

**MUSIC ACTIVITIES IN THE HOME ENVIRONMENT TO SUPPORT BOND-  
ING BETWEEN PARENT AND CHILD**

Sara Lindstedt  
Musicology  
Department of Music, Art  
and Culture Studies  
University of Jyväskylä  
Spring 2024

# UNIVERSITY OF JYVÄSKYLÄ

|   |  |
|---|--|
| Faculty<br>Humanities and Social Sciences   | Department<br>Music, Art and Culture Studies |
| Author<br>Sara Lindstedt  |  |
| Title<br>Music activities in the home environment to support bonding between parents and children.  |  |
| Subject<br>Musicology   | Level<br>Master's thesis                     |
| Month and year<br>May 2024  | Pages<br>52+18                               |
| Supervisor<br>Margarida Baltazar  |  |
| <p>Abstract</p> <p>This thesis explores how music activities can support parents' and children's relationships. It aims to expand our understanding of families music use in the home environment and the effects of music activities on bonding between parents and children.</p> <p>A music activity assignment and semi-structured interviews were designed. Nine (9) parents and their children aged 1.5-4 years old performed 10-15-minute music activities daily for two weeks. Parents gave semi-structured interviews before and after the assignment. Data was analyzed using thematic analysis.</p> <p>The results show that music use can change once one becomes a parent. Parents' past music relationship (close-distant) and their roles as stay-at-home parents or working parents also seem to have an effect. Results show that parents found five stress reduction strategies during the music activity assignment. Parents were able to be more self-aware and found that music activities supported their emotion regulation. Parents also noticed improvement in their and their children's focus. Music activities offered the parent-child duo fun and interesting activities and motivated parents to commit. Parents noticed that empathizing with their children was easier during music activities than in typical playtimes. Parents' positive experiences designing and sharing music activities with their children supported their parental efficacy.</p> <p>In conclusion, the results show that home-based music activities can support bonding between parents and children. Music activities can help parents reduce stress, be more mindful, and show positive parenting behavior that strengthens parent-child bonding.</p> |  |
| Keywords: Music and social bonding, music and parenting, music and affect regulation, music and empathy, music and self-efficacy, music and positive parenting.   |  |
| Repository: University of Jyväskylä   |  |
|   |  |

# JYVÄSKYLÄN YLIOPISTO

|   |  |
|---|--|
| Tiedekunta<br>Humanistis-yhteiskuntatieteellinen  | Laitos<br>Musiikin, taiteen ja kulttuurin tutkimuksen laitos |
| Tekijä<br>Sara Lindstedt  |  |
| Työn nimi<br>Musiikkiaktiviteetit kotiympäristössä tukemassa vanhemman suhdetta lapseen.  |  |
| Oppiaine<br>Musiikkitiede   | Työn laji<br>Maisteritutkielma                               |
| Aika<br>Toukokuu 2024   | Sivumäärä<br>52+18   |
| Ohjaaja<br>Margarida Baltazar   |  |
| Tiivistelmä<br><p>Tämän tutkielman tarkoituksena on selvittää, millä tavoin musiikkiaktiviteetit voivat tukea vanhemman ja lapsen välistä suhdetta (bonding). Tavoitteena on kuvata perheiden musiikin käyttöä arjessa ja kuinka musiikkiaktiviteetit vaikuttavat vanhemman ja lapsen suhteeseen.</p> <p>Musiikkiaktiviteetti-tutkimukseen osallistui yhdeksän (9) vanhempaa ja heidän lastansa, jotka olivat iältään 1,5–4-vuotiaita. Vanhemmat ja lapset toteuttivat kotonaan vapaavalintaisia musiikkiaktiviteetteja 10–15 minuutin ajan päivittäin kahden viikon ajan. Vanhemmat osallistuivat puolistrukturoituun haastatteluuun ennen musiikkiaktiviteettiharjoitusjaksoa, sekä sen jälkeen. Haastatteluaineisto analysoitiin teemaattisen analyysin menetelmin.</p> <p>Tulokset kertovat, että musiikin käyttö voi muuttua vanhemmaksi tultua. Vanhempien oma musiikkisuhde (läheinen-kaukainen) ja heidän vanhemmuuden roolinsa (kotivanhempana tai työssäkäyvänä vanhempana) näyttää vaikuttavan myös musiikin käyttöön. Vanhemmat löysivät viisi strategiaa stressin vähentämiseksi musiikkiaktiviteettitehtävän aikana. Vanhempien itsetietoisuus lisääntyi ja he huomasivat musiikkiaktiviteettien auttavan tunteiden säätelyssä, sekä parantavan vanhemman ja lapsen keskittymiskykyä. Musiikkiaktiviteetit tarjosivat sekä vanhemmalle, että lapselle hauskaa ja kiinnostavaa yhteistä toimintaa. Vanhemmat kokivat olevansa empaattisempia lastaan kohtaan musiikkiaktiviteettien aikana, verrattuna tyyppisiin leikkihetkiin. Positiiviset kokemukset musiikkiaktiviteettien parissa lisäsivät vanhempien minäpystyvyyttä.</p> <p>Tuloksista voidaan päätellä, että musiikkiaktiviteetit voivat vahvistaa vanhemman ja lapsen välistä suhdetta. Kotiympäristössä toteutettavat musiikkiaktiviteetit vähensivät vanhempien stressiä, lisäsivät tietoista läsnäoloa. Nämä tekijät näyttävät edistävän positiivista vanhemmuustyyliä, vahvistaen vanhemman ja lapsen suhdetta.</p> |  |
| Asiasanat: Musiikki ja sosiaaliset suhteet, musiikki ja vanhemmuus, musiikki ja tunnesäätely, musiikki ja empatia, musiikki ja minäpystyvyys, musiikki ja positiivinen kasvatus.  |  |
| Säilytyspaikka Jyväskylän yliopisto   |  |
| Muita tietoja   |  |

## LIST OF FIGURES

|   |    |
|---|----|
| Figure 1 The Main Themes .....                                | 19 |
| Figure 2 Music and Parenting .....                            | 24 |
| Figure 3 Stress Factors .....                                 | 25 |
| Figure 4 Stress Reducing Strategies.....                      | 30 |
| Figure 5 Enablers of Empathy .....                            | 37 |
| Figure 6 Meanings of Music Activities .....                   | 39 |
| Figure 7 Music Activities and Parent-Child Dynamics.....      | 42 |
| Figure 8 Route to Positive Parenting Via Music Activity ..... | 47 |

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

|       |   |    |
|-------|---|----|
| 1.    | PARENTING AND MUSIC IN THE HOME ENVIRONMENT .....                     | 1  |
| 1.1   | Parents' and Children's Bond.....                                     | 3  |
| 1.2   | Parental Bonding.....   | 3  |
| 1.2.1 | Challenges in Parenting.....  | 4  |
| 1.2.2 | Parenting in Western Culture.....                                     | 6  |
| 1.3   | Music and Social Bonding.....   | 7  |
| 1.3.1 | Empathy and Music .....   | 8  |
| 1.4   | Music Activities.....   | 8  |
| 1.4.1 | Parents, Children, and Music .....                                    | 9  |
| 2     | CURRENT RESEARCH -MUSIC ACTIVITIES IN HOME ENVIRONMENT ...            | 11 |
| 2.1   | Qualitative Research.....   | 11 |
| 2.1.1 | Phenomenology .....   | 12 |
| 2.2   | Music Activities in the Home Environment - The Research Question..... | 13 |
| 2.2.1 | Research Plan and Description of Data.....                            | 13 |
| 2.2.2 | Describing the Participants .....                                     | 15 |
| 2.2.3 | Ethics and Psychological Safety in the Interview .....                | 15 |
| 2.2.4 | Data Protection and Security .....                                    | 16 |
| 3     | THEMATIC ANALYSIS .....   | 17 |
| 3.1   | Coding the Data.....  | 18 |
| 3.1.1 | Grouping the Codes into Themes .....                                  | 18 |
| 4     | RESULTS.....  | 20 |
| 4.1   | Parents' Music Relationship .....                                     | 20 |
| 4.1.1 | Music Use Before Music Activity Assignment.....                       | 22 |
| 4.2   | Stress Reduction .....  | 24 |
| 4.2.1 | The Stress Reducing Strategies.....                                   | 26 |
| 4.3   | Focus .....   | 31 |
| 4.4   | Enablers of Empathy.....  | 32 |
| 4.4.1 | Novelty and Motivation .....  | 35 |
| 4.5   | Parent-Child Dynamics .....   | 37 |
| 5     | DISCUSSION.....   | 43 |
| 6     | CONCLUSION .....  | 48 |
| 6.1   | Limitations .....   | 49 |
| 6.2   | Recommendations for Future Studies.....                               | 50 |
| 6.2.1 | Music activities and Family Flow .....                                | 51 |

|                 |    |
|-----------------|----|
| REFERENCES..... | 53 |
| APPENDICES..... | 63 |

# 1. PARENTING AND MUSIC IN THE HOME ENVIRONMENT

One of the most important things in our lives is meaningful relationships. The ground base of our emotional experiences is built in our early relationships with our caregivers. Those ground experiences create a platform from which we reach out to future relationships and grow an understanding of who we are and how we experience the world. The emotional relationship we have with our parents as children is indisputably important.

The recurring themes of my own life have been related in one way or another to raising children, parenting, and well-being. When I think about the challenges faced by today's parents, the lack of resources, (e.g. time, support from relatives, and money), come to the fore. This is rigidly connected to the equation of the culture of individuality and the culture of working life (Roskam et al., 2021).

In previous musicology studies, parents are often enablers of the child's music hobby. We know from prior research that non-musician parents usually feel that they do not have the skills to offer their children guidance in the world of music, and because of this, parents take their children to music school. This creates a situation where “non-musical” parents might be left out of the positive impact, that easy access to music experiences could offer to their family.

More research is needed to understand how music and music activities affect parents' and children's relationships and how parents' music relationships affect this. I hope this research will help us better understand parents' experiences of music activities with their children and provide some suggestions on how the experiences can be further refined into future research questions, providing more information about music's ability to strengthen relationships and the mental health of family members.

Next, I present previous research related to parenting, families, and the use of music in the home environment. I have identified key concepts for understanding possible family dynamics supported by music: parenting and bonding, parental stress,

and empathy. I will present literature on these and how music uses might be connected to them.



## 1.1 Parents' and Children's Bond

Much research has been done on parents' and children's bonding and attachment. Bowlby and Ainsworth's attachment theory is at the core of many other theories and concepts that explain our emotional tie that bonds one person intimately with another (Bowlby, 1969; Ainsworth, 1978). This theory also suggests how attachment style impacts how we behave and regulate our emotions.

Based on Bowlby's theory, Jones et al. (2015) describe social and developmental attachment traditions. Bowlby proposed a biologically based and evolutionarily adapted attachment behavioral system, meaning that the principal function of attachment is to protect infants from danger. However, the attachment behavioral system continues to influence a person's behavior. The theory suggests that when parents' caregiving behavior fits well with a child's attachment behavior, it is a well-functioning, synchronic relationship.

DePasquale and Gunnar (2020) explain that parents' sensitivity and nurturance are incredibly important to children's development, particularly during the first three years of life, when attachment relationships form, affecting children's neurobiological, socioemotional, and psychological health. Children of sensitive and nurturing parents tend to have many benefits in their future, such as fewer mental health problems, better social competence, and higher cognitive functioning. DePasquale and Gunnar also report that children's temperament and emotional reactivity can affect parents' behavior. Sensitive parental care means being finely tuned to a child's signals, so the parent interprets signals accurately and responds to the infant's needs. Parental nurturance describes sensitivity to a child's distress. Parenting that is sensitive and nurturant supports secure attachment relationships.

## 1.2 Parental Bonding

The first social bond is created with the primary caregiver. Social bonding refers to forming, strengthening, and maintaining affiliative connections (Savage et al., 2020). Prior research has explored the parent-child dyad relationship from both perspectives. While several studies discuss the attachment style (which focuses on a child's attachment to a parent), parental research has defined parents' connection to the child as a parental bond.

Parenting bonding refers to an emotional experience that parents have toward their child. Klaus and Kennell created the definition of mother-infant bonding in the

1970s as “...a maternal-driven process that occurs primarily throughout the first year of an infant’s life but may continue throughout a child’s life. It is an affective state of the mother; maternal feelings and emotions towards the infant are the primary indicators of maternal-infant bonding” (Ettenberger et al., 2021). De Cock (2017) summarizes that currently, it is believed that the parental bond forms during pregnancy and concerns all primary caregivers.

Parental bond is defined as the emotional tie a parent has to the child and can be observed as a subjective state of feeling. When parental bonding is strong it tends to lead to parents’ psychological well-being, whereas if parents experience less connection toward their child, it can lead to parental stress or insecurity. De Cock suggest that stress and self-efficacy (confidence in their ability to perform parenting and positively affect a child’s development) are the two forms of parental cognition that have an impact on the child (De Cock 2017).

Baumrind’s (1971; 1991) parenting styles, based on a range from responsiveness to demandingness, are well known when describing different ways of parenting. Authoritarian style is described as having high levels of control, rules, and less sensitivity to a child’s needs and opinions, while permissive parenting is shown as parents giving little to no structure and consulting children to make decisions. Neglectful parenting is when a parent ignores the child. The authoritative parenting style is described as parenting that has demands but also responds to child needs, and this style has been associated with a positive parenting style.

Seay et al. (2014) acknowledge that parenting can be difficult and that awareness and teaching of positive parenting can be achieved. They define positive parenting as “...continual relationship of parent and child that includes caring, teaching, leading, communicating and providing for the needs of a child consistently and unconditionally.”

### **1.2.1 Challenges in Parenting**

It is easy to accept the idea of the circle of intergenerational well-being; when a parent is healthy and can provide tender care for the child, it will predict well-being and health in the child’s future. Therefore, it is important to recognize parenting behavior and state of mental health, to support parents’ wellbeing and child’s healthy development. Next, we will see the research results that are centered in postnatal mental health problems, parental stress, and parental burnout.

One reason for attachment problems is postnatal mental health problems that affect 10-15% of people who give birth (Colella et al., 2022). Colella et al. (2022) describe this condition as impacting parents’ interaction and bonding with the infants. They explain that performing arts (such as musical activities) may improve maternal mental health, as it has the potential to affect postnatal depression.

Jones et al. (2015) showed links between parental emotions and attachment styles in seven areas: desire to have children, feelings of closeness to children, parental satisfaction, coping with pregnancy and parenthood, parental stress, maternal separation anxiety, and miscellaneous parenting emotions. They found that parental stress and attachment style have significant associations. Many findings show that both avoidance and anxiety are related to greater experienced parenting stress. In conclusion, parents' stress may appear as unwanted parenting behavior; therefore, reducing parents' stress would likely be beneficial to the children's well-being.

Stress affects parenting behavior, but what factors cause stress in parents? Nærde et al. (2020) define parental stress as "a negative psychological response to the numerous obligations associated with raising children, and its presence is the rule rather than the exception." As the demands on parents grow over the resources, it is typical to experience high-stress levels. As stress turns chronic, it can cause parental burnout following overwhelming exhaustion in the parental role and loss of emotional touch with the child.

Mikolajczak et al. (2019) describe parental burnout as "a condition characterized by intense exhaustion related to parenting, emotional distancing from one's children, a loss of pleasure and efficacy in one's parental role, and a contrast between a previous and current parental self." They collect the risk factors of parental burnout that the research field has found. These factors are aiming to be a perfect parent, having neurotic behavior, lacking skill in managing emotion and stress, lacking emotional or practical support from the co-parent or the social network more broadly, having poor child-rearing practices, children's special needs, working part-time or staying-at-home parents.

Everyday parenting behavior involves variation. Parenting style has been defined as a relatively stable aspect of parent and child interaction. This style reflects parents' goals and values in parent's behavior and practices (Darling & Steinberg, 1993).

Mikkonen et al. (2022) refers to Baumrind's typology (1971), which describes traditional parenting styles can be described as demanding or responsive, as parents control their child's behavior and demand maturity or show sensitivity and acceptance of a child's emotional and developmental needs respectfully. Later, control was divided into behavioral (limit-setting) and psychological control (manipulative activity). Aunola et al. (2017) research showed that parents with children 6-7 years old showed more controlling parenting after the child's misconduct days. Controlling parenting is parental behavior that is intrusive and manipulative of children's thoughts and feelings. It has various negative outcomes for a child's health, such as anxiety and depression. They also found that parent's high overall level of negative emotions across the week was related to a high overall level of psychologically controlling parenting.

As the quality of parent and child interpersonal relationships is one of the key factors explaining family well-being, parents' control and its type seem to have a crucial role. Baumrind (2012) explains that there are harmonious families where parents have control without the frequent need to exercise control.

