

### 1. Music Motivates

Music is one of the top motivators for children with special needs so you can use this to your advantage by:

- Using captivating instruments to encourage a child to make requests, i.e. holding out a drum and waiting for them to communicate, "I want the drum"
- Using different instruments to encourage the development of motor skills
- Singing a song during a challenging activity so a child is more willing to work through it

### 2. Music is a Multi-Sensory Experience

Music making is a perfect fit for kids with special needs because it engages and appeals to many of their sensory strengths and needs. When a child plays a simple instrument such as a drum, there is so much more going on! Let's break it down.

- Their tactile system is engaged because they are feeling the mallet in their hand
- Their kinesthetic system is engaged as they move their wrist and arm to strike the drum
- Their auditory system is engaged as they listen to the sound of the drum
- Their visual system is engaged as their eyes track the motion of their arm and the mallet in their hand

### 3. Music is Processed in Both Hemispheres of the Brain

The remarkable thing about music is that it's processed in many regions of the brain simultaneously. The Cognitive Neuroscience of Music shows that when making music, the sensory cortex, auditory cortex, hippocampus, visual cortex, cerebellum, amygdala, prefrontal cortex, and motor cortex are all firing at once. Amazing!

### 4. Music is Non-verbal

Hans Christian Anderson once said, "where words fail, music speaks." When making music with a child who is non-verbal you can connect with each other and express yourselves without words. This can be more powerful and effective than spoken language.

### 5. Music Helps You Bond

Music is a rich and beautiful way to connect with your child and deepen your bond. Mothers have known this for centuries and now the science is showing us that Oxytocin, known as the "bonding" or "cuddle" hormone, is released when listening to and making music. Some musical ways that you can bond with your child include:

- Getting into a routine of singing to your child throughout the day
- Moving and dancing with them to their favorite recorded music
- Using simple instruments such as rhythm sticks to create your own music or to jam along to some recorded music



the rhythm tree