

Rhythmic Learning – engagement of whole families

We refer to two sources of research evidence, with regard to the benefits of parental &/or wider family engagement.

The first dates back to just after the 2nd World War, when the violin maker Suzuki presented his teaching method in Japan.

In Suzuki learning parents are expected to attend lessons, to take notes and to practise with their children, most fully in the early years. It is not necessary for a parent to be able to play the instrument themselves. The teacher will show them all they need to know in order to help their child. Indeed, many parents have been so inspired helping their children, they have taken up music study themselves. (from British Suzuki organisation uk).

In the words of Suzuki himself, "The fate of the child is in the hands of the parent," "The responsibility for education lies in the home." "Creating a desire in your child is the parents' duty," "Parents with smiling faces have children with smiling faces." "Every child improves depending on his parents,".

The Suzuki proposal is backed up by modern research, such as the report of Alma Harris and Janet Goodall, London Centre for Leadership in Learning, Institute of Education, and Institute of Education, University of Warwick, UK. April 2008

*Do parents know they matter? Engaging all parents in learning
Parents are the most important influence on learning. Long after a child's early years give way to formal education, parents continue to play a key role in student success and achievement. The lives parents lead today means that it is more challenging to secure their engagement in learning, but it still remains the factor that can make a significant difference to a child's educational attainment and subsequent life chances.*

Based on the above, in spring and summer 2016, we set up our own research of family engagement. 8 families played RF films on their tablet or computer, then used instruments and cards to play 'swapsy' games between adult and child or children.

Our results came back via a simple online survey, establishing that the games were fun and positive for all, especially when played by a grand parent with grand children. But it was also found that we should begin with something easier than the foot work/ walk and jogging challenges. Our session plans for pre-school age were adjusted accordingly. As a result you will find each contains an ending section of extension to the games, specifically planned for parents or grand parents to play in the home.

The following words come from a grand parent report, during our 2016 research.

Yes we had lots of fun yesterday. Here's a rough record:

Wednesday Eve, getting the guiro out of the box, trying it out, finding their one, playing, all good introduction and time to talk about and prepare for the game we were going to do in the morning. Same with stars, opening the envelope, finding stars etc.

Thursday, caught him at his best time, morning after breakfast. Went in front room and got comfy, low table, facing each other etc.

Got into role: I'm Mrs Beat, Luke was Batman (already in his outfit). Stars at the ready, talked about the three columns, held back from sticking stars before we did the game...

Took a while to get the idea of listening first, eyes shut helped. Then playing with me, wanted to watch me, repeated three or four times but he soon got the idea and tapped in time -hooray! I re-ran them in different order and he got it. So we had stars - he wanted one for each column which we did while talking about the headings again and how I thought he had managed, ie reflecting on the process.

Then Luke wanted to be the leader and make up rhythms, so I listened with eyes shut and then played along. His were a bit loose and sprawly but the idea made it fun.

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