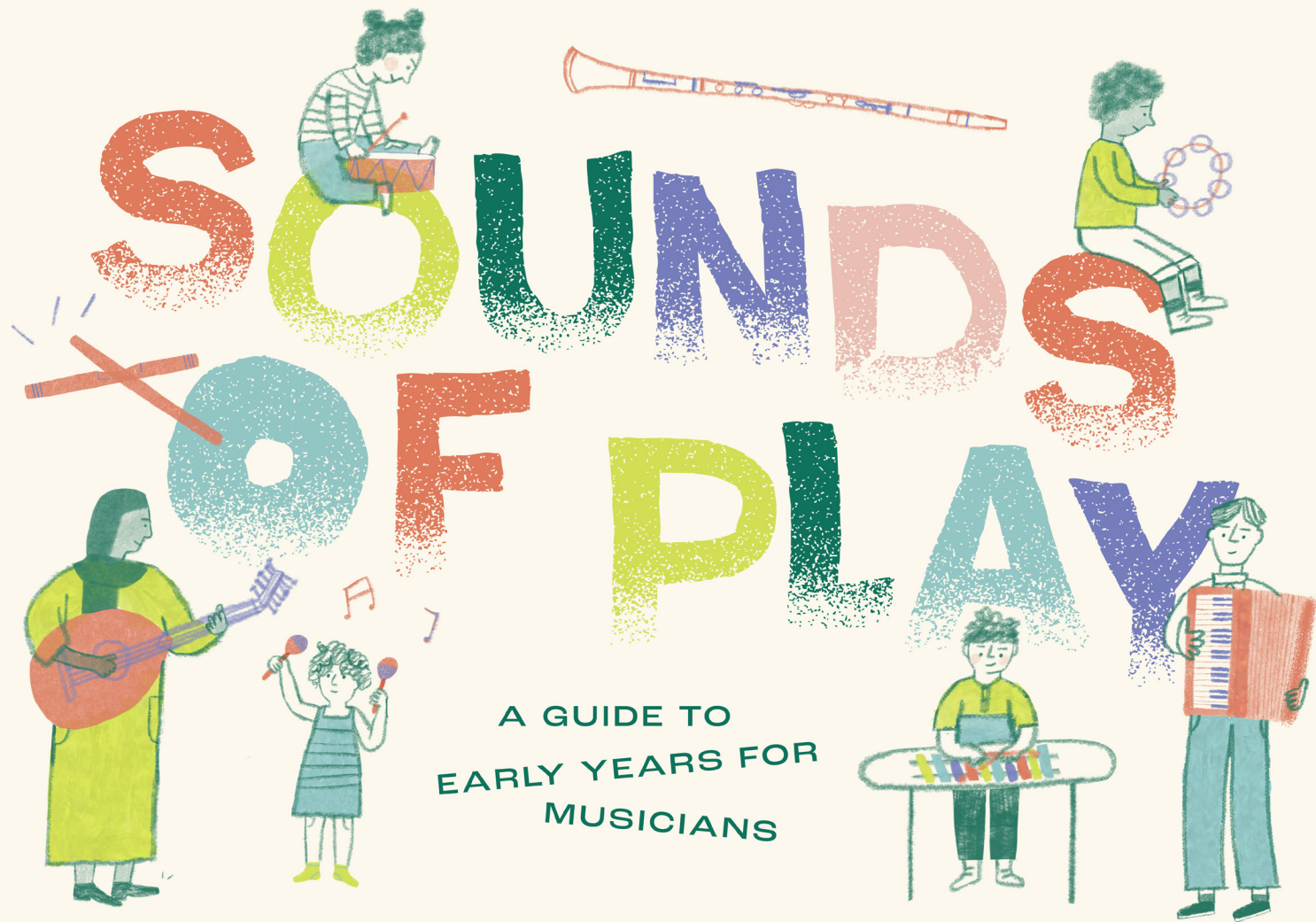




A GUIDE TO
EARLY YEARS FOR
MUSICIANS

SOUNDS OF PLAY

Sounds of Play is a Youth Music funded workforce development project led by The Springfield Project, a leading partner of Birmingham Forward Steps (BFS). The project is built upon the partnership of 18 early years and music organisations in Birmingham who together make up the Birmingham Early Years Music Consortium (BEYMC).

