Linda Bance MA (Music Education) is founder of Play Music Play, a community organisation promoting creative music-making for young children. She is a member of the National Association of Music Educators ([www.name.org.uk](http://www.name.org.uk)) & Music Educators and Researchers of Young Children ([www.meryc.eu](http://www.meryc.eu) )

Music has always been in her life, playing and supported by her family from a young age. She trained and worked in early years and soon became a ‘musical nursery nurse’. She soon realised how music is a gift for all children. In time, she began to study the connection between child development and music.

Linda now spends her time teaching, training, writing and consulting as she works towards “achieving the ultimate in appropriate music education for our young.”

Children are naturally curious, excited, spontaneous… about everything

Children are naturally eager and playful. Songs and music effortlessly connect with young children’s spontaneous curiosity, as they discover and make sounds. All are born musical, and the role of adults is to simply keep it in our lives, celebrate and join in with the music and sounds our children enjoy.

### Ticking boxes

Parents, practitioners, and teachers need to know that children’s development is supported in their early years. Linda has written in greater detail about how songs and musical activities effectively support children’s development (see below).

In short, this includes,

Babies are born musical. They have fine aural discrimination, recognising notes, sounds and voices. They are soothed and settled through music and rhythmic movements. They discover their actions often make a sound as they shake, tap, lift and drop things. As they begin to explore their own voice, adults can support their musicality by celebrating these sounds and join in.

Toddlers are movers and will respond independently to music and music. This includes full bodied movements, joining in with songs and vocalising freely. As they develop and coordinate their body movements, they can use instruments with greater control.

Pre-school children are still playful and spontaneous. With greater control of their movements, they are beginning to use rhythm, patterns, and pulse more independently. Finding ways to ensure their songs are heard is important at this age.

Young children are open to and absorb *everything* (see Delving a Little Deeper, set 1). Linda encourages us to include all types of music and musical genres into their lives.

Weaving music into our everyday lives creates a rich tapestry.

There can be a song for every occasion. Songs can soothe, distract, excite, and simply make chores more enjoyable.

Linda introduces us a song she made up for one young child,

*Shoo fly, don’t bother me,*

*Shoo fly, don’t bother me,*

*Shoo fly, don’t bother me,*

*I belong to somebody.*

The child went onto change this simple song and made it his own ‘Butterfly Song’.

Linda also sings for us a song that Alison Davis wrote during COVID lockdown,

*Every single cell in my body is happy,*

*Every single cell in my body is well.*

*Every single cell in my body is happy,*

*Every single cell in my body is well.*

*I’m so glad, every little cell,*

*In my body is happy and well.*

*I’m so glad, every little cell,*

*In my body is happy and well.*

*Every single cell in my body is happy,*

*Every single cell in my body is well.*

*Every single cell in my body is happy,*

*Every single cell in my body is well.*

When things are not going well, such songs can help our well-being. Alison explains,

*‘Active singing controls our breath, helps reduce anxiety, oxygenates our blood, which maximises our ability to feel well’.*

Linda concludes,

*‘Creating repetition helps us to perceive that everything is safe and well’.*

Voices

For those less confident singers, Linda assures us that confidence comes with repetition. She suggests starting with a small repertoire of 3 simple songs that we repeat and practise, so our children connect these songs with us.

Waking and warming up our voices (on the way to work?) and encouraging children to hear our quieter voices helps them to tune in and listen carefully.

Linda explains a simple technique of ‘scooping up’ a song from speech… lifting the pitch of our speaking voice into a singing-pitched song.

It is also important to know where our children’s voice lie… and pitch our singing voice to match their voice.

Making space for music

In early years settings, there are usually well resources areas for Role Play, Messy Play, Arts & Craft. Rarely is there a music-making area. Linda practitioners to think how Sound Making can be as important as the other creative areas. Simple resources that allow children to express themselves musically will also help adults to observe and celebrate their musicality and ‘tick those developmental boxes’.

Sound Making spaces should be resourced with good quality, sustainable instruments so that children can spontaneously and creatively express their musicality. Adults can support children by modelling how use instruments and treat them with respect.

### And finally…

When we are stretched, sing a song… and life can be just that little bit better!

More from Linda in her book (highly recommended)

**Music for Early Learning**

ISBN: 978-0-415-67921-3 (pbk)

ISBN: 978-0-203-80668-5 (ebk)

Other related podcasts in Turning Little Stones, Series 1.

**Adventures in Music (episodes 1 & 2)** &

**On the Move… heuristic play and music (episode 23).**

*Further information, practical guidance and advice are available through,*

***Turning Little Stones*** *(Series 1, Episodes 2 & 4)* ***& Delving a little Deeper***

*See website for details.*