### **1.2.2 Parenting in Western Culture**

This research is being done in Finland and will describe Finnish parents' experiences. Next, we will look at the features of Finnish parenting today. Many of today's parents stand alone or in two-parent units. Roskam et al. (2021) research shows that, particularly in Western countries, individualistic culture may put parents under heightened stress levels. In the Finnish population, 38% of families were families with children, and the average number of children in families was 1,82 (Tilastokeskus, 2023).

Rotkirch (2014) described the irony of Finnish parents' situation. While living in a prosperous country, there is a deficiency in social relationships. Parents are often alone, and they spend their days without adult company. Rotkirch points out that mother's fatigue, loneliness, and frustration are repeated in the research results. The general atmosphere does not encourage actualizing the idea of needing the whole village to raise children – instead, today's parents are extremely alone in raising their children. Many parents experience that the social expectations for parenting are too heavy to carry, which can lead to feelings of parental guilt.

Rotkirch talks about research conducted by the Family Federations of Finland, which studied the experiences of Finnish mothers with forbidden and difficult feelings. The key issues were the lack of feeling of being a part of the community and the idea of expecting parents to be solely responsible for raising the child. This norm creates a highly intensive role for parents and captures their time to an extent that creates negative outcomes (Rotkirch, 2014).

Finlapset 2020- research concluded that about 10% of parents in Finland did not express their needs concerning their mental health issues during pregnancy. After a child's birth, this number increased to 17%. The research found that parents' challenges are usually about depression symptoms before and after giving birth, having mild or severe parental burnout symptoms, and experiencing loneliness. (Finlapset-kyselytutkimus, 2020).

Research on child maltreatment in Finland showed that 44% of 4-year-old children had experienced some form of psychological abuse and 14% of physical abuse. This research stresses the importance of preventing all forms of child maltreatment and the importance of supporting parenthood (Leppäkoski et al., 2021).

### 1.3 Music and Social Bonding

Music and musicality are part of everyday life for many families with children. Parents are tuned to recognize and react to the auditory input of newborns' cries as they express their needs by crying. When we comfort a crying baby in our arms, we tend to know innately that a humming song and a rocking movement are soothing. When a toddler gets tired on a car trip, parents turn the music on, knowing that music provides entertainment.

Prior researchers have been pursuing an understanding of why musicality exists. Recent studies have promoted that musicality is a fundamental structure of social bonding. The music and social bonding (MSB) hypothesis by Savage et al. (2020) suggest that human musicality is a co-evolved system for social bonding. They suggest musicality is a skill set useful in diverse ways involving social affiliation. They suggest that musicality is a cognitive skill that has been co-evolved for social bonding needs, such as supporting infant care, mate bonding, and group cohesion.

There are several research that shed light on music and parenting. Parson et al. (2014) found that parents with musical training have greater sensitivity to distress in infant cries, as manipulated by pitch than parents without a history of music training. Saarikallio (2009) points out that music can regulate one's emotions, which is well-known in adolescence and adulthood and that parents use music to regulate their babies' emotions. Saarikallio refers to Oldfield 1993, suggesting that music helps parent and child emotional connections through non-verbal emotional communication.

Parents seem to automatically use music or musical elements for emotion regulation to a certain extent. Music and human speech, language, and communication have a wide range of associations. For example, when infants and their early-stage caregivers were observed, it was noticeable that there were musical patterns in their interaction, such as timing, voice timbre, and rhythm. Young (2023) refers to Malloch and Trevarthen's theory of communicative musicality, which suggests that all communication is based on musicality. Pitt and Hargreaves (2016) also quote Papousek and Papousek's demonstration that speech toward the child is characterized by elevated pitch, slowing tempo, and melodic quality that shows cooperation and synchrony between parent and child.

Music is often used for emotion regulation. Stress is part of life, but it would be desirable if its share were reasonably small. Baltazar et al. (2019) refer to Lazarus, who states that stress impacts our well-being and health. Our ability to self-regulate our affective tension and valence concomitates stress responses. Baltazar et al. research revealed that music itself and regulation strategies influence self-reported tension. Groarke and Hogan (2019) add that when adults want to use music to affect regulation,

they tend to choose it themselves. Goarke and Hogan suggest that listening to self-chosen music effectively regulates affect during stress.

### **1.3.1 Empathy and Music**

As parents have strategies to regulate their emotions, we shall continue to look more closely at the aspect needed in co-regulating others' affective states: empathy and how music seems to have the power to affect this important skill.

By having the skill to be empathic, we can understand the feelings and thoughts of others and be compassionate. Greenberg et al. (2015) explain empathy, referring to earlier definitions, that it requires cognitive and affective components, as does music listening and performing. When having the skill of empathy, we can recognize the emotional and mental states of others and respond to these with appropriate emotions.

Rabinowitch et al. (2013) found that children participating in long-term musical groups positively influence their social-emotional capacities, such as empathy. Rereferring to previous research, they describe that joint musical action tends to generate a sense of togetherness and focus attention on others.

Music can also promote empathy on a broader spectrum, increasing social/cultural understanding through powerful affective, cognitive, and social factors. Clarke et al. (2015) made a model of musical empathic engagement from a listening perception. Their research indicated that music listening influences people's unconscious attitudes towards cultural other, showing music's skill to awaken empathy.

## **1.4 Music Activities**

Research has been done on music activities in families. Blackburn (2017) surveyed families about children's musical activities in their homes. The survey was done on families with children under five years old, and the results suggest that children participate in a range of spontaneous shared musical activities in their homes daily.

Williams et al. (2015) share their findings from a longitudinal study of Australian children, which identified the benefits of shared musical activities in the home environment. Their findings suggest that the frequency of shared parent-child music activities correlates positively to the child's development in prosocial skills, vocabulary, numeracy, and attentional and emotional regulation.

Similar impacts were seen in children's prosocial behavior; Buren et al. (2019) found that joint music-making led to more helping behavior than just listening to music or reading a book. Their results suggest that joint music-making affects prosocial behavior as early as 18-month-olds.

There is also evidence that home music activities are connected to long-lasting child-parent relationships. Wallace and Harwood (2018) showed that joint musical engagement is associated with stronger family interpersonal relationships. They conducted research in which young adults recalled their childhood experiences with musical activities with their parents and how this shows in their current relationships.

Childhood experiences can also have negative effects on music-related activity. A negative parenting style can lead to problems that interfere with creativity and free expression in adulthood. There is a link between parenting style and adult behavior in music performance anxiety. Wiedemann et al. (2020) revealed the connection between parenting style and later adulthood anxiety, which can also be shown as music performance anxiety.

Hallam (2010) proposes that music activities do support the development of other skills in children, such as intelligence, concentration, social skills, and relaxation. However, these positive effects on personal and social development can only emerge when music engagement has been an enjoyable and rewarding experience.

#### **1.4.1 Parents, Children, and Music**

Pitt and Hargreaves (2016) state that group music-making with young children and their parents is quite a popular activity. In which ways are families active with music when they are at home, and what type of variation does it have? The academic community has explored parents' musical backgrounds (de Vries, 2009; Ilari, 2005; Custodero & Johnson-Green, 2002) and has posited that parents' own musical background predicts more opportunities for children to have a possibility to be musically active. Custodero et al. (2002) showed that after children are over 24 months old, there is a lower likelihood of daily music playing and singing. Parents' involvement in the child's musical activity decreases as the child ages.

Hendricks et al. (2021) combine previous studies with evidence of parents' important role in children's early musical experiences. Parents' values vary depending on their socio-cultural context. Positive parental expectations and active support predict a child's musical involvement. Their own research indicated a correlation between children's higher empathy scores and parents' ratings of the importance of music instruction generally.

de Vries (2009) researched shared music activities in homes where children were under 5 years old. Research shows that even though parents value music's capacity to support children's development, only 18% played music to their children daily, 9% sang with children or to children, and none encouraged their children to make up their own music. Parents also reported that children's musical activities were best organized outside the home because of their own musical incompetence. Other reasons for

low levels of shared daily engagement in music activities in homes were a lack of time and knowledge about music and the fact that children could access music independently through the use of technology.

Some parents choose to take their children to music schools, which positively impacts their well-being. Kawase and Ogawa (2018) showed a connection between parents' mood improvement and anxiety reduction when attending their children's group music lessons. They also found that mood improvements were more noticeable when parents' everyday anxiety was higher than the others.

Some parents have greater struggles to face than others. Jacobsen (2014) refers to previous studies that have proven that highly stressed parents who lack control are more likely to neglect and abuse their children emotionally, and the structure behind this is usually a negative transgenerational spiral. Jacobsen et al. found that a 10-week music therapy intervention helped families with emotionally neglected children improve their emotional communication and develop healthy parent-child interactions. Their research results show that there was a significant improvement in nonverbal communication and mutual attunement. Parents reported being significantly less stressed by their children's mood and improved their parent-child relationship by talking and understanding their children better. Music has elements that create interpersonal synchrony between parent and child. Feldman (2007) describes synchrony as being seen in short, intense, playful interactions built on familiarity with others' behavior and interaction rhythm. In the music therapy context, it has been possible to see child-parent interbrain synchrony where the children were non-speaking and living with severe motor impairments (Samandi et al., 2021).



## **2 CURRENT RESEARCH -MUSIC ACTIVITIES IN HOME ENVIRONMENT**

The focus of this thesis is on exploring the potential of music to have a positive impact on parent-child relationships. Through qualitative research, I sought to investigate the influence of music on family well-being, with the participation of nine individuals as parents in this study. I aim to adopt an overarching perspective from positive psychology, which recognizes mental health and its fluctuations as inherent aspects of human experience. This approach allows us to employ scientific methods to examine the experiences of individuals (parents) and the dynamics of institutions (families) in order to identify pathways toward leading a fulfilling life (Park et al., 2016). This chapter is dedicated to describing the research plan and its methodology.

I wanted to see if parents can distinguish the positive impacts of music in a brief time that previous research has deducted. I was interested to see how differently they experienced music activities, as they might be adapting musical elements to their play-time for the first time. Therefore, a two-week music activity assignment was designed for families with small children in their home environment.

### **2.1 Qualitative Research**

This empirical research is interested in discovering people's experiences. When the interest of research is in people, it is possible to do qualitative, quantitative, or mixed-method research that combines these research styles. This research is qualitative, meaning that the material that I used is the interview answers obtained through my research. The interviewees' answers were valuable in achieving an understanding of the parents' experiences. Juhila (2021) explains that qualitative research characteristics are critical self-evident evaluations of self-evident knowledge, using mostly

qualitative data, unstructured and natural data, valuing subjectivity, and emphasizing the participant's own meaning-making and interpretations. Qualitative research makes it possible to understand parents' unique experiences. The research is data-driven, inductive research. Juhila describes that inductive research starts with empirical data, and the results are generated from the data. It is possible to compare the results with previous theories or research results only after this.

The interview material serving as research data acknowledges the value of subjective experiences, as they are a true description of the experiencer's reality. The research aimed to create authenticity by taking the music activity exercises to the participants' homes, where they could perform the exercises in the most natural environment possible and evaluate their effects (Williamon et al., 2021, pp. 31-56).

The parents' descriptions of their own experiences are qualitative in nature. The qualitative research aims to discover the parents' experiences, feelings, and attitudes. Laine (2018) explains that if we want to understand other people's perspectives and experiences, we must be self-aware of our own interpretations, critically evaluate our subjective perspectives, and reflect on our thoughts.

### **2.1.1 Phenomenology**

Phenomenology is a philosophical study of consciousness and how phenomena are being experienced. Edmund Husserl is one of the founders of the school of phenomenology. His teacher, Franz Brentano, greatly inspired him, who described the intentionality of our consciousness as having a direction toward a subject (Merleau-Ponty, 2012). Brentano saw psychology as a science of psychic phenomena or the inner life of people that was accessible through inner perception. Psychology is the science of phenomena occurring in the human mind. He wanted to separate the phenomena into physical and psychological by explaining that only psychological phenomena have intention. He also introduced the concept of psychic acts, which could separate one psychic phenomenon from another (Niskanen, 2005).

Phenomenology considers intention to be the core of conscious function. When we intentionally select a subject, we have experiences. This experience appears to us in some way. This way, reality is experienced, and it has meaning. Phenomenology considers experiences as a relationship. We are a subject that has a relationship with things we experience (such as the music we hear), and this connection is seen as a whole (Perttula, 2005).

Williamon et al. (2021) describes that phenomenology is the study of participants' conscious experiences of phenomena and that it is a good choice of strategy when the goal is to seek detailed experiences and meaning-making processes of the participants. This study aims to describe how phenomena of music activities are possibly

meaningful to parents' bonding experience and what type of meaning-making processes it is possible to identify in the concept of parent-child joint music activities.

## **2.2 Music Activities in the Home Environment - The Research Question**

After looking into earlier research on families in musicology, I assumed that music activities could potentially support bonding between parents and children. My presumption while conducting this research was that musical activities would offer a playfully approachable way to get to know music. The attempt was to design an assignment that would be easy and pleasant enough for the parents to commit to doing it. As the interest is in how different parents' experiences about music activities and did music activities positively influence the parent-child relationship, this study's research question is:

- How do music activities in the home environment support parental bonding?

### **2.2.1 Research Plan and Description of Data.**

This research concentrates on the experience. The analysis will be based on interview material. The goal is to understand the experiential phenomenon as it is without changing its meaning relationship to match my own (as a researcher) meaning relationship (Lehtomaa, 2005). To my knowledge, no research has been done about parents' experiences adapting to new home music activities. Therefore, a data-oriented research style was adopted.

Parents were asked to perform optional musical activities for 10-15 minutes daily for two weeks in their homes when they felt suitable. This way, musical activities were performed in an environment that was most natural and familiar to the participating families. In addition, they were asked to observe themselves and the child during the musical activities. The parents received a printout of sample games from musical activities (see attachments for instructions and examples). It was emphasized to the parents that the content of music activities was optional and that activities described in the printout were examples and a source of inspiration. For example, they could paint together and have classical music playing in the background, or a parent and child can build and play with an obstacle course while rhythmic music plays in the background.

Parents participated in two interviews before and after their two-week music activity assignment. The interview style was interactive because the main interest was in the parents' experiences. This style gave space to discuss freely on the topic's parents felt important. The first meeting aimed to collect information about the parents and their families. They gave descriptive answers on what their everyday parenthood looked like. The answers gave a richer picture of the parents' values and the ways they perform their parenthood. Parents and children's music relationship was also conducted through interviews.

In this research, music relationships address a person's subjective experience of their connection to music. The relationship status is the person's own experience, and they gave descriptive answers about their music listening habit, history of music training, or other music-related activities. The first meeting also included guidance and motivation for the daily music activity exercise.

The goal for the second interview was to get descriptive answers from parents' experiences and hear the variety of how each of the parent-child duo adopted musical activities to their daily lives. Questions led to describing answers to their music activity moments, including insight into the parent-child relationship through the parents' perspective. There were questions about how well parents recognize their child's emotional states and whether musical activities affect their capability to understand the child's emotions. Parents were asked to describe their relationship with their child during activities and whether the music activities affected their feeling of closeness with their child in any special ways or whether the activities offered some other features that strengthened their relationship.

The interview questions were quite open, and the parents had the opportunity to reflect on the topics between the meetings. Parents were encouraged to take notes during the two-week assignment. This practice was beneficial, as it led to more accurate descriptions, as parents could recall more activities and details, and they felt meaningful. Few parents gave their notes to be used as part of the research data. Written notes decided to be left out as there were only a few, and they would not represent the research sample.

The semi-structured interview aims to have the same questions for every participant, but space is left for some flexibility as the discussion progresses (Saarinen-Kauppinen & Puusniekka, 2006). For my research purposes, the semi-structured interview style was the best option, giving a structure that would keep the discussion on the main topics but simultaneously leave flexibility to hear the participants' individual voices. Descriptive answers gave me space to narrate everyday life experiences, from which topics emerged that I could not have predicted in advance.

Eskola et al. (2018) describe a semi-structured interview style in which the topics for discussion are decided in advance, and the interview is not structured to follow

certain steps. Brinkmann (2014) explains that semi-structured interviews have better knowledge-producing potential because they allow dialogue to be directed to where the interviewee desires. This wouldn't be possible in structured interviews. Unstructured interviews could lead too far to topics that the interviewer isn't interested in current research.

### **2.2.2 Describing the Participants**

I hoped to find parents to interview, who would represent well the diversity of parents. I hoped that not all parents would have a particularly strong musical background. I recruit parents with posters, on social media, and by face-to-face recruiting at hobby places in two cities in Finland. It turned out from the ad that participation in the study includes two meetings and a small, nice exercise to be done at home with the child, but the ad did not mention musical activities, as I suspected that the information would weed out some of the participants. The participants had been promised a small sweet thank you for participating in the study.

I collected the material by interviewing parents who had a child between 1,5 and 4 years old. Eleven (11) parents agreed to take part in the study. Ten (10) parents took part in the first interview. Nine (9) parents took part in both interviews and their interviews will be used as data.

