general planning it may be placed</p> <p>FAQ’s include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do I include music within my planning for Expressive Arts and Design? • Do I include planning for music independently as its own separate area? • Do I include music in all areas of planning as it threads through all areas of Learning & Development? <p>The answers to such questions depends on how your overall planning. For more information on planning please visit here.</p>
<p>3. Do practitioners recognise and value children’s spontaneous vocal play/spontaneous singing?</p>	<p>Children are often singing and/or vocalising whilst playing independently and with others. Vocalising begins at birth and develops throughout early childhood and beyond. You can recognize and value children’s spontaneous vocal play/spontaneous singing by:</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Looking out and listening for children's vocalisations and how they are vocally playful whilst playing • Looking out and listening out for the songs that children sing whilst playing • Looking out and listening for children's sound effects whilst they play with toys or in their role play <p>For further ideas to develop your practice, please look at the Vocalising and singing aspect of Musical Development Matters online here.</p>
<p>4. Are new songs introduced on a regular basis and children are encouraged to create their own songs?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children learn through repetition. Don't be afraid to sing a song over and over again, you can change what you do with a song so that the song offers a range of learning opportunities, e.g. you can vary it by e.g. changing the volume (dynamics), speed (tempo) or by involving instruments. • Developing your repertoire of songs is also important so that children have a wide range of songs they can experience and sing. Have a look here for websites and books for song ideas. • Be flexible, children often ask if they can sing their favourite songs – be prepared to include them in your sessions. • Making up songs for and with children can be a great way of developing your song repertoire • Asking families about the songs that they sing at home – can you learn songs from parents/carers that can then be shared in your setting?
<p>5. Is children's musical play recognised and valued with adults sensitively interacting where appropriate?</p>	<p>Children's music making is often described as noisy. A great starting point to help recognise and value children's musical play is to explore the following questions together as a team with other practitioners in the setting:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is it music or is it noise? • How do staff in the setting identify, value and respond to children's musical communications? <p>For examples of children's music making and videos of adults sensitively interacting with children, you can look in the Exploring and Playing section of Musical Development Matters here and in the Take Art video library here.</p>

	<p>Take Art share the learning from their 3-year Youth Music funded Early Years music programme via their website. You can read about how the educators explored, observed and documented children’s musical behaviours here.</p>
<p>6. Is background music kept to a minimum and are active music listening experiences supported by practitioners?</p>	<p>Music is often on in the ‘background’. People often categorise background music as music that is playing but is not the focus. When music is played within any environment it may be the focus for some children and not for others, it depends whether they are tuning into it and hearing it. Some children may thrive on having music played in the background whilst it may be detrimental to others. Consider the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If music is played within the environment does this shift the children’s original focus and does the music become their new focus? • If it is not the focus for children is it distracting them (even very slightly) from what they are doing and impacting their ability to concentrate? <p>To develop your range of active music listening activities for children please look here.</p>
<p>7. Are a wide range of genres of recorded music available for children to listen to?</p>	<p>If you do not offer a wide range of genres for children to listen to, consider how you can expand this so that children do not have limited music listening experiences. Recorded, commercial music in EY settings tends to be limited to a small range of music such as nursery rhymes, classical music, pop music and doesn’t often include a wide variety.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children need a rich diet of listening experiences to enable them to form their own individual tastes and preferences. • A great starting point is to find out about the music that children listen to at home and bring this music into the setting. If you can find out about the music that all of the children in your setting listen to and include this in your provision, you are likely to build up a wide range of repertoire. • You can also ask the staff in the setting to share their tastes in music and include this in the music provision. • It is crucial that you consider and discuss what is appropriate and what is not appropriate, this is subjective and needs discussing with the team of educators you work with. <p>To find out more about active listening and developing opportunities for children to listen to music, please look at the Tune into Listening research here.</p>

<p>8. Is children's music making documented using a range of mediums such as audio recording, film, annotated photographs?</p>	<p>Children's music making is often documented by photos, this is a great start as this will demonstrate that music making is valued, but we can't hear a photo. Consider how you can capture children's music making:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Videos are brilliant as we can see and hear the music that is being made with all of the movement that goes with it and these can be shared with children and their families. • Audio recordings are also brilliant as when we listen without the visual aspect we often listen differently. If you have an iPad then using the voice recording can be great, if not, using a Dictaphone to capture children's music can be really effective. Dictaphones can be fairly low in cost and can be a really useful resource to invest in.
<p>9. Are the musical interests of the children explored and built upon within the setting?</p>	<p>Seek out information about the children' musical homelives, their musical identities, their preferences and musical interests. This can be done by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Asking this information when the child first joins the setting, e.g., on home visits or in initial questionnaires • Creating a space in your setting where parents/carers can leave information, e.g. in the drop-off/collection area you could create a display that asks: • What kind of music does your child like to listen to? • What kind of music does your child like to listen to in the car? • What songs does your child like to sing? • What kind of music does your child like to dance or move to? <p>Leaving post its or small cards for parents/ carers to complete can be an effective way of gathering this information which you can then include in your practice and provision.</p>
<p>10. Do all practitioners have an awareness of musical development in early childhood?</p>	<p>Early childhood musical development is something that is often not considered and nurtured in general early childhood practice, this is for many reasons. Some people feel they are not musical themselves and therefore cannot engage in music, some people have minimal knowledge and experience of learning about early childhood musical development and were not introduced to this within their early childhood training.</p> <p>Musical Development Matters is a guidance that was written to support practitioners, teachers, musicians and parents to see the musical attributes of young children and to offer ideas as to how they can support and nurture children's musical development by offering broad musical experiences. This can be downloaded for free here.</p> <p>You will also see aspects of musical development within the Expressive Arts and Design aspects of Birth to Five Matters and Development Matters.</p>