Four Early Years Music Champions have supported the development of EY music practice and provision across the city. This guidance has been created by the Champions to help musicians understand the world of Early Years Music and the possibilities of working with young children and families. The Champions, Davina Brownrigg, Emma Powell, Rebecca Shrewsbury & Jobe Sullivan have all contributed to the creation of this guidance to share their expertise.

CONTENTS

02

EARLY YEARS

What does 'Early Years' mean?

What is a setting?

What is the EYFSP?

What is OFSTED?

EYFS in more detail

Safeguarding

06

TYPES OF EARLY YEARS SETTINGS

Categories of settings

Types of work

Guidance

Content & Approaches

08

FREE PLAY AND CIRCLE TIME APPROACHES

Resources

Reflection time

Reflections from Participants

12

ESSENTIAL INFORMATION

Useful links

FAQ

Questions & considerations

SECTION ONE

EARLY YEARS

What does this mean?

In England 'Early Years' refers to the period of childhood from birth to the age of 5 years.

Scan for more info about the EYFS



What is a setting?

An Early Years setting is a place that provides care and education for children in their Early Years, this can include a nursery, preschool, childminding setting and Reception classes in Primary schools.

What is the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS)?

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) is the government statutory framework that sets out the EYFS standards, learning, development and care of children from birth to five years old in England. There are different early years standards in Scotland and in Wales. All schools and Ofsted-registered (see below) early years providers must follow the EYFS. These include childminders, preschools, nurseries and Reception classes in Primary Schools.



'Early Years' is typically described in three overarching age brackets; 0-3 years, 3-4 years & 4-5 years. In schools and some settings, 3-4 years and 4-5 years are described as follows:

Foundation stage 1 (FS1) is a non-compulsory year of education for children aged 3-4 years old. FS1 may take place within a nursery, preschool, infant or primary school or a childcare environment such as a preschool, daycare nursery or in a childminding setting.

Foundation stage 2 (FS2) is the first year of school for children aged 4-5 years old. Also known as the Reception year of school. It is compulsory for children to attend school at the age of five years old in England.

What is OFSTED?

Ofsted is the Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills. Ofsted is a non-ministerial department of His Majesty's government, reporting to Parliament. Ofsted inspect services providing education and skills for learners of all ages and inspect and regulate services that care for children and young people.

Read more about
Ofsted here



EYFS in more detail

The EYFS framework outlines seven areas of learning & development for children aged from birth to 5 years. These are categorised into three primary areas and four specific areas which each contribute to a child's holistic development.

Prime Areas	Specific Areas
Physical	Literacy
Communication and language	Mathematics
Personal, social and emotional development	Understanding the World
	Expressive Arts and Design

There are non-statutory guidance materials freely available for support practitioners to support and nurture children's learning and development:

Development
Matters



Birth to Five
Matters



Musical
Development
Matters





Safeguarding

Safeguarding means protecting all children & young people from harm, promoting the wellbeing of babies, infants and young people, as well as supporting new and expectant parents to meet the needs of their child. It is the responsibility of everyone that has contact with 'children' (anyone under the age of 18).

Early years settings require all people that work with children in their care to know about safeguarding and hold an enhanced DBS certificate. Obtaining an enhanced DBS certificate needs to be done through an organisation that the individual (e.g. freelance or peripatetic musician) works for or via organisations such as the Musicians' Union or Independent Society for Musicians.

There is also the DBS Update service which is an online subscription provided by the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) that allows individuals to keep their standard and enhanced DBS certificates up-to-date and allows employers to check those certificates online, with the individual's consent.

You can read more about that by scanning the QR code above.

SECTION TWO

TYPES OF

EARLY YEARS SETTINGS



There are three broad categories of settings:

- 1 | Private, Voluntary, Independent (PVI) settings:**
Day nurseries, Pre-schools, Childminders, Creches
- 2 | Maintained Settings:**
Nursery schools, Nursery & Reception classes in schools
- 3 | Family Hubs and Children's Centres:**
Offering a network of services that provides support to families with children and young people, from pregnancy through to age 19 (or 25 for those with special educational needs or disabilities). Family Hubs typically offer stay and play sessions, these are sessions that families attend together with their children and access a range of activities.