Seven (7) women and two (2) men took part in the current research. They were 25-40 years old, and they were parents of 1-4 children. Their family size was 2 - 6 person. They had different aged children, from newborn to school age. They were asked to do the music activities (especially) with the child who was 1,5-4 years old.

When parents are described, they will be anonymized by being letters A-I and the child's age (e.g., Parent C and a 3-year-old child). Most parents were primarily stay-at-home parents. About half of the children in the age group of 1.5-4 spent part of the week in daycare.

### **2.2.3 Ethics and Psychological Safety in the Interview**

Conducting research always includes the responsibility to act ethically. I tried to make sure that the subject of the research and the data collection were carried out responsibly, carefully, and with justification. It is important to ensure that the identity of the interviewees is kept secret and that, in the name of science, only relevant questions are included in the interview questions (Hyvärinen et al., 2017).

The role of being a parent is a very personal part of our identity. I tried to create a sense of security by telling the parents that their identity cannot be identified from the answers afterwards and that they can withdraw from the study at any time. Since I assumed that music activities initially arouse uncertainty in some parents, I

emphasized that music is just an additional element in addition to familiar games and activities and if it is not possible to do exercises on some days, they can leave them for a better time.

The interviews were conversational, and parents comfortably shared their thoughts and experiences. Some parents had their children with them in interviews, and there were toys to keep children happy during interviews and possibilities to take breaks when needed.

Although I did not assume that the interviews or the music activities at home would harm the parents, I noticed during the interviews that some of the themes evoked sadness and feelings of parental guilt. I pursued empathy to ease these feelings. At the end of the interviews, I was left with the impression that the parents and their children's participation in the research was a pleasant experience.

#### **2.2.4 Data Protection and Security**

The interviews are recorded on an audio recorder, after which the audio files are securely transferred to JYU's U-file and Microsoft transcription program.

Personal data, such as names, phone numbers, and e-mail addresses, was collected only to contact the interviewees. Consent forms and contact information were kept in a locked cabinet and later deleted. Other indirect information from the interviews (e.g., the child's name, and the parent's job) is anonymized during the transcription phase.

Before consent, the interviewees were informed of the study information and privacy notice. These include security measures, anonymization, and deletion of direct identification data as soon as possible.

### 3 THEMATIC ANALYSIS

As this research pursues to find answers to questions about parents' experiences, the data is from the interviews before and after participants' two-week music activity assignments. Hence data's nature is described, and aim is to conceptualize the phenomenon, the best solution was to analyse the data using thematic analysis (Joffe, 2012). Thematic analysis is suitable for interviews that have a theme. This research's semi-structured interviews had recognizable themes, such as *parenting style* and *music use*, which seemed important when acknowledging the previous research knowledge. The thematic analysis method can contain a phase where data is being coded, and after that, codes are organized into themes. At times, themes follow the original thematic interview, but at times, new themes may emerge. For this method, it is important to remember to be free from preconceptions. As the themes are created, the quotes that represent the themes are being collected (Saaranen-Kauppinen & Puusniekka 2006).

By this method, I was able to see what were the themes that kept coming up from the participant's descriptions, as the thematic analysis is designed to show patterns of meanings (Braun & Clarke, 2006). This is a suitable way to analyze the data, as all the parents had similar interview questions, and so the discussions had pre-decided topics. The approach was as open as possible, being ready to see themes that were repeating but also to see themes that were appearing only in some of the participant's descriptions.

Next, the thematic analysis will be described using a three-step approach: coding the data, grouping codes into themes, and grouping themes again into overarching themes. (Williamon et. al. 2021).

### **3.1 Coding the Data**

As the interviews were transcribed, the process of coding started. The first coding detected some central codes, but there was a need for a second round of codes to find more codes to describe the phenomenon the original codes did not reach. Because the initial interest was in finding out how parents described music activities that affected them possibly to be empathic parents and whether the activity affected their stress, it influenced the coding. The first coding was centered on these themes, leaving out some of the relevant codes.

As the coding needed to continue to describe the true nature of the parents' descriptions, there was a demand to bring new codes that had not been initially thought of. The codes found in the second round described parents' and children's focus. Almost all the participants described focus as a positive feature without being asked about it. Discovering enhanced focus was the starting point of the second coding round. After this code, there was a birth of codes that pursued to describe parenting more specifically. This was left as an attempt and gave an understanding that the parenting style should be measured in some way in future research.

After the second coding, my interest focused on this series of events. Codes started to take shape, and it looked like there was a step-by-step action that could happen in every family (regardless of what their music relationship was before). The most precious, joyful experiences that parents described eventually started to remind the state of flow. Therefore, I included more codes representing this shared joyful experience. Such codes were immersion, creativity, and learning.

#### **3.1.1 Grouping the Codes into Themes**

As the coding was complete, the total number of codes was 101, and codes were arranged as themes. The codes were in an Excel worksheet, and each participant's appearance was counted and divided into their first and second interviews. This step helped to see the codes that rose up the most frequently.

To give a few examples of how codes turned into themes, there were codes for music, such as "parent's music relationship" and "music and relaxation". There were codes that described the parent and child's behavior and emotions, such as "parents' stress," "tired child," and "child's excitement." Then there were also codes that described the parent and child's relationship dynamics. Those codes were, for example, "child in control" and "relaxing together". Then there were also codes that describe parents and how they described themselves as parent, such as "confident parent" and "flexible parent." There was an attempt to create their own theme for parental reflective functions, but it was too vague and had to be left out.



As a result, five main themes were created from the codes and are presented in the figure below:

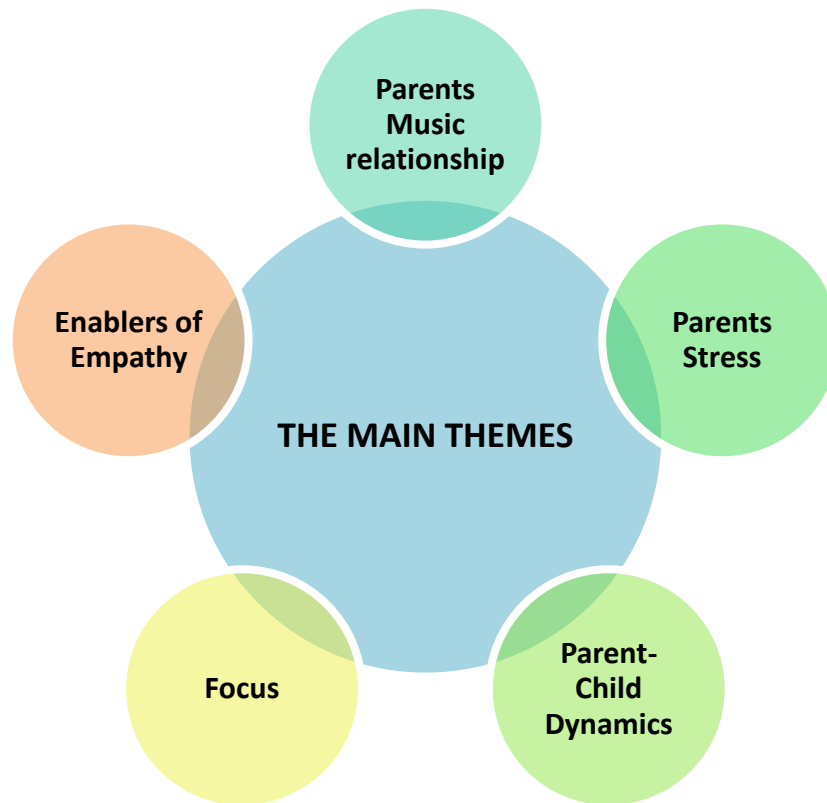


Figure 1 The Main Themes

After themes were built, all the transcriptions were read again with the intention of finding how these themes were shown in each participant's interview. Then, the analysis continued by taking examples from each participant's interview that described each theme and pursuing to see how different parents described these themes and how themes were connected to each other.

Based on the collected data and identified themes, I will pursue to describe and answer the research question of how music activities can support bonding between parent and child. As the thematic analysis was completed, it served a pattern of meanings that described the affective, cognitive, and symbolic dimensions of participants' experiences (Joffe, 2012). After presenting the results, I will describe a pattern that emerged and how these patterns could lead to a general conclusion.

## 4 RESULTS

The first section of the Results' chapter will describe the diversity of the participants' music use and how parenting seems to change it. Then, in the second section, we will see how parents' experiences with music activities influenced their stress factors. The third section will describe how music activities supported both parents' and children's focus. Then, the fourth section, will illustrate how music activities seemed to support parental empathy. The final section of the Results will present the parent-child relationship dynamics during music activities and describe the changes that music activities seem to birth.

### 4.1 Parents' Music Relationship

Parents' own music relationship is one factor that influences the overall experience of music activity. Parents' beliefs affect their behavior, influencing the opportunities children receive (Sonnenschein et al., 1997). Prior research generally confirms that parents with musical backgrounds more often offer opportunities for their children to be musically active (de Vries, 2009; Ilari, 2005; Custodero et al., 2002).

Parents' ways of offering their children musical engagement clearly reflected their own (previous) music use. Parents were then divided into groups to see how distant or close music relationships can change the observed phenomenon. These groups are based only on parents' interview descriptions, so the group's validity should be treated with reservation. First, parents were organized into three groups: 1) parents whose music relationship was the most distant (don't usually listen to music), 2) parents who described more musical engagement (like to have background music), and 3) parents who described the most music engagement (music training). Because

of the small number of participants and the absence of valid measurements, I pursued the strengthening of this scale by using it as a bipolar scale from distant to close music relationships.

Parents' descriptions of their own music use were very much in touch with their physical space of being alone to be with children as stay-at-home parents. Also, their personal music relationship impacted their current music use, correlating to the amount and in what ways music was part of their everyday lives.

The working parents who participated in the study had a close relationship to music. Many of them had previous experience with music education, such as playing instruments or taking dance lessons. These parents said they frequently listen to music, sing, and dance at home. They explained that they use music as a source of joy for themselves and their families.

P: We tend to have a lot of music playing at home. All kinds of music genres are played. Especially if I can be behind the wheel, then it's time to have a disco party in the car.

Parent B & 2,5-year-old child.

P: Actually, we usually don't have quiet time.

Parent D & 2,5-year-old child.

The parents, who were currently stay-at-home parents, described more about the changes to their music listening habits after becoming parents. It seems that parents' music listening tends to reduce. Understandably, this change was more obvious when the parents' music relationship was closer. Next, we go through some reasons parents gave for this phenomenon.

One reason for reducing music listening was the auditory landscape of constant noises. When parents had their own time, they chose silence over music.

I: Do you use music in your everyday life? When you are, perhaps, alone sometimes?

(laughter)

P: Yes, sometimes, but I have noticed it has decreased significantly after having children. When there is that commotion in the background all the time, then when the fuss subsides, it's nice to have it in silence for a while. There is such a load of sound in your ears that you already miss that silence.

Parent H & 4 years old child

Stay-at-home parents also described using music for the children's amusement, taking the children to music school, and using background music to shift the whole family's mood (e.g., getting excited about cleaning day).

Mostly in the car, when you're driving, that is the time we listen to music. And sometimes, maybe more on the weekend, if we're at home and then we're cleaning day. I always like to put music on the radio and then ask a three-year-old, for example, what song would be good, what to play. Now the Käärijä is an absolute favorite, and you wish for something calmer or something you can't listen to Cha Cha Cha a hundred times in a row, but clearly, they pick up the same kind of hits from the radio."

Parent E & Child 3 years old

They also described not having suitable devices available and feeling they did not have time to put music on.

I: You are saying that listening to music has decreased. Can you say why?

P: Probably the fact that we don't have that radio at home. And we're so busy, so there isn't that much time.

Parent I & 1,5-year-old child.

Those who had distant relationships with music were willing to let their children's wishes impact their use of music.

It doesn't fit to our family. We never have any background music. (...) Well, we sing sometimes. She is excited about songbooks, and that is absolutely not in my or my husband's interest. But because our child is excited about those, so it has also become our interest.

Parent C & 3-year-old child

#### **4.1.1 Music Use Before Music Activity Assignment**

In the first interview, parents described music activities that they did with their children. As mentioned, parents' music relationship and status as either stay-at-home parents or working outside the home influenced how versatile music's role was in their children's lives.

Some parents very rarely had music activities with their children but were ready to engage in music activities when it was their child's wish. The most common music activities that parents described they do every now and then were well-known children's songs, which include some movements (e.g., Itsy-bitsy-spider).

Well, we sing, you know basic itsy-bitsy-spider and all the kids' songs you can play along (..) He really enjoys singing, he sings even when he is alone in his room. (...) Yeah, so a lot. And the younger sibling also loves it, especially when the music has a good strong rhythm. He will come and dance."

Parent D & Child 2,5 years old.

Parents whose music relationship was closer described music use as more versatile. Their descriptions of the child's music relationship showed awareness of what type of music is a good fit in different situations. Children seemed to have inherited their parents' close music relationship and used music to support self-regulation.

But I love taking them to music school. (...). I'm a big proponent of, and fan of, music and getting them to play something. Because I think it's really good for development, for so many different parts of life. (...) at the evenings and sing to them. (...) she likes to listen to music. So, her quite time, because she doesn't nap anymore, and sometimes she says, "I need to rest" (...) She'll just usually go to our bed and put whatever Spotify list, like songs from music school (laughs) and um. She sits there and does puzzles in our bed and listens to music, and that really helps her to calm down.

Parent G & child 3 years old.

Earlier research has shown that even though parents value music's capacity to support children's development, only 18% play music to children daily, 9% sing with children or to children, and none encourage their children to make up their own music (de Vries, 2009).

For pursuing to see how participants' music relationships have changed as they become parents and how music use could differ because of the role of being a stay-at-home parent from a working parent, their descriptions were collected in Figure 2. below.

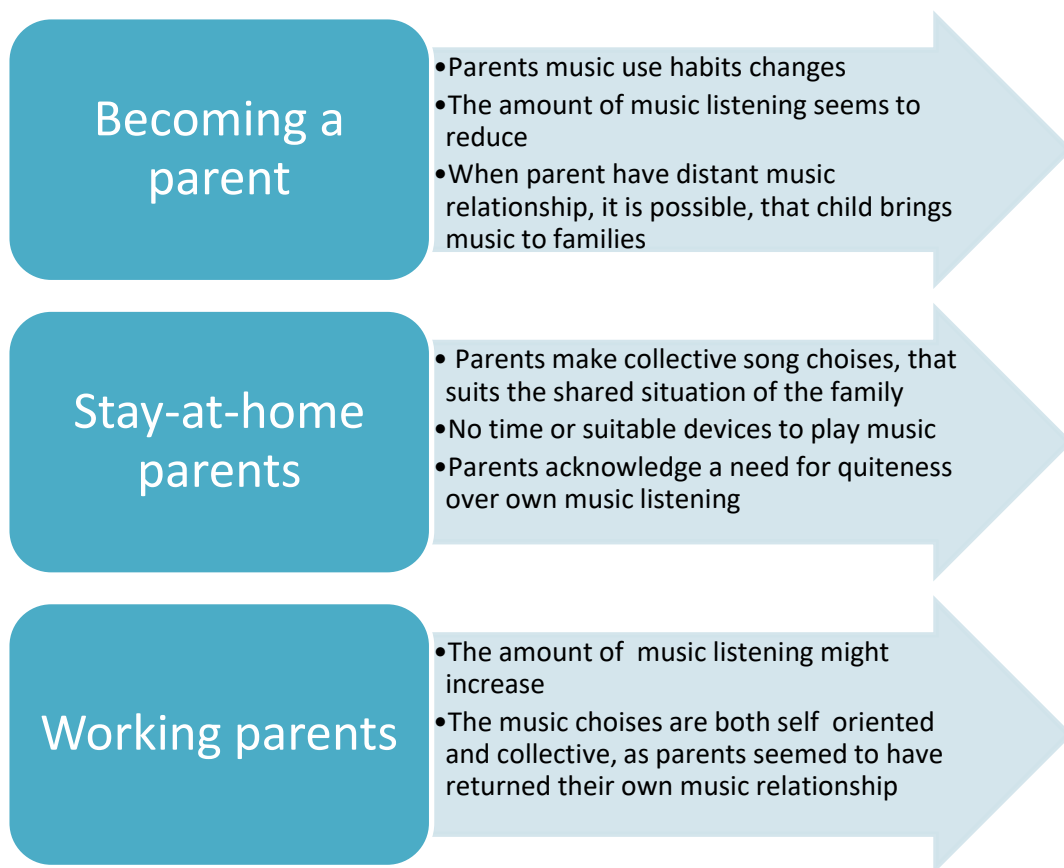


Figure 2 Music and Parenting

## 4.2 Stress Reduction

Parents were asked to describe their current parental stress, how it shows in their interaction with the child, how they recognize stress in themselves, and if the child is experiencing stress, how the parent usually tries to ease it. Parents varied a lot when asked about their experience with parental stress. The amount of stress was described all the way from not recognizing any to much stress. Some parents describe stress as coming and going on or off state. Some parents described parental stress as a constant, stable state, and the reasons change as the children grow older. This last description seemed to have a more accepting tone and seemed like a noted state for parents.

