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Music Therapy and children with ASD

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The use of music therapy with children with ASD is just as old as the diagnose itself. For many children (and adults) the musical abilities are almost preserved, in conjunction with the developmental age. Some children respond more to song than to speak, and over the past 10 years RCTs and research, including fMRI scans, indicate the relevance of using a musical approach to both engage the child socially and to support language development. A recent Cochrane Review provides evidence that music therapy can help children with ASD to improve their skills in primary outcome areas including social interaction, initiating behavior and verbal communication. The presentation provides a state of the art, including a newly developed treatment guide focusing on important principles of music therapy with preschool children with ASD. The next step is further clarification of different ways a musical approach can influence the social and communicative skills, and how this can be done in a way that complements other interventions for the children and their parents.