Types of work

As a musician in early years, you may:

- Run standalone music sessions for families and children
- Work and play in a *stay and play* session



- Lead and facilitate music making sessions in settings as a peripatetic tutor
- Offer a 'one-off-session' for a setting or a series over eg a term, a year
- Have a 'residency' in a setting involving working with a setting as part of a project eg 10 weeks, 2 terms

Some guidance for your early years music making

There are different challenges and considerations for various types of settings:

- **Stay and play sessions:**

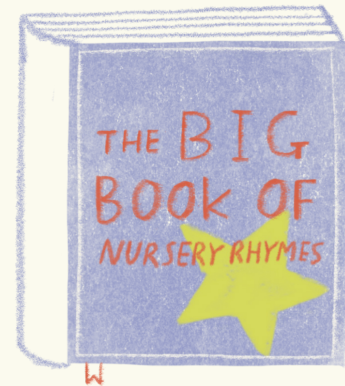
Parents/carers may see the benefit of music and take children to encourage early growth and development or as a social outlet for the child and themselves so they may want to talk to each other. It can be beneficial to build time into your session for social interaction.

- **Nurseries:**

Encourage everyone to participate in your session including staff as well as the children. Let staff know the level of support you require to help the music session run fluidly. They will know the children and can be a great resource to help your session be engaging.

- Each setting is very different, some adopt a free play approach to music making where children are free to move around the room accessing a series of activities and join in as and when they feel, some prefer the more focused circle time session where children are expected to all come together for the duration of the music session. Find out about the approach that each setting uses.

- When choosing where to work or agreeing to work somewhere, it is a matter of finding the right fit for your approach and being a little flexible. Don't be afraid to ask questions about the type of setting and ask them to be flexible too if you prefer to work in a slightly different way.



Content & Approaches

Consider the origin of songs before using them, particularly some older nursery rhymes which are now considered to be inappropriate due to their history.

Consider having long, medium and short-term plans for settings if you are working with them over a series of weeks/months or for the year.

SECTION THREE

APPROACHES TO FREE PLAY AND CIRCLE TIME



Child led (typically within free play) and adult led (typically circle time) approaches to music making are important and beneficial. The widespread model of EY music practice that we currently have in England is typically adult-led, and the sessions are usually planned by the visiting musician with little or any knowledge of the children. There is not often time and space for the musicians to discuss the musical development of the children with the staff and/or parents/carers at the settings and information about the needs of the children is not often shared with musicians.

An important aspect of quality early years education involves starting with what children can do and not what they cannot do, i.e. starting from and working with children's strengths. Find out as much as you can about the music provision in the setting and get to know the children and their musical identities.

Music making in free play enables musicians to be responsive/improvisational with individual children. Free play can feel odd as you can feel like you're in a groove with an activity and then a child/group of children disappear. Try moving with it and be in the moment - move to be with them and change your music/song to whichever new activity they're exploring or keep playing music by yourself and children will join in with you when they want to.

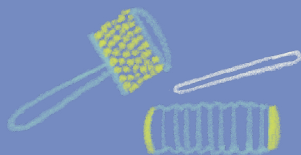
When making music in circle time, children are typically expected to all come together for the duration of the music session. Having a more structured approach to the music session can encourage active listening, turn taking and can enable the musician to lead activities that focus on specific musical skills. Plan your session to meet the needs of the children.

Resources

In nurseries, there may already be some music resources available (e.g. shakers, drums, chime bars etc).

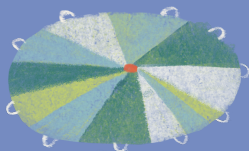
In stay and play sessions or standalone music sessions it is more likely the visiting musician will be the sole provider of musical resources (although this is not always the case - check with the setting).

Resources that are typically used in Early Years are:



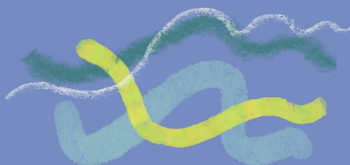
Percussion instruments

- Claves, shakers, small drums, handheld percussion



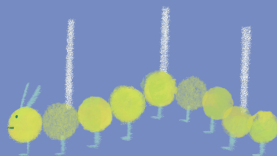
Parachute

for group participation with songs and rhymes



Scarves

for eg movement activities and peepo songs



Puppets, teddy bears soft toys

for character and to encourage singing together

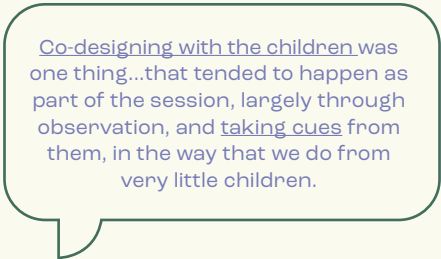


Reflection time

Planning for reflection time within your practice is vital, and it is recommended you do this soon after your music making, preferably with a member of early years staff that was in the room with you, though be aware that due to staffing this is not always possible.