Half of the parents described parental stress as a form of parental guilt – mostly not giving children enough one-on-one quality time. They also described other stress factors that could be described either as their personal or task-related stress factors. Such things were insufficient time to process one's emotions and home-, work- or study-related concerns.

Attempting to understand these stress factors and to see later how music activities replied to these as a reducing source, stress factors are organized into two groups:

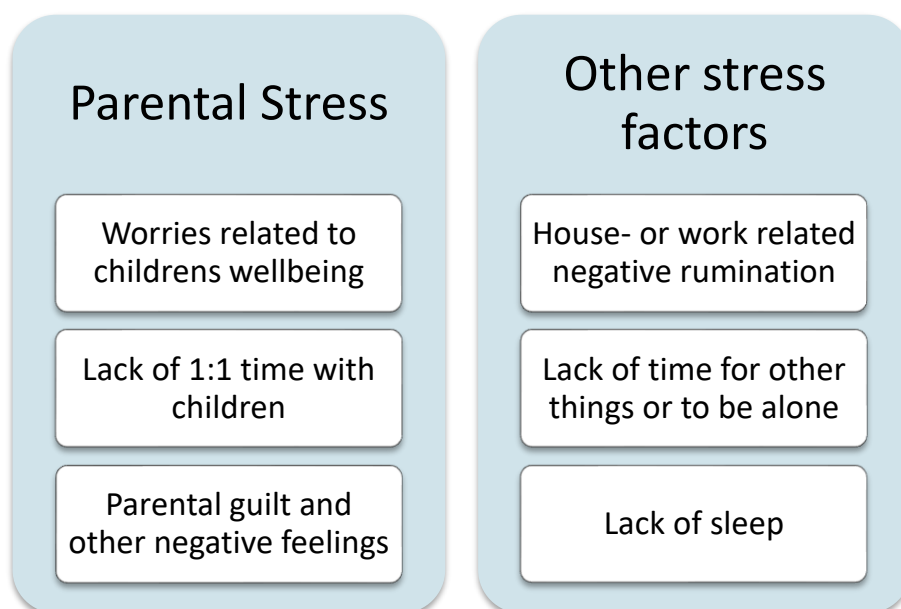


Figure 3 Stress Factors

Parents described how music activities influenced them, especially in reducing stress, and how they understood a child's mind and emotions during music activities.

One of the results was that music activity can reduce mutual stress for both the child and the parent. As parents describe moments when they were able to reduce stress, they found a variety of regulatory strategies. At times, they chose relaxing music as background music for their art and craft-moment, and at other times, they chose upbeat music that invited the whole family to the dance floor. When the music activity was successful, it responded to the need for one-on-one quality time with children.

Baltazar et al. (2019) studied the factors that affect stress regulation when music is used as a regulatory strategy. Baltazar et al. research clarifies that affective regulation will depend on both strategy and music, but it is more up to the music we choose, at least in the short term. Baltazar defines that music plays a bigger role because the music we choose creates the platform where the regulatory process happens.

The reasons why music activities helped parents and their children to reduce their stress levels varied. It was clear that parents have been testing what works and what does not. Next, the five strategies that parents found during the two-week music activity assignment. As the strategies were defined, they matched the participant's

needs. Therefore, the strategies are stress-reducing both parental and other stress factors (figure 1. Stress types).

#### 4.2.1 The Stress Reducing Strategies

One stress reduction strategy was dancing. When parents described dancing with children, based on the description, the dynamics between parent and child seemed flexible, as it was suitable for children to dance the way they wanted.

I didn't know you could do this and just like letting her control me, in a sense of, how are we dancing and what are we doing like... What do you want to do?

Parent G & 3-year-old child.

Dancing reduced stress and led to stress over messy home melt away. Parents described unpleasant ruminating thoughts about unfinished, never-ending house tasks. Moving with music reduced parents' stress levels and, in a way, their attitude toward clutter slightly changed.

But we had already been dancing for 10 minutes and had fun together. So, my stress levels were decreased so much that it didn't bother me to see the mess we made. (laughing) Our floor was covered in shredder paper, and we even went to get more! But maybe that was when I noticed that the activity moment did lower my stress levels, so I didn't stress about that.

Maybe that was also the reason why it was nice, somehow my own feeling in those moments were more relaxed and I didn't get irritated over things that usually do that. (...) I really wasn't bothered about the mess we made (laughing), so it was more relaxed and... Probably it was the music that influenced and led to us having nice time and it was fun to do things with kids and that I wasn't bothered to clean a bit after that.

Parent H & Child 4 years old.

The second stress reduction strategy was to develop other fun and interesting activities with the child. Music activities offered a platform to teach. The teaching perspective included skills related to musicality and other skills such as social skills and remembering rules. Parents' musical background did not affect whether they concentrated on teaching rules or musical skills.

"The joy from learning maybe also. And to myself also, joy out of, when child notices that he is learning, when he sings the songs that are familiar, and at times, he already could sing by himself. (...) Well, of course it's not perfect, but still, just the right way."

Parent A & Child 2 years old

"(..) If this is something he is nervous about, then he could be more confident about it. When he goes to daycare, they will have these types of music activity moments, so... This could give him something that... A way of engaging those moments with ease, even when he doesn't know what is this new game".



Parent F & 2-year-old child.

Parents described music activities reduced their stress levels when music activities were fun and interesting to children. Parents felt that seeing their children enjoying their activity and showing a positive affective state in these moments gave them positive, confident thoughts about their parenting. This included the aspects that music listening activated other (than music) types of new creativity in children and that parents were proud of their child's skills.

P: (...) And then you felt good about it. You see that the child is having a fun time, he likes it, and now he is clearly having a fun time during this music thing and there's no anger or anything like that, so of course it sticks to you. Like, isn't this nice! This was a nice thing, and it feels good.

Parent E & 3-year-old child

"When the child was drawing, he made several different and new types of shapes on the paper, and he also used a lot of different colors. He also described more what he was drawing, which I found, as a parent, very interesting, to see what is happening inside my child's mind."

Parent D & 2 years old child.

"She doesn't tell stories and yesterday we made up a little fort and she was inside the fort reading a book to baby and she was obviously making it up, she can't read. And the two of us were sitting outside listening that like, she has never done that and made-up stories from the book, it's a familiar story and that wasn't what she told. Also, about the Christmas book she tells stories about the characters. It's very... Very interesting because I feel like the past two weeks, she has shown so much more creativity."

Parent G & 3-year-old child

Parents with a more distant relationship with music were delighted to see that, after two weeks of activities, they were able to give their children new ways to express themselves musically.

P: (...) What has been done with that child, it shines through. The history of that. Like well, we have been investing to it, she dares to sing out loud, (...) varies the tones and melodies very nicely and invented her own words out of nowhere. So, it gave... I had a kind of feeling of winning, that "Yes, we have done something right" (...). In a way, I could see my effort in it.

Parent C & 3-year-old child

The third strategy was designing a shared moment to rest and enjoy music, offering a place to be close to each other. One reason for parents' stress was concerns about the child's wellbeing. Parents described worries about sufficiently meeting their children's needs.

Sometimes, when needs are unmet, they are followed up with unwanted behavior that challenges parents. These situations were especially described by parents whose child was at the developmental stage when the child stopped napping in the afternoons. The music activity assignment gave them a new way to calm down and relax together. In these moments, parents were relieved to see their children calm and knew that the rest of the day would continue with better energy levels.

P: But this relaxed, so it was wonderful to notice and know, that now the child is relaxing. It is like... It was such an acknowledging moment, in a way, like a relief, that now the day is going to continue a little better.

Parent C & 3 years old child

The fourth and fifth strategies concentrated on how parents could include their needs to be met during the daily music activity. The fourth strategy was to take time to reflect on their own emotions and thoughts. Shared moments offered parents a place to rest, letting music relax them and reflect their minds.

A parent reported this benefit to have reached even as far as better sleeping. Some parents explained that they made those moments more enjoyable after noticing that music activities can provide joyful breaks.

Yes, so I also had an opportunity to reflect on the things that happened earlier that day, about work and stress factors, and so I didn't need to think about it later, and my own time became more serene, and those topics didn't come to mind when I was going to bed. I was able to let go of those thoughts a long time before and it was easier to go to sleep.

Parent D & child 2 years old.

Because it would calm me down of course if I was having a really hard day to um. It would, you know. Put me back in my place, like ok this is... Taking a breath, relaxing, having fun and just being with her and enjoy with her and it would help me just listening, watching her just release her stress and soften like soften me.

Parent G & 3-year-old child

This leads to the fifth strategy the parents found helpful: playing self-chosen music. One thing that parents pointed out about the music they chose was that they felt it was important that they genuinely liked the music. Some of the parents chose background music for their music activity moments. Some chose music that is titled as children's music, and some experienced different genres. Nevertheless, overall, some of the parents felt they needed to be the ones who chose the music for their music activity.

Self-chosen music and practicing their own musicality seemed to symbolize parents' increased self-awareness and self-agency. Parents who described a lack of time started considering their own needs when making song selections.

P: It needed to be calmer that I didn't put anything like. Even though the children might want that (...), I didn't put that because I didn't want the songs to be wild. So rowdy or something that. (...) I asked, if we were going to put on music, but not (...) songs, which sounds very annoying to me.

I: Do you mean you wanted more lyrical music?

P: Yes, yes, yes, that had an effect.

Parent E & 3 years old child

Some participants gained new nuances to their music relationship as they discovered new ways to be musical. Interestingly, some of the parents who had a more distant relationship with music approached these activities by testing their voices, creating sound effects, humming, and later even singing. They describe this feeling as liberating.

I: Has your relationship with music changed during these two weeks?

P: Well, maybe it's a little more liberated. Well, we listen to music that comes from the radio and such... But now, I'm a little more relaxed to hum and things like that.

I: How does it feel, it sounds like, maybe you haven't hummed and sung like that before, how does it make you feel?

P: It's... Just that... It feels good, and that it... Somehow, there is always a more liberated feeling there. But yes, I haven't practiced it before, so now I can do it. I can relax and just get involved much better.

Parent I & 1,5 years old child.

These five strategies could respond to parent's and child's needs individually and mutually. Parental stress was described as concerns about a child's well-being, lacking one-on-one time, and having negative feelings about one's parenthood. Other reasons causing stress were unfinished tasks, lack of time to reflect on their feelings, and lack of sleep. Parents were able to find new musical ways to answer their individual and shared needs during music activities. Music regulated the affective states of the parent-child duos and led them to a more positive state.

While most parents (7 out of 9) found that music activities reduced their stress at times, some parents did not see a change in their stress levels (2 out of 9). These parents described themselves as stress-free; interestingly, they stood for the extremes of music relationships (close-distant).



Figure 4 Stress Reducing Strategies

There were also music activities that seemed to cause stress. Few parents reported that sometimes, especially speedier music activities did not serve the purpose they hoped.

I knew that there would be rowdiness, there would be even without music, and at first, it was going well, but when it got over the rowdiness, you realized that maybe it's good to stop now... That you don't know what's coming next. And then I recognize in myself, that I just can't take this anymore. Right, so that I recognized it right away, now I can't take it anymore, the sound level starts to rise, maybe even more, or I should have been somewhere else, some other, bigger space.

Parent E & 3-year-old child.

Lastly, parents' attitudes toward phones as a music source were a repeated theme. Some of the parents said they did not prefer children to listen to music from phones because they know children should not spend too much time on phones or (other devices). This attitude aligns with systematic research reviews about Digital Wellbeing in Families (Tammisalo et al., 2020).

I had the music on my phone (...) I needed my phone, so I turn my phone over, but she just wanted to keep looking at the phone and controlling the music and I said

"Honey we are not doing this, if you keep going to the phone we are not.. Its not screentime, we are not using the phone right now" (...) she's like constantly running to the phone and say, "This song, this song!". (...) And that's the hard... Like obviously phones are really great, um for a lot of things, but I think, I don't like having it, especially when it's like that special time for me and her, and it was hard thing, that's why I like cd, we can put CD on and listen music and not having any screens."

Parent G & child 3 years old.

For some, music activity assignments led to more relaxed use of phones as a music source. Nevertheless, playing music on phones clearly stressed parents at times.

(...) she came to my lap, and we listened to it from my phone. I always feel a bit guilty about showing anything from phone to the child. I don't know why... But eventually, I got through it (laughs). I don't know how much it affected me that there was just one still picture she was looking at while we listened (...).

Parent C & child 3 years old.

### 4.3 Focus

When parents agreed to participate in a two-week music activity assignment, this outside motivator initially affected their focus on music activity moments. Nevertheless, music activities seemed to have elements that supported parents and children's foci.

Having an enjoyable moment with the child could center both parents' and children's focus on one shared moment. Parents described enhanced focus as a positively surprising outcome of the music activities offered.

When parents' focus was better than usual, it responded to several stress factors that parents earlier described, such as having ruminating thoughts while playing with children.

"I haven't really used music to focus and calm before, like if I am doing something, music will, at least when the lyrics are in Finnish, they will distract my focus, at least a bit. But now, it looks like 't's the other way around with kids."

"(..) as soon as the music was on, it calmed our atmosphere. Like, children were calm or especially older one calmed and started listening to music and focused to that activity in whole new way... (...) So I would say that there was a clear difference in calming down and gaining more focus. (...) I think my own ability to focus also improved, like music kind of attached to the activity and I could focus and calm myself to do that thing with child and focus only to that.

Parent H & 4 years old child.

Parents described noticing better focus, both on themselves and on their children. They described that the shared activity drew their focus on each other. Parents

described that music activities captured their focus, as they needed to concentrate on movements or lyrics.

I was so 100% present at that moment because you can't think of other things or look around and think of the things that need to be done or that I just received a message on my phone or else... So, it was like I had to focus also, to think about the lyrics and how should I move my hands and such, so the focus had to be there.

Parent B & Child 2,5 years old child

It was a kind of stopping, probably in the hustle and bustle of everyday life, not like that, probably more of being in the moment. Like, now we are here, two of us, and we can do nice things and do, and maybe it was like that, somehow, like that... I would describe it as a kind of stopping in that situation that. ... Because of that, he was able to come to my arms effortlessly, or in other ways, being close to me. Like, through that music.

Parent E & 3 years old child.

As the music activity captured parents' focus on the activity, one of the parents described that it helped the parents be more self-aware during the music activity assignment.

I just noticed the amount of stress and how this reduces it. It was such an interesting fact to see how it can affect so much. I can see and notice it now.

Parent I & 1,5 years old child.

When parents and children had suitable time and space for music activities, the music captured their focus and rooted them in the present moment. More about focus will be in section 4.4.1, which addresses parents' motivation toward music activity assignments.

## **4.4 Enablers of Empathy**

Half the parents noticed being more empathic toward their child during music activities than in typical shared playtimes. Music activities had elements that enabled parents to understand with more clarity what their child was feeling and experiencing and have compassion for the child.

P: "It was like a more relaxed feeling. And I guess that because my stress levels were reduced (...) If I were more stressed and the child is yelling about nothing like... Well, you know, in my opinion over nothing, then it would be the breaking point for me and um... I would lose my nerves. But probably that music activity moment, and that I had my focus on only one thing and that music helped to be so focused... Those were the things that lowered my stress levels.

R: So, what did you think about in that moment of your child, when he was yelling over a balloon that had dropped on the ground?

P: I can feel what he is feeling. He is very upset and disappointed, and I can see that this is causing him sadness even though, from my point of view, it seemed like nothing.

R: So, you were able to empathize with him more easily?

P: Yes, empathizing was easier, and I saw I tried to... Be compassionate about his disappointment. "

Parent H & 4-year-old child.

Looking into the enablers that led to parents' access to increased empathy, we found that the results presented above were mediators and explain why music activity assignment supported some of the parents' empathy; Parents' music relationship (4.1), Stress reduction (4.2), and Focus (4.3) were variables that influenced parents' experience of empathy. Music activities supported parents in being more self-aware, regulating their emotions, and leading to being more mindful in the moment, summarizing these qualifications as a regulated parent.

When parents have the opportunity to give unhurried attention to their children, empathy becomes more accessible.

It was so much easier to see and understand the child after taking my time in the moment. Then, I could understand him even from the smallest things (...). For example, we understood each other just by looking at each other.

It was so much clearer to see when you could seriously take the time to do it. You could understand even the smallest things, you knew what he wanted, or what he wanted to do. You didn't have to ask many times, for example, "Hey, what's going on, or how do you feel". (...) you already knew what was going on. (...) I didn't realize it then, but when I think about it now, (...) it's probably even maybe deepened our understanding of each other.

Parent D & 2,5 years old child

Well, it was kind of, somehow, natural and good connections, like, it was like... Having a good eye contact, for the whole-time, child had eye contact with me and looked at me with a lot of interest and excitement. Like asking "what's next" and of course I replied to that eye contact so... It was like, it was just ours fun and nice moment, so it was. Like it was shared excitement. Child was excited about mom is doing fun things and it's so different and we are doing this together and I was excited because gosh, he really seems to like this, this actually is fun, seeing him laughing hard, giving him hints of songs that we are going to start sing.

Parent B & 2,5 years old child

Parents described observing a child's affective states through children's bodily expressions.

Through body language, because the child has a “concentration tongue” (laughs). When a child concentrates on something, (...) puts their tongue out, just a little.

Parent D & 2,5 years old child

It's really good, there was like a bodily vibration of anticipation, and child didn't focus on anything else (...) Like really wide-eyed (...) All those expressions and gestures.

Parent C & child 3 years old.

And you could see her body soften (...) and then again exited and shivering.

Parent G & 3 years old child

As parents noticed music's ability to help them regulate and reflect their emotions and experiences and later empathized with their children, they were able to offer music activities that supported children's emotion regulation.

The next description shows how a parent with a distant music relationship processes two situations where the parent empathizes with the child. First, the parent suggests that music helps the child communicate clearly. Then, the parent re-evaluates the situation through self-awareness and adds that the parent's own emotional state was beneficial for being empathic.

R:“ Do you think the music calmed him down and made it easier to understand him?

P:“ Yeah! It's like that's... What came to my mind the most was that when the child calms down, he can tell his needs a little easier what he wants. Or it could be that I was so much calmer there, and then those other thoughts disappeared, and then I focused so much better on the child. (...)

P:“ When the child didn't want to eat and started to get angry, if I started singing or something, it stopped after a while, and he started listening to it, and then he basically participated in it a little bit; he waved his hands or something, and it's like that... I guess he forgot what he was supposed to be angry about (laughs), and something else nice came in between.

Parent I and 1,5-year-old child

Some parents were using music to regulate their affective states, but during music activity assignments, they began to apply this strategy more intentionally to their children's needs. This was a new act of parents' empathy and could be described as a musical co-regulation.

But eventually, I made conscious choices also from the point of view of that child, and I noticed that it helped him as well. (...) We no longer had to fight or deal with those emotions when it was time to go to bed.

Parent D & 2,5 years old child.

It changed! So, we've never really listened to any children's music, while I've always thought it didn't matter what kind of music we listen to. (...) If it has some nice



rhythms, the child might feel like dancing to them. But now I somehow got the hang of what this is, it's like that thing in children's music. why do people listen to it, and why do they make silly choreographies to it and sing (...) That's now opened for me.

Parent B & 2,5-year-old child

#### 4.4.1 Novelty and Motivation

Enablers of empathy have been presented above, and this section will finish it as it addresses the parents' motivators to be empathic during music activities. While some parents were instantly excited to participate in the research and see what novel experiences the music activity assignment would bring, other parents got interested after noticing new positive outcomes. These standpoints affected their intention to design and commit to daily music activities. When music activities led to new insights, parents' motivation to continue daily activities increased.

Parents' self-efficacy seems to play a role: When they intentionally chose or allowed the child to choose music and the activity, they also had the inner motivation to stay in the shared moment with the child as it was enjoyable for both. This topic partly overlaps with section 4.2.1, describing music activities as a platform for meeting parents' needs.

More intentional shared playtime with their children seemed to create activities that parents found interesting, leading to even more motivation toward music activities with their children. Few parents adopted their hobbies as part of their music activity moments. The next quote is from Parent E's second interview. In the first interview, the parent named handcrafts as a relaxing activity.

Well, maybe the crafting moments. Often, the other child was also there. I got both children to calm down at the kitchen table and put music with a calm tempo in the background (...). And then we all started to do something crafty. Someone made cards, and I could knit while the children were doing their own thing, so maybe that was the reason I noticed that the music activities worked nicely; it was really nice, and I could even start singing along to those songs, and then we talked about those songs.

Parent E and 3-year-old-child

Almost all the parents had new experiences with music or music activities. The novelty seemed to support their commitment to continuing the assignment daily as they could find new aspects, for example, in the child's creativity (as described in section 4.3). Music activities' nature as a flexible platform to design different things provided continuous experiences of novelty and maintained parents' and children's motivation.

One aspect of novelty and empathy was that parents had a new viewpoint to empathize with the child's musicality.

I mean, it helps strengthen it (relationship). Like I said, I learned so much about her, just these few moments with her and her musical knowledge is incredible and recognition of rhythm like... (...) Dance, draw, sing... And see kind of, letting her choose and see what she decides, and it's kind of like, how is her, from her decision, I can learn how are you feeling right now. Do you want to dance or cuddle or look at the book, with one, and it's you know, obviously lovely for her to have that time with me, and actually sit and be with just her.

(...) like listening more to the words, because she listens to them and tries to hear what they are... Even when I was working, I would listen to classical music. My 20 min drive, only classical music, no talking, (...), but it made me listen to the words again because she sings all the time."

Parent G & 3 years old child

Well, maybe it was different in that way, you know that this was a given task, so maybe somehow (...) it was like observing as an outsider, (...) that I saw the child more sensitively, like let's follow now out of interest how this music influences in this situation. (...) For example, I found a small radio (...), which also plays CDs, (...), and I have been asking if the children would like to listen to music while they play with Legos, (...) and the kind of musical fairy tales that I have now borrowed more from the library, where is the CD and the child can follow them. (...) Especially this 3-year-old, he sits there and browses, and calms down with that. These types of things I have been paying attention to (during the music activity assignment).

Parent E and 3-year-old child

Some of the parents who described the closest musical relationship described having a good understanding of their children's minds and emotions and not having as many new insights into their child or their relationship during music activities as the others.

Most parents gained new insight into their children's minds and experiences. They also represented the ones who were "in-between" on the close-distant music relationships scale. This leads to the conclusion that it could mean that the parents who found the music activity assignment to offer novelty and interesting activities were more easily motivated by the assignment. The parents who either felt that the assignment was already completely familiar to their family or, on the other end, parents who had the most distant music relationship might have felt music-related activities to be less motivating, leading to having fewer new insights about the child and music.

Well, I think I already knew quite well this child before.

Parent A & 2 years old child

No, I don't think so. No, I don't think. The child is really clear about his own moods and such.

Parent F & 2,5 years old child.

To summarize the enablers of empathy, parents' affective state and past music experiences affected their motivation to commit to assignments and plan and execute suitable activities.

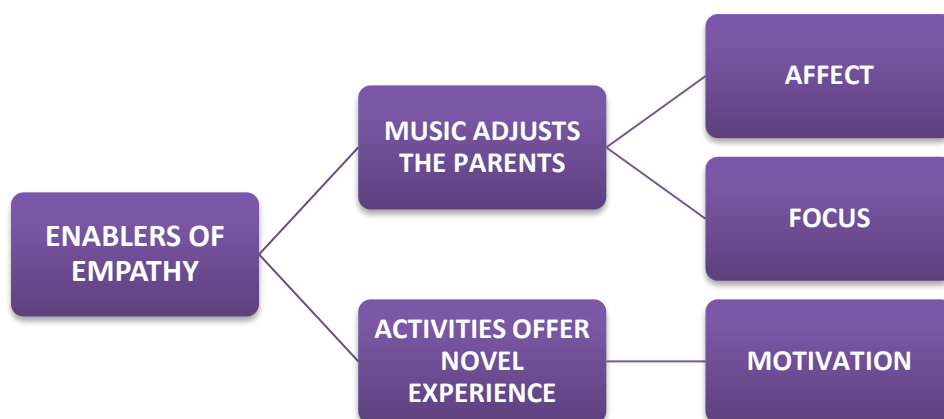


Figure 5 Enablers of Empathy

## 4.5 Parent-Child Dynamics

This research focused on the parent-child relationship and explored how music activities can strengthen parents' bonding with their children. One of the results is that music activities influenced some of the parent-child duos' dynamics. Next, I will describe some factors influencing their dynamics during the music activity assignment.

Firstly, parents and children had environmental factors that influenced their experience. As mentioned earlier, participants were parents of 1-4 children, and their family size was 2 - 6 people. This alone describes the different environments and opportunities parents had to do daily shared music activities with their children. They had children of different ages, from newborn to school age. Family size and having a spouse affected their relationship and music activity experience.

Having suitable time and space were crucial factors for shared music activity moments. Many parents describe wanting one-on-one time with their child, and participating in two-week daily music activities answered that need. The best moments

were described as when parents could do music activities with only one child at a time, as parents noticed siblings' presence interfered with focusing on the activity.

Parents who spent less time with their children (for example, having a younger sibling or a parent working) were most interested in how music activities influenced their relationship.

P: "Well, at that time, both children were with me, and the younger one didn't know how to do it like the older (...), so I had to go after the younger one (...) So, maybe the child lost nerves that I couldn't focus only on this child and the activity (...), and so then he gave up and left."

R: "So, your connection broke?"

P: "Yes."

Parent H & 4-year-old child.

Overall, parents enjoyed being close and connecting with their children physically and mentally during music activities.

It was just a moment between the two of us. Neither the father, the baby, the cat, nor the dog belonged there, but it was just a moment between the two of us, which no one had any business coming to disturb.

Parent C & 3-year-old child

"Um. where I was relaxed... Well like especially when she wanted to cuddle. You know, be in my laps, listening songs. There's nothing better (laughs). Lying on the couch and having her curled up next to me and just singing (laughs) it just perfect.

Parent G & 3 years old child

Secondly, their dynamics were influenced because parents designed and controlled music activities. Many of the parents described that the assignment first caused them a small amount of stress because they had to learn a new way to play and remember to do the assignment daily. They also described that children initially evaded the new game that their parents suggested. After the first week, families started to feel like music activities were an easy and familiar way to have a pleasant time together.

At first, it was just that we were testing different things, and I also took it quite seriously, Like, "Now, for 10 minutes, the whole family is having fun!" (laughs). Yes, it was like that, but in a way, when I gave up on them (expectations) and just let it flow naturally (...), it started to become a little easier. (...) Maybe after a week.

Parent C & 3 years old child

Parents who were not familiar with doing music activities before said that they needed this assignment to do daily activities repeatedly to achieve a relaxed attitude.

(...) ideas started becoming, ideas started to be born. The fact that there was this assignment to do these things, so that also brought that space and time to everyday life.

Parent I & 1,5-year-old child

Parents described five meanings for music activities with their children: to adjust valence and arousal, teach, increase creativity, share positive experiences, and be close and feel a connection. These meanings reflect their dynamics during music activity moments, as in with what intention the parent initially designed music activities.

For example, the next quote is from a parent interview who wanted to teach musical skills and rules. The child wanted to be in the parent's arms, which frustrated the parent.

... So the child didn't want to do it because it was new (...), so the child wanted to always come to my arms. (...) So, all the time, it was a bit difficult to try (new activities) and I was like "Well, could we just play now?".

Parent F & 2,5 years old child.

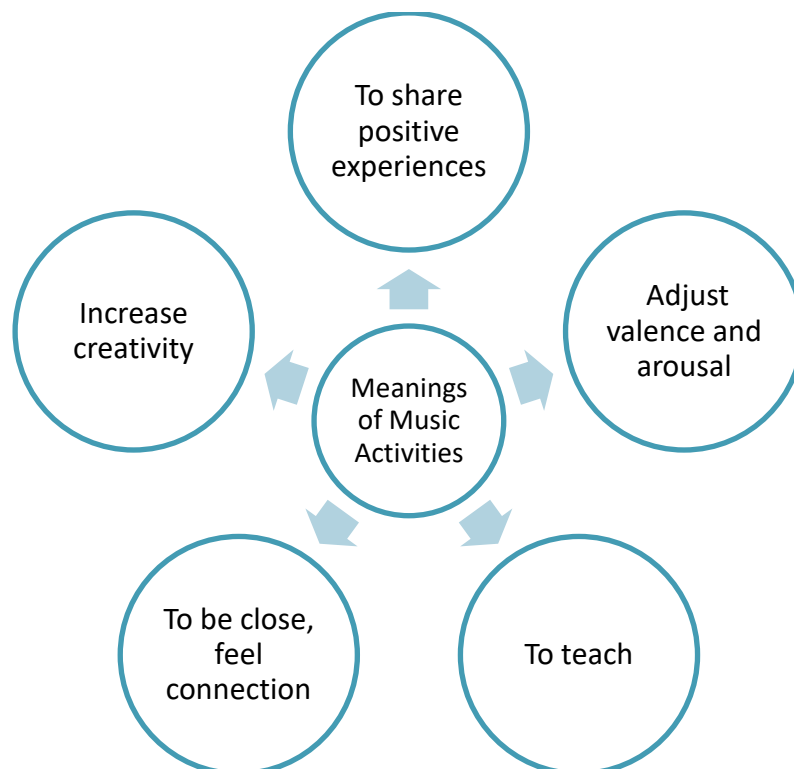


Figure 6 Meanings of Music Activities

When parents were asked to find differences between typical playtimes and music activities, some parents noticed that the music activity assignment offered novelty as this parent-led activity was an unusual setting. This is closely attached to parents' motivation (as described in section 4.1.1).

In their typical playtime, children decide and control their shared games and activities. They described that this had led to situations where parents felt uninterested, and their thoughts were elsewhere. When parents were asked to choose music activities, they were in a new situation of planning and directing the shared activity.

R: "How would you describe your connection with the child during music activities?"

P: "Well, it was probably deeper, as it is probably deeper whenever you do something new together and concentrate completely on it, so, of course, it's better than what we usually have (...) (Typically) at the same time while playing, I'm also concentrating on something else, such as listening to what the baby does (...) so no matter how hard you try to be present, you're not. But this (music activity) was pretty good because now I consciously took part, so I put effort into it in a completely different way than normally (...) It was so different, particularly regarding concentration.

Parent C and 3-year-old child

Usually, the child orders the games. (...) Playing with the child is challenging (...) or how to make the game continue without him starting to scream that I am doing everything wrong. So maybe in this (music activity) the point was that he was the one waiting for what I'm going to do, what's next, what we're going to do now. (...) The fact that I had control, I was able to make the child focus 100% on what I was doing and enjoy it. So maybe it gave me that kind of... More relaxed feeling.

Parent B & 2,5-year-old child.

Thirdly, parents' self-efficacy seemed to strengthen during the two-week music activity assignment. In these parent-child duos, the music activity assignment offered a new place for different dynamics leading to positive experiences that strengthened parents' confidence. The parents who initially focused on teaching music activities later seemed to change their perception to shared fun activities after noticing children purely enjoying relaxed moments with their parents.

Music activities led, at times, to a stronger and more empathic connection with the child in shared music activity moments, giving them both positive feelings. Some of the parents described that after the music activity moment ended, they were more drawn to continue to different activities with their child. Some parents described that children also hoped their shared time would continue after the music activity ended. Parents described this wish as proof of a new type of connection for them not being used to experiencing after playtime. This improved parents' self-efficacy as more confident parents, leading to more flexibility in their dynamics.

P: Earlier, I thought that it didn't matter if I put (...); it would do it. But now I may have realized what other mothers, those whose kids know all the lyrics (...), may have known.

R: What do you think it was? Why do you think these kids' songs exist?

P: Well because it's kids and adults joint. An activity that brings them together (...) Not just, that child is alone listening to music, but that it combines so clearly that, now we are going to do this thing with adult, mom or someone else close. We are having fun time together, we have good music playing, we have shared choreography, shared lyrics.

Parent B & 2,5-year-old child.

Well, maybe it was sometimes easier for him when I could have... Like it's not important if this goes the way I planned (...) when it became more of just doing things and such. And like having fun.

Parent F & 2-year-old child

A parent-child duo had a more harmonic atmosphere and flexible dynamics when conditions were favorable.

P: Yes, well, if you compare it (music activity) to some other kind of play, something like... We always play with cars and other things, and it might be that he does not like something, what do you try to do with him (laughs) and then he tries to tell you about it and, it's so much more difficult. But you see, when there is music and other things, you calm down and can wonder (...), So somehow you get to a better understanding with each other, don't you. Yes, it made it easier. (...) It brought more of, that kind of having silly and fun time.