Write/type/dictate what worked well and for who (the children, the staff, you), what could be different, your thoughts. Try to find a separate, quiet room, or if weather permits, an outdoor area for this reflection. It is important that this is seen as paid time within your work with the setting, to ensure quality, reflective practice.

Reflections from Sounds of Play residency project participants



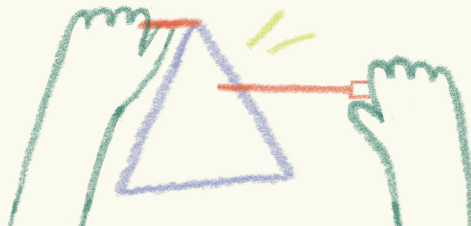
Co-designing with the children was one thing...that tended to happen as part of the session, largely through observation, and taking cues from them, in the way that we do from very little children.



The 1st session was observation, getting to see the children, what their environment was like, what they were into and then they very much influenced what was used in the sessions, based on their interests.

An Early Years audience is the best audience ever - they are appreciative, satisfying, but have critical minds and are worthy of careful consideration and planning. Ultimately, whatever you bring as a musician is worthy, unique, and the last thing we would want to encourage is for you to become a carbon copy of what has gone before. Never lose the spark, never lose your voice, you are of incredible value as a musician.

Whilst there are many schools of thought, many different types of settings, instruments, children with different needs - the most important thing is that you communicate with the people around you, to the best of your ability, so that they're clear of your intentions and the other members of staff in the setting are on board. People are not mind-readers, and we musicians can often act on 'instinct' - which can be good, but we need to give the generalist practitioners we work alongside some inclination of our intentions and plans. The practitioners are also the experts in the settings and know the children, talk with them to discover and learn as much as you can about the children and the setting.

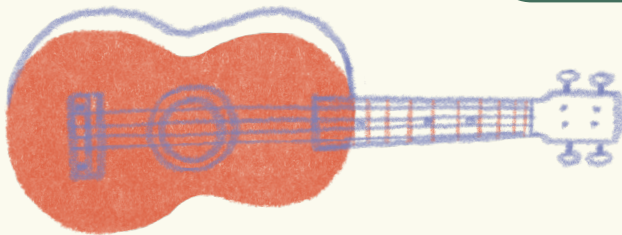
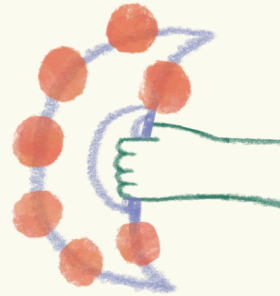


It doesn't necessarily matter that much whether you're doing an old or a new song, it's about how you're doing it.

Each week I was there I felt less and less like someone coming in as a musician and a different person, and more like a member of the team.

It's quite important just to go in and find out, what do they need? What does this situation need? And what have I got that I can bring that will help that need? And that might involve leaving 95% of what you know and do outside of that room.

We're kind of bouncing off each other and sort of how we were taking charge and learning from each other.



SECTION FOUR

ESSENTIAL INFORMATION



Useful Links

A few places to look if you are looking for ideas either around a theme or a musical goal are:

- 'Early Years Music' page on Facebook: use the search bar to find relevant posts
- Searching for Kodály repertoire online: these songs are often bitesize and age appropriate
- YouTube popular early years music pages: e.g. Super Simple Songs, BBC Teach etc.
- Highscope, Kodály, Dalcroze, Montessori - some of the approaches to Early Years

Training and continuous professional development

- MA in Early Years Music Education
- Certificate for Music Educators: Early Childhood

FAQ

What paperwork do I need to work in an early years setting?

Always have your Enhanced DBS and photo ID - and allow 10 minutes for the reception staff to process this - when going into a setting for the first time, or even the second time.

Do I have to have work experience with young children or a music qualification?

No but as with any job, experience and qualifications are beneficial. If going in a setting for the first time, take time to get to know the setting first and make sure you feel comfortable and confident with their expectations.

Ask the setting if any other paperwork is required, eg a service level agreement / contract, insurance documents.

EARLYYEARS MUSIC GO

Questions & considerations for musicians

Considerations on fees

Pricing can be a challenge for freelance musicians, it is recommended to take into account:

- Hourly/half-day/day rate
- Travel costs/travel time
- Preparation time
- One-off resources
- Cost of further training
- Courses if applicable



Questions to ask as a musician before entering a stay and play setting

Are there any special needs you need to be aware of to enable all children to be included and participate?

Does the setting have instruments for you to borrow? If so, what and how many?

Does the setting want you to run throughout their session (e.g. 1 - 2 hours)? Or will you be doing small break out groups in a side room?

Who is your main point of contact for any safeguarding concerns etc. Can you park near the entrance (if you have heavy bags and/or instruments etc)?

Questions to ask as a musician before working in a nursery setting

Are there any special needs you need to be aware of to enable all children to be included and participate?

How long are sessions expected to be?

How many groups will you work with?

What age will the children be in each group?

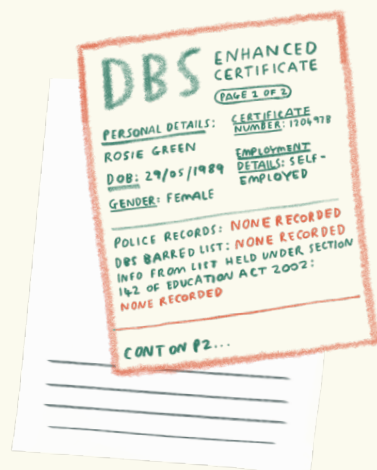
How many children will be in each group?

Will the sessions be adult led in eg circle time or child led in free flow?

Does the setting follow any curriculum/material/theme they want you to engage with?

Questions & considerations for musicians

- 1 | You will need an enhanced DBS and some settings may require other alternative paperwork. Ensure you ask what paperwork is required well in advance of the first session.



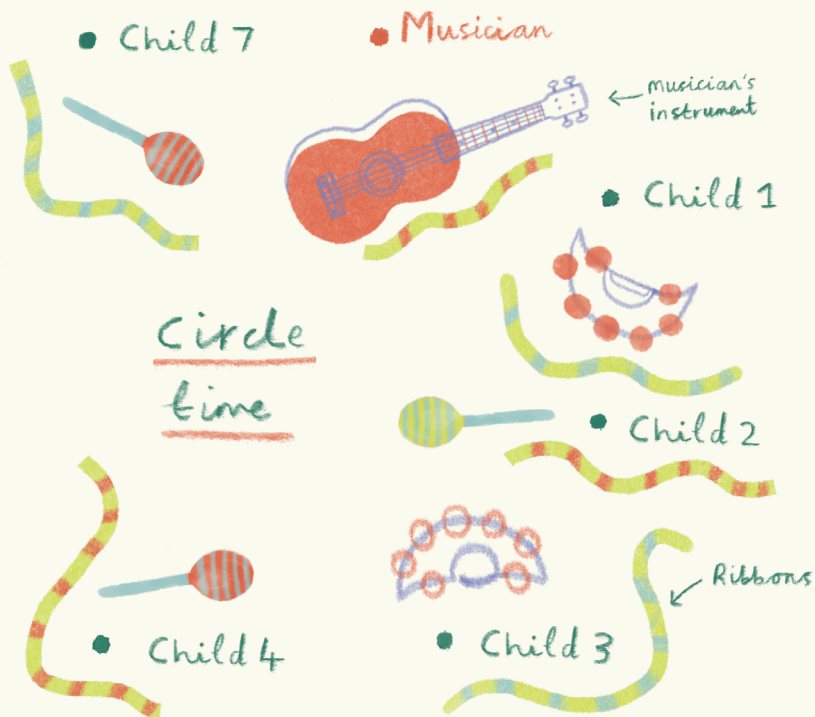
- 2 | Observe in the setting: Can you have time to observe so you get a feel for their ethos (e.g. are they child led where the children decide what activities they do and for how long or would your session be adult led e.g. a circletime approach)?



- 3 | Meet the staff and ask questions: ask about individual children's needs, spaces you might be expected to work in (e.g. outdoors or small rooms provide different challenges).



- 4 | Allow set up and pack up time into your schedule.



All the useful links in this section are here





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MUSIC**



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