Parent I & 1,5-year-old child

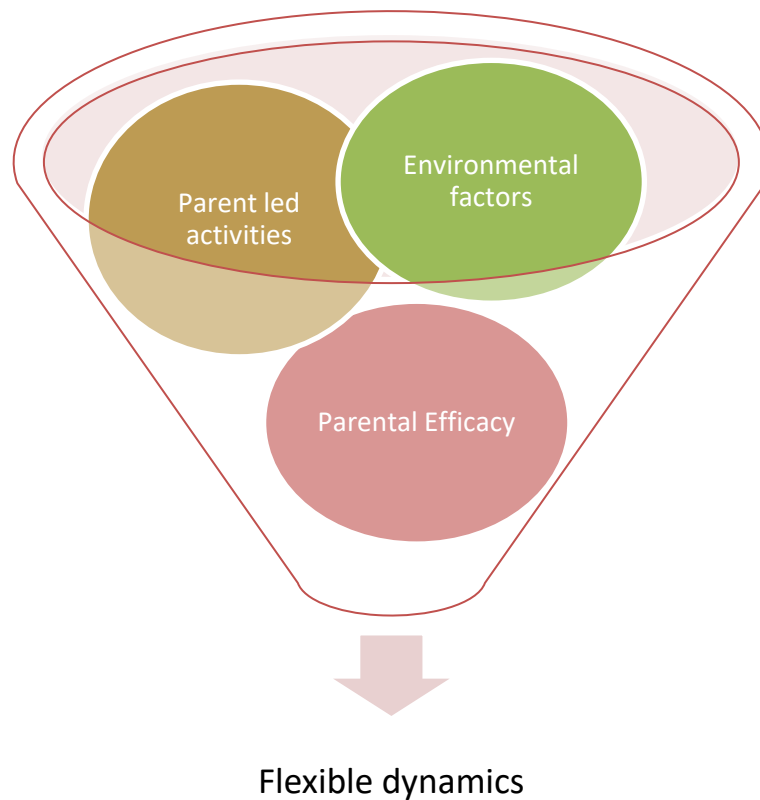


Figure 7 Music Activities and Parent-Child Dynamics

Parent-child dynamics were reflected in the parents' described well-being and workload. When parents' needs needed to be met (stressed parent), it seemed to show a more distant perception of the child. In these circumstances, parents showed interest in music and created music activities where parents were not as involved. Stressed parents' descriptions of their music activities included a shift of tone after they had lowered their stress levels.

Music activities offered a forum for more intensive playtime when a suitable time and place were available. When music activities were perceived as successful, parental efficacy increased. Results suggest that this could lead to more flexible dynamics.



## 5 DISCUSSION

This thesis aimed to comprehend the role of daily music activities in fortifying parent-child bonding. The findings underscore the significant positive effects of music activity assignments on parenting, thereby shedding light on the profound impact of music activities.

Parents' previous music relationships, encompassing music-related hobbies and typical music use, directly influenced their approach to incorporating music into their children's daily lives. Although music activities were suitable for all parents and their children, regardless of their past music relationships, parents' music relationships impacted their motivation toward the assignment.

For some parents' music use changed after becoming a parent. For some, music listening is reduced, while others describe that their own music listening has been replaced by music designed for children. There were also parents who gained new insight into why there is a concept of children's music in the first place. Notably, the assignment seemed to inspire more motivation in parents with an average relationship with music, while those with either distant or very close music relationships found less motivation.

Parents' overall life situation and stress factors also explain different experiences. Parental stress and other stress factors were discussed in semi-structured interviews. As a safe and flexible playground, music activities provided a space that could answer different needs. Some parents seemed to need more relaxing moments with their children, and others needed special one-on-one time with only one child. Music has been associated with emotional regulation and coping, so its potential to create well-being is recognized (Peters et al., 2023). Reducing parents' stress can lead to positive parenting behavior. Prior research confirms that parental stress and the danger of parental burnout are risk factors for children's well-being (Roskam et al., 2021; Mikolajczak et al., 2019).

When parents shared music activities with their children, they seemed to find the same affective tune and understood each other better. The results are in line with earlier music-induced family research. Nicholson et al. (2008) showed that musical activities positively promoted parent-child relationships, such as improvement in parents' reported irritability in a music therapy context. Current research results showed that 7 out of 9 parents notice less stress during or after the music activity, providing a sense of comfort and security in their bond. Jacobsen et al. (2014) found significant improvement in nonverbal communication and mutual attunement in a music therapy intervention context. Parents reported being less stressed by their child's mood and improving their parent-child relationship by better talking and understanding their children.

When parents were motivated to design and execute daily shared music activities with their 1.5-4-year-old child, especially stay-at-home-parents noticed that their music listening had been on "a pause" after they had become parents. As they had more intention to choose music or test singing or dancing, they noticed that music relaxed them, brought their attention to the present moment, and gave them a place to be more self-aware. Groarke and Hogan (2019) have shown that self-chosen music regulates induced negative affect more efficiently.

Music activities helped both parent and child focus better on their shared music activity. Enhanced focus was a pleasant and surprising outcome for parents. Cirelli et al. (2014) evaluated musical activities that require the ability to entrain to a rhythmic beat and encourage high levels of interpersonal coordination. This coordination skill has been connected to group cohesion and social bonding. Their research identifies that even at the age of 14 months, children showed more prosocial behavior toward people with whom they had experienced synchronous movement.

A mutually attuned, harmonic atmosphere offered parents a special place to observe their children. Parents described that they learned new aspects about their children during music activities. Some of these observations were about children's affective states through bodily movement (gestures and tension changes), musicality, and others noticed children becoming more creative with their artwork or storytelling skills. More eye contact was also one of the examples that parents described when describing the differences between typical playtime and music activities. The importance of eye-to-eye contact in maternal-infant attachment is recognized, embodying reciprocity and a robust parent-and-child bond (Wever et al., 2022; Robson, 1967).

The descriptions the parents gave about moments when joint music activity gave parents a place to be more aware of the present moment and, through that, were able to meet a child with a calm presence, reminds a stage of mindfulness. Mindfulness has many definitions and can be seen in ancient Buddhist practice or modern science. In this research, mindfulness is meant as Kabat-Zinn's definition is "the awareness that

arises from paying attention, on purpose, in the present moment, and non-judgmentally.” (Brewer & Kabat-Zinn, 2017, p. 12).

Music activities, therefore, seem to have elements that have the potential to be more mindful in a home environment with small children. Previous research about mindfulness has shown that increasing mindfulness daily can be a beneficial means to improve daily psychological well-being (Snippe et al., 2015). Research has shown that higher levels of mindfulness are associated with better lifestyle habits, lower levels of stress, and reduced negative effects (Rosini et al., 2017). Barcaccia et al. (2020) showed that mindfulness was connected to lower levels of depression and anxiety in adolescents, as it offers a place to improve self-related attitudes.

Parents had positive experiences designing and executing music activities with their children. They enjoyed seeing that they could create fun activities their children were excited about. These experiences can support parents' confidence, especially their sense of parental efficacy. The music activity assignment offered a novel and exciting activity that positively affected parents' self-regulation.

Parents closely observed their children and noticed they were more empathic than in typical playtimes. I believe that increased empathy was possible because music activity offered parents tools to be firstly regulated. Secondly, they had the inner motivation and intention to share moments of music activity with their children. Thirdly, music activities were flexible and fun platforms that provided different activities suitable for parent-child duos. Because both enjoyed the activities, the parents focused on the child and could operate from an empathic point of view. Music activities' novelty supported parents' commitment to creating new ways to include musical elements in their shared playtimes.

Music activities in the home environment were also a place to train parent-child dynamics. While this result needs more research to support the preliminary results, it suggests that music activities can be very suitable for practicing flexible dynamics. The music seemed to support the parents' being more relaxed, and their descriptions of music activity moments were harmonic, allowing their dynamics to be more flexible and less controlling.

The change in dynamics is an important finding. Earlier research by Foneca et al. (2020) has shown that lower levels of psychological flexibility within parenting were translated into higher use of authoritarian or permissive parenting styles. As earlier described in Chapter 1.2, authoritarian styles represent either high control or less sensitivity to a child's needs and opinions (Baumrind, 1991). Mikkonen et al. (2023) suggests that parents who show an authoritarian parenting style (controlling) are in the potential risk group.

Music activities helped parents achieve a suitable cognitive, emotional, and physical state to see, hear, and understand their children's inner experiences. I

conclude that music activities support bonding between parent and child because music offers a playground where parents' needs are met, and therefore, have the possibility to be regulated, empathic and flexible parents.

Music activities generated more motivation as the parent-child duos continued their daily assignment. When parents were observing children, music activities offered novel insights into the children's inner experiences. This led to increased motivation to continue shared activities with children, where parents continuously gained new insights about themselves, their children, and their relationships.

Parents described successful music activity moments as the best possible ones to have with their child. In these moments, they felt as if the world disappeared around them. They could focus only on each other, having interesting and fun activities where they could physically and mentally sense each other. These moments gave parents a feeling of accomplishment, satisfaction, and pride.

When these results are combined, we can see that music activities have elements that support bonding between parent and child. This research shows that these positive parental and mutual attunement impacts can happen in a home environment. This result gives promising insight into finding ways that families can adopt as good practices to decrease the parents' negative emotions and improve their warm parent-child relationship.

The results support the music and social bonding (MSB) hypothesis by Savage et al. (2020), who suggested that musicality is a skill set useful in diverse ways involving social affiliation. Current results demonstrated how parents can use music to regulate their affective states, but during music activity assignments, they began to apply this strategy more intentionally to their children's needs. This was a new act of parents' empathy and could be described as a musical co-regulation.

Music adjusts especially the parent, to a more relaxed and focused mood and offers an adjustable platform to enjoy each other's company and music. Looking back on the moments when parents had immersed music activities with their children, a pattern of positive parenting behavior can be seen. The next figure represents the pattern that emerged from parents' descriptions as a route to positive parenting during music activities.

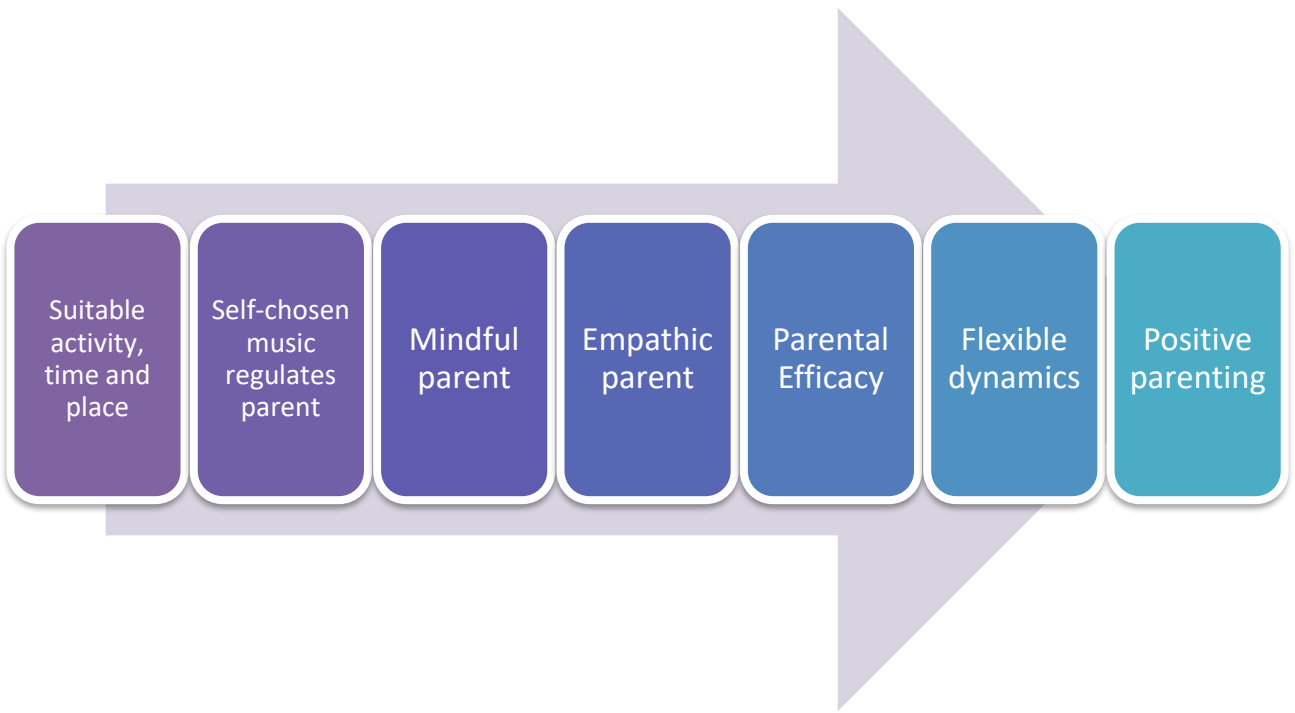


Figure 8 Route to Positive Parenting Via Music Activity

## 6 CONCLUSION

The thesis sought to understand how music activities in the home environment support bonding between parents and children. A two-week music activity assignment and semi-structured interviews were designed. Nine parents and their children aged 1.5-4-years-old performed daily 10-15-minute free-choice music activities. Parents gave semi-structured interviews before and after the assignment. Data was analyzed using thematic analysis.

Parents' past music relationship (close-distant) and their roles as stay-at-home parents or working parents also seem to have an effect. Music activities are easy to access, and parents do not need earlier music-related hobbies or training to create suitable activities. Parents with distant music relationships described becoming comfortable with the assignment after one week of practice. After this, it was easy to include music or musical elements in their shared playtimes or other activities.

Shared music activity moments provided parents a place to re-meet their own music relationship and have a safe environment to explore music with their child. They practiced more intention when choosing music, found new ways to use music, and explored their own musicality, such as humming and singing. Some created more possibilities for enjoying easy-access music, such as returning old radios to living spaces.

Parents who had closer music relationships described that their children were familiar with music activities. Their children seemed to already have music-emotional skills, such as going to rest and putting music on.

The results showed that music activities responded very well and naturally to parents' stress factors and individual needs as the parents faced different challenges. During the music activity assignment, parents found five stress reduction strategies.

Music activities offered the parent-child duo fun and interesting activities that motivated parents to commit. Parents' positive experiences in designing and sharing music activities with their children supported their parental efficacy. Being a relaxed

parent and able to focus on interesting activities with the child, followed by descriptions of empathic parenting. By engaging and having more intention about music, parents gained self-awareness and were able to be in the present moment with themselves and their children. They found that music activities supported their emotion regulation and later practiced musical co-regulation toward children. When parents were more confident designing and joining music activities with their children, they seemed to show more flexible dynamics and less control over their children.

The music activity experience positively affected the individual (parent) and relational (parent-child) levels. Thematic analysis raised several elements that improved bonding between parent and child. These elements were that the parents' chosen music reduced their stress; the assignment motivated them to find the time and place for the special one-on-one time they lacked.

In conclusion, the results show that home-based music activities can support bonding between parents and children. Music activities can help parents reduce stress, be more mindful, and show positive parenting behavior, such as being more emphatic, potentially leading to having more flexible dynamics with children. Music activity's changes to parents' affective state and self-awareness led to regulated and mindful parents who enjoyed their children's company, music, and activities. These mindful, musical moments embodied mutual understanding and empathic resonance, strengthening the parents' confidence and parent-child bond.

Results have shown evidence that music activities are a suitable platform for regulating parent-child duos to the same harmonic atmosphere. When combined, these results show an emerging pattern of a route to positive parenting via music activity. When we think about the nature of families with small children, there is usually a lot of energy, noise, and emotions. Music activities offer a playground-like platform, where parents and children can regulate their affective states, gain focus, and connect with each other. The result of music activities influencing parents to adopt positive parenting behavior inspires us to continue researching this topic.

The music activity assignment study gave new insight into the field of musicology and helped us understand everyday music's potential to support bonding and flexible dynamics between parents and children. The results also described the importance of parents' music relationships when conducting research about music and parent-child relationships.

## **6.1 Limitations**

We must recognize that participants' music activity experiences were influenced. Firstly, they attended interviews before the two-week music activity assignment.

Parents described looking more closely at their children to have descriptions in the second interview. This influenced their initial motivator toward music activities and led at least partly to experiences of heightened focus and empathy. Some participants described that the topics discussed in the first meetings gave them a starting place for self-reflection and self-awareness, such as discovering stress levels. One of the participants noticed that she discovered new positive meanings for music activities because the first interview discussed parent-child relationships, which led her to ponder whether music activities influence relationships. Therefore, the results this thesis provided should be further researched to take these limitations into consideration. Diaz (2013) conducted research on music listening and mindfulness, and the participants reported having experienced a higher level of attention regardless of whether they had specific mindfulness tasks.

I saw no reason why music activities would not fit all families, but it is possible that some parents will not find music activities beneficial to their families. Potential risks of music activities leading to negative outcomes could be parents feeling guilty or having other negative experiences of being unable to offer their children musical knowledge. One aspect of inequality in the field of family music is that not all parents have a musical background, and families may have many reasons why they cannot offer their children music hobbies.

The missing valid measurement that would have broadcasted parents' different music relationships was evident. I pursued to conclude a valid definition of the close-distant music relationship, but in the absence of the scale, many interesting observations had to be left out.

With this research style, it is understandable that some parents may have given descriptions that give a more positive appearance. For example, DePasquale and Gunnar (2020) describe that researchers use several methods to measure parental sensitivity and nurturance, that self-reporting includes a subconscious desire to respond in socially appropriate ways, and that people differ in their awareness of their behavior.

These results strengthen the earlier results in musicology and provide a new description for an even broader viewpoint on how musical activities support bonding between parents and children.

## **6.2 Recommendations for Future Studies**

This study left several questions for future research to solve. More research must be done to understand the connection between a person's music relationship and how it supports healthy relationships. One concrete subject is to create a measurement technique that defines a person's music relationship. It is left to see what factors lead to



parents having music activities as a part of their family's leisure time and what outcomes it provides to the quality of attachment and overall well-being in the long run.

Sonnenschein et al. (1997) research result, where they investigated parents' perspective's role of the home environment in fostering literacy. They found that when parents' perspective emphasized entertainment orientation (in contrast to skill-oriented), they read more to their children and seemed to interact with their children in a more sensitive manner. This was also a predictor of certain literacy-related knowledge.

A similar type of research should be performed in the field of musicology to determine the outcomes that daily music use correlates and present parents' valuable knowledge of good practices that generally everyone has access to. Parents described that they need permission to have a break. This leaves questioning: Did music activity bring new, pleasurable ways, particularly into families needing daily breaks and stress reduction? In the future, we might know the daily music that families should have.

This paper confirms the positive effects that music can have on the home environment. However, this approach only describes the potential factors that affect parents and the parent-child relationship. Therefore, this study challenges future research to continue to explore music's role and its changes in parenthood, increasing positive parenting, and effects on parent-child dynamics.

### **6.2.1 Music activities and Family Flow**

I see a fruitful opportunity to continue exploring families shared music use and its possibilities to positively influence parenting behavior and children's well-being by continuing the research with the theoretical concept of flow. Parents' descriptions of their mindful music activity moments seemed to have elements of "flow".

The theory of flow was made to describe optimal experiences. The creator of flow theory, Mihály Csíkszentmihályi (1990), described flow as a "state of complete absorption and engagement in an activity, which is enjoyed both in the moment and in retrospect". Flow experiences are described as where one's skills meet challenges in exactly the right proportion. Is it possible that the edge of having flow was closer in families where music activities had novelty to both parent and child? Is it possible that the families who had previous experiences with music activities, would have gained more positive experiences, if they had different type of music activity instruction?

Nakamura & Csíkszentmihályi (2002) describe flow to be subjective state what is characterized by intense and focused concentrations on what one is doing in the present moment, merging of action and awareness, loss of reflective self-consciousness, sense that one can control one's actions, distortion of temporal experience (typically that time has passed faster than normal). Experience of the activity as intrinsically rewarding.

They describe that all the information we can reach by our consciousness is structured through our attention. After this we can be aware of the things we experience. They describe that person's ability to regulate attention is undervalued. The talent to direct attention to activity is needed when pursuing the flow state.

After a week, it left (...), and I started to catch them along with the current flow. I was able to be thought that, now is this type of a time, so let's add such and such to this.

Parent B & 2,5-year-old child

As the positive, rewarding experience has been lived, our nature leading us to grow, we tend to seek again those pleasurable experiences. In the future, that same task may no longer offer a place to positively challenge oneself; they need to see how the task should be re-model and continue to develop greater skills (Nakamura & Csíkszentmihályi 2002).

Therefore, I wonder, when parent has distant relationship with music, can they then have more opportunities to discover and play with music, and to be more likely to experience flow. Delightfully, all the parents noticed enhanced focus, leaving with the idea of possibility to have flow moments with child during music activities. They also described times when their children seemed to be fully immersed in music activities.

All the facial expressions and gestures. The whole body was sending the message. And the whole world disappeared around us. (...) It was more intensive playtime and she really immersed to the play (...) I think it was because she didn't focus on anything else. She focused purely what she was doing, and I can say that I was also quite intensively involved (...) I focused only to that one thing and moment, I didn't think about what we are going to eat today.

Parent C & 3 years old child

Flow research has been taken also to dynamic system research (Nakamura & Csíkszentmihályi, 2002). Shoshani & Yaari (2021) point out that flow-parenting is rarely touched in research, whereas family characteristics that enable children's flow experiences has received more attention. Their own research systematically examined the associations between parental flow and positive emotions relation to parental efficacy, satisfaction, and subjective well-being. Their result showed that parent-child interactions were associated with greater flow and positive emotions than most other activities the parents engaged in during the day.

Future research can see how parents' perceptions and music skills affect parent-child music activities that lead to parents having a flow state or even a parent-child having a shared flow state.

## REFERENCES

- Ainsworth, M. D. S. (Toim.). (1978). *Patterns of attachment: A psychological study of the strange situation*. Erlbaum.
- Aunola, K., Viljaranta, J., & Tolvanen, A. (2017). Does daily distress make parents prone to using psychologically controlling parenting? *International Journal of Behavioral Development*, *41*(3), 405–414. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0165025416658555>
- Baltazar, M., Västfjäll, D., Asutay, E., Koppel, L., & Saarikallio, S. (2019). Is it me or the music? Stress reduction and the role of regulation strategies and music. *Music & Science*, *2*, 2059204319844161. <https://doi.org/10.1177/2059204319844161>
- Barcaccia, B., Cervin, M., Pozza, A., Medvedev, O., Baiocco, R., & Pallini, S. (2020). Mindfulness, Self-Compassion and Attachment: A Network Analysis of Psychopathology Symptoms in Adolescents. *Mindfulness*, *11*, 2531–2541. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12671-020-01466-8>
- Baumrind, D. (1971). Current patterns of parental authority. *Developmental Psychology*, *4*(1, Pt.2), 1–103. <https://doi.org/10.1037/h0030372>
- Baumrind, D. (1991). The Influence of Parenting Style on Adolescent Competence and Substance Use. *The Journal of Early Adolescence*, *11*(1), 56–95. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0272431691111004>

- Baumrind, D. (2012). Differentiating between Confrontive and Coercive Kinds of Parental Power-Assertive Disciplinary Practices. *Human Development*, 55(2), 35–51.  
<https://doi.org/10.1159/000337962>
- Blackburn, C. (2017). Young children’s musical activities in the home. *Education 3-13*, 45(6), 674–688. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03004279.2017.1342320>
- Bowlby, J. (1969). *Attachment*. New York: Basic Books.
- Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2006). Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, 3(2), 77–101. <https://doi.org/10.1191/1478088706qp063oa>
- Brewer Judson & Kabat-Zinn Jon. (2017). *The Craving Mind: From Cigarettes to Smartphones to Love? Why We Get Hooked and How We Can Break Bad Habits* (Vsk. 2017). Yale University Press.  
<https://search.eschost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=e000xww&AN=1478420&site=ehost-live>
- Buren, V., Degé, F., & Schwarzer, G. (2021). Active music-making facilitates prosocial behavior in 18-month-old children. *Musicae Scientiae*, 25(4), 449–464.  
<https://doi.org/10.1177/1029864919892308>
- Cirelli, L. K., Wan, S. J., & Trainor, L. J. (2014). Fourteen-month-old infants use interpersonal synchrony as a cue to direct helpfulness. *Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society B: Biological Sciences*, 369(1658), 20130400. <https://doi.org/10.1098/rstb.2013.0400>
- Clarke, E., DeNora, T., & Vuoskoski, J. (2015). Music, empathy and cultural understanding. *Physics of Life Reviews*, 15, 61–88. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.plrev.2015.09.001>
- Colella, C., McNeill, J., & Lynn, F. (2022). The effect of mother-infant group music classes on postnatal depression—A systematic review protocol. *PLOS ONE*, 17(10), e0273669.  
<https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0273669>

Custodero, L. A., & Johnson-Green, E. A. (2003). Passing the Cultural Torch: Musical Experience and Musical Parenting of Infants. *Journal of Research in Music Education*, 51(2), 102–114.

<https://doi.org/10.2307/3345844>

Darling, N., & Steinberg, L. (1993). Parenting style as context: An integrative model: Psychological Bulletin. *Psychological Bulletin*, 113(3), 487–496. [https://doi.org/10.1037/0033-](https://doi.org/10.1037/0033-2909.113.3.487)

[2909.113.3.487](https://doi.org/10.1037/0033-2909.113.3.487)

De Vries, P. (2009). Music at home with the under fives: What is happening? *Early Child Development and Care*, 179(4), 395–405. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03004430802691914>

DePasquale, C. E., & Gunnar, M. R. (2020). Parental Sensitivity and Nurturance. *The Future of Children*, 30(2), 53–70.

Diaz, F. M. (2013). Mindfulness, Attention, and Flow during Music Listening: An Empirical Investigation. *Psychology of Music*, 41(1), 42–58. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0305735611415144>

ERIC Number: EJ989380

Eskola, J., Lätti, J & Vastamäki, J. (2018). Teemahaastattelu: Lyhyt selviytymisopas. Valli, R. (Ed.) *Ikkunoita tutkimusmetodeihin 1 | Ellibs Lukuohjelma*. Noudettu 29. huhtikuuta 2024, osoitteesta <https://www.ellibslibrary.com/reader/9789524515160/preview>

Feldman, R. (2007). Parent-infant synchrony and the construction of shared timing; physiological precursors, developmental outcomes, and risk conditions. *Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry*, 48(3–4), 329–354. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1469-7610.2006.01701.x>

Fonseca, A., Moreira, H., & Canavarro, M. C. (2020). Uncovering the links between parenting stress and parenting styles: The role of psychological flexibility within parenting and global psychological flexibility. *Journal of Contextual Behavioral Science*, 18, 59–67.

<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jcbs.2020.08.004>

Greenberg, D. M., Rentfrow, P. J., & Baron-Cohen, S. (2015). Can Music Increase Empathy? Interpreting Musical Experience Through the Empathizing–Systemizing (E–S) Theory:

Implications for Autism. *Empirical Musicology Review*, 10(1–2), 80.

<https://doi.org/10.18061/emr.v10i1-2.4603>

Groarke, J. M., & Hogan, M. J. (2019). Listening to self-chosen music regulates induced negative affect for both younger and older adults. *PLOS ONE*, 14(6), e0218017.

<https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0218017>

Hallam, S. (2010). The power of music: Its impact on the intellectual, social and personal development of children and young people. *International Journal of Music Education*, 28(3), 269–

289. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0255761410370658>

Harper, D., & Thompson, A. R. (2011). *Qualitative Research Methods in Mental Health and Psychotherapy: A Guide for Students and Practitioners*. John Wiley & Sons, Incorporated.

<http://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/jyvaskyla-ebooks/detail.action?docID=818736>

Hendricks, K. S., Einarson, K. M., Mitchell, N., Guerriero, E. M., & D’Ercole, P. (2021). Caring For, About, and With: Exploring Musical Meaningfulness Among Suzuki Students and Parents. *Frontiers in Education*, 6, 648776. <https://doi.org/10.3389/educ.2021.648776>

<https://doi.org/10.3389/educ.2021.648776>

Hyvärinen, M., Nikander, P. & Ruusuvoori, J. (2017). *Tutkimushaastattelun käsikirja | Ellibs Lu-  
kuohjelma*. Noudettu 29. huhtikuuta 2024, osoitteesta [https://www.ellibslibrary.com/rea-](https://www.ellibslibrary.com/reader/9789517686112/preview)

[https://www.ellibslibrary.com/rea-  
der/9789517686112/preview](https://www.ellibslibrary.com/reader/9789517686112/preview)

Ilari, B. (2005). On musical parenting of young children: Musical beliefs and behaviors of mothers and infants. *Early Child Development and Care*, 175(7–8), 647–660.

<https://doi.org/10.1080/0300443042000302573>

Jacobsen, S. L., McKinney, C. H., & Holck, U. (2014). Effects of a Dyadic Music Therapy Intervention on Parent-Child Interaction, Parent Stress, and Parent-Child Relationship in Families with Emotionally Neglected Children: A Randomized Controlled Trial. *Journal of Music*

*Therapy*, 51(4), 310–332. <https://doi.org/10.1093/jmt/thu028>

- Jones, J. D., Cassidy, J., & Shaver, P. R. (2015). Parents' Self-Reported Attachment Styles: A Review of Links with Parenting Behaviors, Emotions, and Cognitions. *Personality and Social Psychology Review, 19*(1), 44–76. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1088868314541858>
- Kawase, S., & Ogawa, J. (2020). Group music lessons for children aged 1–3 improve accompanying parents' moods. *Psychology of Music, 48*(3), 410–420. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0305735618803791>
- Laine, T. (2018). Miten kokemusta voidaan tutkia? Fenomenologinen näkökulma. Valli, Raine. (Ed.) *Ikkunoita tutkimusmetodeihin 2 | Ellibs Lukuohjelma*. <https://www.elibrary.com/reader/9789524518758/preview>
- Leavy, P. (2014). *The Oxford Handbook of Qualitative Research*. Oxford University Press, Incorporated. <http://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/jyvaskyla-ebooks/detail.action?docID=1657789>
- Leppäkoski, T., Vuorenmaa, M., & Paavilainen, E. (2021). Psychological and physical abuse towards four-year-old children as reported by their parents: A national Finnish survey. *Child Abuse & Neglect, 118*, 105127. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chiabu.2021.105127>
- Merleau-Ponty, Maurice., & Landes, D. (2012). *Phenomenology of Perception*. Taylor & Francis Group. <http://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/jyvaskyla-ebooks/detail.action?docID=1433878>
- Mikkonen, K., Veikkola, H.-R., Sorkkila, M., & Aunola, K. (2023). Parenting styles of Finnish parents and their associations with parental burnout. *Current Psychology, 42*(25), 21412–21423. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12144-022-03223-7>
- Mikolajczak, M., Aunola, K., Sorkkila, M., & Roskam, I. (2023). 15 Years of Parental Burnout Research: Systematic Review and Agenda. *Current Directions in Psychological Science, 32*(4), 276–283. <https://doi.org/10.1177/09637214221142777>
- Nicholson, J. M., Berthelsen, D., Abad, V., Williams, K., & Bradley, J. (2008). Impact of Music Therapy to Promote Positive Parenting and Child Development. *Journal of Health Psychology, 13*(2), 226–238. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1359105307086705>

- Nærde, A., & Sommer Hukkelberg, S. (2020). An examination of validity and reliability of the Parental Stress Scale in a population based sample of Norwegian parents. *PLOS ONE*, *15*(12), e0242735. <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0242735>
- Park, N., Peterson, C., Szvarca, D., Vander Molen, R. J., Kim, E. S., & Collon, K. (2016). Positive Psychology and Physical Health: Research and Applications. *American Journal of Lifestyle Medicine*, *10*(3), 200–206. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1559827614550277>
- Parsons, C. E., Young, K. S., JegindÅ, E.-M. E., Vuust, P., Stein, A., & Kringelbach, M. L. (2014). Music training and empathy positively impact adultsâ€™ sensitivity to infant distress. *Frontiers in Psychology*, *5*. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2014.01440>
- Perttula J & Latomaa, T. (2005). *Kokemuksen tutkimus: Merkitys, tulkinta, ymmärtäminen*. Dialogia 2005.
- Peters, V., Bissonnette, J., Nadeau, D., Gauthier-Légaré, A., & Noël, M.-A. (2023). The impact of musicking on emotion regulation: A systematic review and meta-analysis. *Psychology of Music*, 03057356231212362. <https://doi.org/10.1177/03057356231212362>
- Pitt, J., & Hargreaves, D. J. (2017). Attitudes towards and perceptions of the rationale for parent-child group music making with young children. *Music Education Research*, *19*(3), 292–308. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14613808.2016.1145644>
- Rabinowitch, T.-C., Cross, I., & Burnard, P. (2013). Long-term musical group interaction has a positive influence on empathy in children. *Psychology of Music*, *41*(4), 484–498. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0305735612440609>
- Robson, K. S. (1967). The role of eye-to-eye contact in maternal-infant attachment. *Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry*, *8*(1), 13–25. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1469-7610.1967.tb02176.x>
- Rosini, R. J., Nelson, A., Sledjeski, E., & Dinzeo, T. (2017). *Relationships Between Levels of Mindfulness and Subjective Well-Being in Undergraduate Students*.



- Roskam, I., Aguiar, J., Akgun, E. et al. Parental Burnout Around the Globe: A 42-Country Study. *Affec Sci* 2, 58–79 (2021). <https://doi-org.ezproxy.jyu.fi/10.1007/s42761-020-00028-4>
- Mikolajczak, M. (2021). Parental Burnout Around the Globe: A 42-Country Study. *Affective Science*, 2(1), 58–79. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s42761-020-00028-4>
- Rotkirch, A. (2014). *Yhdessä. Lapsen kasvatusta ei ole yksilölaji*. WSOY.
- Saarikallio, S. (2009). *Emotional self-regulation through music in 3-8-year-old children*. ESCOM 2009 : 7th Triennial Conference of European Society for the Cognitive Sciences of Music. <https://jyx.jyu.fi/handle/123456789/20913>
- Samadani, A., Kim, S., Moon, J., Kang, K., & Chau, T. (2021). Neurophysiological Synchrony Between Children with Severe Physical Disabilities and Their Parents During Music Therapy. *Frontiers in Neuroscience*, 15, 531915. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fnins.2021.531915>
- Seay, A., Freysteinson, W. M., & McFarlane, J. (2014). Positive Parenting. *Nursing Forum*, 49(3), 200–208. <https://doi.org/10.1111/nuf.12093>
- Snippe, E., Nyklíček, I., Schroevers, M. J., & Bos, E. H. (2015). The temporal order of change in daily mindfulness and affect during mindfulness-based stress reduction: Journal of Counseling Psychology. *Journal of Counseling Psychology*, 62(2), 106–114. <https://doi.org/10.1037/cou0000057>
- Snyder, C. R., & Lopez, S. J. (2002). Handbook of positive psychology. Oxford University Press. (ei pvm.). *Handbook of Positive Psychology*. <https://web-p-ebsohost-com.ezproxy.jyu.fi/ehost/ebookviewer/ebook/bmx-1YmtfXzE0MDUyOF9fQU41?sid=da508dc8-b450-4975-bbfb-03f4429cccf8@re-dis&vid=0&format=EB&rid=1>
- Sonnenschein, S., Baker, L., Serpell, R., Scher, D., Truitt, V. G., & Munsterman, K. (1997). Parental Beliefs about Ways to Help Children Learn to Read: The Impact of an Entertainment

or a Skills Perspective. *Early Child Development and Care*, 127(1), 111–118.

<https://doi.org/10.1080/0300443971270109>

Tammisalo, K., Rotkirch, A., Alanko, L., Danielsbacka, M., Honkanen, J., Hämäläinen, M. & Prusskij, C. (2020). *Digitaalinen hyvinvointi perheissä. Suomi hyvin käytetyn ajan mallimaaksi*. Valtioneuvosto. [https://julkaisut.valtioneuvosto.fi/bitstream/handle/10024/162438/VNTEAS\\_2020\\_43.pdf](https://julkaisut.valtioneuvosto.fi/bitstream/handle/10024/162438/VNTEAS_2020_43.pdf).

Juhila, K. (2021). *Laadullinen tutkimus ja teoria*. Tietoarkisto. <https://www.fsd.tuni.fi/fi/palvelut/menetelmaopetus/kvali/mita-on-laadullinen-tutkimus/laadullinen-tutkimus-ja-teoria/>

*Vauvaperheiden hyvinvointi – FinLapset-kyselytutkimus 2020*—THL. Terveystieteiden tutkimuskeskus. <https://thl.fi/tilastot-ja-data/tilastot-aiheittain/lapset-nuoret-ja-perheet/vauvaperheiden-hyvinvointi>

Wallace, S. D., & Harwood, J. (2018). Associations Between Shared Musical Engagement and Parent-Child Relational Quality: The Mediating Roles of Interpersonal Coordination and Empathy. *Journal of Family Communication*, 18(3), 202–216.  
<https://doi.org/10.1080/15267431.2018.1466783>

Wever, M. C. M., Van Houtum, L. A. E. M., Janssen, L. H. C., Wentholt, W. G. M., Spruit, I. M., Tollenaar, M. S., Will, G.-J., & Elzinga, B. M. (2022). Neural and Affective Responses to Prolonged Eye Contact with One’s Own Adolescent Child and Unfamiliar Others. *NeuroImage*, 260, 119463. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.neuroimage.2022.119463>

Wiedemann, Vogel, Voss, Nusseck and Hoyer (2020). *The role of retrospectively perceived parenting style and adult attachment behaviour in music performance anxiety*.  
<https://doi.org/10.1177/0305735618817877>

Williamson, A., Ginsborg, J., Perkins, R., & Waddell, G. (2021). *Performing Music Research: Methods in Music Education, Psychology, and Performance Science*. Oxford University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1093/oso/9780198714545.001.0001>

Williams, K. E., Barrett, M. S., Welch, G. F., Abad, V., & Broughton, M. (2015). Associations between early shared music activities in the home and later child outcomes: Findings from the Longitudinal Study of Australian Children. *Early Childhood Research Quarterly, 31*, 113–124. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ecresq.2015.01.004>

Young, S. (2023). *Music in Early Childhood: Exploring the Theories, Philosophies and Practices*. Taylor & Francis Group. <http://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/jyvaskyla-ebooks/detail.action?docID=7260390>

## Acknowledgments

I acknowledge the use of Grammarly (<https://www.grammarly.com/>). The thesis was otherwise completed and written in English; the final proofreading was done using this program.



MUSIIKIN, TAITEEN JA  
KULTTUURIN TUTKIMUKSEN  
LAITOS

Pvm 2.11.2023

## APPENDICES

JYVÄSKYLÄN YLIOPISTO

TIEDOTE TUTKIMUKSESTA

### **1. Pyyntö osallistua tutkimukseen Näkökulmia vanhemmuudesta musiikkiaktiiviteettien kontekstissa**

**Sinua pyydetään mukaan tutkimukseen Näkökulmia vanhemmuudesta musiikkiaktiiviteettien kontekstissa**, jossa tutkitaan vanhemman kokemuksia ja tunteita arjessaan 1,5–4-vuotiaan lapsen vanhempana. Tarkoituksena on selvittää kotona tehtävien musiikkiaktiiviteettien vaikutuksia vanhempaan ja lapseen. Tavoitteena on kerätä vanhempien kuvauksia musiikkiaktiiviteettien herättämistä kokemuksista.

Sinua pyydetään tutkimukseen, koska olet ilmaissut halukkuutesi osallistua ja sitoutua tutkimukseen ja olet 1,5–4-vuotiaan lapsen vanhempi.

Tämä tiedote kuvaa tutkimusta ja siihen osallistumista. Liitteessä on kerrottu henkilötietojesi käsittelystä.

Tutkimukseen osallistuu arviolta 10 vanhempaa, joilla on 1,5–4-vuotiaat lapset.

Tämä on yksittäinen tutkimus, eikä sinuun oteta myöhemmin uudestaan yhteyttä.

## **2. Vapaaehtoisuus**

Tähän tutkimukseen osallistuminen on vapaaehtoista. Voit kieltäytyä osallistumasta tutkimukseen, keskeyttää osallistumisen tai peruuttaa jo antamasi suostumuksen syytä ilmoittamatta milloin tahansa tutkimuksen aikana. Tästä ei aiheudu sinulle kielteisiä seurauksia.

Keskeyttäessäsi tutkimukseen osallistumisesi tai peruuttaessasi antamasi suostumuksen, sinusta siihen mennessä kerättyjä henkilötietoja, näytteitä ja muita tietoja käytetään osana tutkimusaineistoa, kun se on välttämätöntä tutkimustulosten varmistamiseksi. Tuloksia voidaan esitellä konferenssi- ja seminaariesityksissä, sekä käytännön sovelluksissa.

## **3. Tutkimuksen kulku**

Ensimmäisen tapaamisen tarkoitus on tutustua hieman teihin, kuulla arjestaan ja lapsestaan. Tämän jälkeen teitä pyydetään lisäämään kahden viikon ajaksi musiikkiharjoitteita 10 minuuttia päivässä. Saatte musiikkiharjoitteista helppoja ja mukavia esimerkkejä. Voitte halutessanne kirjata ajatuksianne päiväkirja-tyyppisesti muistiin. Kahden viikon jälkeen tapaamme toisen kerran ja tuon tapaamisen tarkoituksena on haastatella teitä ja kuulla kokemuksistanne musiikkiharjoitteisiin liittyen. Ensimmäiseen tapaamiseen olisi hyvä varata aikaa 45 minuuttia ja jälkimmäiseen tapaamiseen olisi hyvä varata 1,5 h. Musiikkiharjoitteiden toteuttamiseen olisi hyvä varata aikaa 10 minuuttia päivittäin 14 vuorokauden ajalle ja mahdollisten muistiinpanojen tekemiseen muutama minuutti päivässä.

#### **4. Tutkimuksesta mahdollisesti aiheutuvat hyödyt**

Tutkimuksesta on mahdollista saada uusia miellyttäviä musiikkileikkejä arkeen. Haastattelut saattavat tarjota hyvän tilaisuuden pohtia omaa ja lapsen musiikkisuhdetta, tunteita ja omaa kokemusta vanhemmuudesta.

Tutkimuksesta on hyötyä yhteiskunnallisella tasolla, sillä tutkimustulokset lisäävät tietoa erilaisten vanhempien kokemuksista musiikkiaktiiviteeteista. Tämän tutkimuksen tulokset tarjoavat uutta tietoa erityisesti musiikkitieteen kentälle.

#### **5. Tutkimuksesta mahdollisesti aiheutuvat riskit, haitat ja epämukavuudet sekä niihin varautuminen**

Emme odota, että tähän tutkimukseen osallistuminen aiheuttaisi tutkittaville riskejä, haittoja tai epämukavuuksia.

#### **6. Tutkimuksen kustannukset ja korvaukset tutkittavalle sekä tutkimuksen rahoitus**

Tutkimukseen osallistumisesta ei makseta palkkiota. Jälkimmäisen tapaamisen jälkeen haastateltavat saavat pienen makean kiitoksen osallistumisesta.

#### **7. Tutkimustuloksista tiedottaminen ja tutkimustulokset**

Tutkimuksesta valmistuu opinnäytetyö ja mahdollisesti tieteellinen julkaisu. Tuloksia käsitellään ja julkaistaan siten, että teitä ei voida tunnistaa.

#### **8. Tutkittavien vakuutusturva**

Jyväskylän yliopiston toiminta ja tutkittavat on vakuutettu.

Jyväskylän yliopiston vakuutukset korvaavat etänä suoritettavissa tutkimuksissa ainoastaan sellaiset vahingot, jotka liittyvät suoraan annettuun tutkimustehtävään ja jotka ovat sattuneet varsinaisen ohjeistetun tutkimustehtävän aikana. Vakuutus ei korvaa taukojen aikana sattuneita vahinkoja.

Jyväskylän yliopiston vakuutukset eivät ole voimassa etänä suoritettavissa tutkimuksissa, jos tutkittavan kotikunta ei ole Suomessa.

Vakuutus sisältää potilasvakuutuksen, toiminnanvastuuvakuutuksen ja vapaaehtoisen tapaturmavakuutuksen. Tutkimuksissa tutkittavat (koehenkilöt) on vakuutettu tutkimuksen ajan ulkoisen syyn aiheuttamien tapaturmien, vahinkojen ja vammojen varalta. Tapaturmavakuutus on voimassa mittauksissa ja niihin välittömästi liittyvillä matkoilla.



## **VANHEMMILLE OHJAUS MUSIIKKIAKTIVITEETEISTA**

Kotona toteutettava harjoitus:

### **Vanhemman ja lapsen yhteinen musiikkiaktiviteetti**

Toivomme, että tulevan kahden viikon aikana toteutate lapsen kanssa yhteisiä musiikkiaktiviteetteja. Musiikkiaktiviteeteista esimerkkejä liitesivulla.

Toiveenamme olisi, että näitä yhteisiä hetkiä olisi päivittäin n. 10–15. Voitte valita teille mukavimmat ja tutut aktiviteetit, ehkäpä kokeillette jotain uutta. Tässä harjoituksessa ei kuitenkaan tarkoiteta musiikin kuuntelua tai musiikkisadun kuuntelua. Jos teillä on ollut tapana laittaa musiikkia soimaan, voitte näihin hetkiin lisätä jonkinlaisen yhteisen aktiviteetin lapsen kanssa.

Käymme läpi seuraavalla tapaamisella musiikkiaktiviteetti- harjoitteiden herättämiä kokemuksia, havaintoja ja tunteita. Voitte tehdä muistin tueksi päiväkirja -tyyppisesti muistiinpanoja ja pohtia esimerkiksi:

- Mitä tunteita ja ajatuksia harjoitus herätti?
- Muuttuiko mielestänne oma ja/ tai lapsenne käytös tai tunnetila harjoitteiden myötä?

Voitte vapaasti valita, mitä asioita koette merkitykselliseksi kirjata ylös. Edellä mainitut kysymykset ovat pohdinnan tueksi. Kaikenlaiset ajatukset ja pohdinnat ovat arvokkaita tulosten kannalta. Muistathan ettet voi tuntea tai kokea mitään väärin, kannustammekin teitä mahdollisimman avoimeen pohdintaan.

Kiitämme teitä jo nyt avustanne ja ajastanne, ilman apuanne tutkimusta ei voisi toteuttaa. Tuloksilla pyritään lisäämään tietoa vanhemmuuden arjen tunteista ja kokemuksista. Haastattelujen tuloksia käsitellään mahdollisimman suureen anonymiteettiin pyrkien ja lopullisten tulosten julkaisusta ei yksittäisiä henkilöitä pysty tunnistamaan.

Esimerkkejä yhteisiin musiikkiaktiviteetteihin:

### Kapteeni käskee "tanssi"

Me kaikki tiedämme pelin "Kapteeni Käskee". Lisää peliin musiikillista käännettä laittamalla musiikkia päälle ja käyttämällä hauskoja motorisia verbejä.

### Esterata

Laita musiikkia päälle, ja rakenna esterata kodin tavaroista ja mene rata läpi taustamusiikin tahtiin.

### Musiikkituolit

Aseta tuolien selkänojat vastakkain ja aloita sitten musiikki. Kun musiikki loppuu, kaikki istuvat. Perinteisesti tätä pelataan yhdellä tuolilla vähemmän kuin pelaajia, sitten yksi tuoli poistetaan per kierros. Pienten lasten kanssa tuoleja voi yhtä monta kuin osallistujiakin.

### Jäätymis-leikki

"Kun sanon seis, pysähdy! Kun sanon tanssi, ala tanssia!". Musiikin soidessa tanssitaan ja pysähtyessä jäädytään patsaiksi.

### Silkkihuivi tanssi klassisen musiikin tahdissa

Laita klassista musiikkia soimaan ja kutsu lapsesi tanssimaan ja liikuttamaan silkkihuiviaan haluamallaan tavalla.

### Tasapainoilua

Laita maalarinteippiä lattiallesi ja pyydä lastasi harjoittelemaan tasapainoilua rauhoittavan musiikin kanssa.

### Kehon osien tanssiminen

Valitaan vuorollaan jokin kehonosa ja laitetaan musiikkia soimaan. Tanssiessa saa käyttää vain sitä kehonosaa, joka vuorollaan valittu. Esimerkiksi jos sanot "vasen jalka", tällöin tulee saada vain vasen jalkansa liikkumaan musiikin tahtiin.

## Musiikki piilosta

Tätä musiikki- ja liiketoimintoa varten hoitaja piilottaa soittimen tai minkä tahansa muun esineen, joka antaa erottuvan äänen, kuten 2 lusikkaa. Lapsen tehtävänä on löytää instrumentti ja saatava siitä ääni.

## Tanssit

Joskus ei tarvitse tehdä muuta kuin laittaa musiikkia päälle ja tanssia!

## Nenäliinatanssi

Pyydä kaikkia laittamaan nenäliina päähänsä ja tanssimaan ympäriinsä antamatta sen pudota lattialle.

## Tanssivat eläimet

Kysy lapseltasi, mitä eläintä hän haluaisi esittää. Kysy sitten heiltä, kuinka he ajattelevat tuon eläimen tanssivan, jos he voisivat. Laita laulu soimaan ja katso mitä he keksivät!

## Pää, olkapää, polvet ja varpaat

Tämä toiminta auttaa lapsia venyttämään vartalooaan ja oppimaan kehon osien nimiä samanaikaisesti.

## Musikaalinen taide

Ota suuri paperiarkki, laita taustalle pehmeää musiikkia soimaan ja ota maalit esiin. Anna lapsesi maalata kämmenillään. Anna heidän maalata mitä tahansa musiikki saa heistä tuntemaan.

## Sulka Tanssii

Hanki muutama iso höyhen ja tanssi klassisten suosikkikappaleidesi tahtiin.

## Ilmapallotanssi

Laita musiikkia päälle ja puhalla muutama ilmapallo. Tanssi ympäriinsä musiikin tahdissa, mutta älä anna ilmapallon osua lattiaan!

## Kapula tanssi

Tässä leikissä voi käyttää rytmikapuloita, lusikoita tai mitä tahansa muuta tavaroita, mistä saa äänen napauttamalla yhteen. Tanssi ympäri taloa lyömällä kapuloita yhteen hauskoissa rytmeissä.



Toivottavasti löydätte mieluisia musiikkiaktiviteettileikkejä näistä ehdotuksista ja voitte vapaasti etsiä ja ideoida juuri teille mieluisia leikkejä mihin sisältyy musiikillinen elementti!

Musiikkiaktiviteetti leikki-ideoita otettu "40+ Music and Movement Activities for Toddlers and Preschoolers", osoitteesta <https://reachformontessori.com/category/crafts-and-activities/>.

Kuva: yle.fi