

**Music therapy is a valuable clinical intervention for children with special educational needs and disabilities. It can work where other therapies cannot, making connections and providing vital support.**

We all relate to music because it connects with what it means to be human. Our bodies work to rhythms - from our heartbeats to our sleep patterns. Even the way we speak has the tones, rhythm and structure of music.

You don't need to have any musical skills to benefit from music therapy. It's not about being able to play an instrument or learning musical skills. It's about making a connection and enabling people to communicate.

Our sessions are conducted by highly trained, registered therapists who use active music making to engage and interact with the child referred. This allows the child to communicate in their own musical language, whatever their level of ability. We have seen children who are unable to interact with others find their voice through music therapy.

**Music therapy is widely recognised as a highly effective health intervention both locally and internationally. At Every Day Harmony, we have wide experience of its value in supporting children with disabilities.**

**Professional music therapists are Allied Health Professionals and are registered with the Health and Care Professions Council.**

**Contact us to find out more.**

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The Northern Ireland Music Therapy Trust  
trading as  
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**EVERY  
DAY  
HARMONY**  
MUSIC THERAPY

**Music Therapy  
for Children with  
Special Educational  
Needs & Disabilities**



## Some of the outcomes of music therapy for children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities are:

- **Communication Skills:** improving verbal and non-verbal communication through singing, vocalising and instrumental play
- **Social skills:** through shared music-making, developing eye contact, turn-taking and interaction
- **Cognitive skills:** improving focus and shared attention within musical activities
- **Emotional needs:** providing an alternative outlet for feelings and developing self-expression and self-esteem
- **Physical skills:** developing movement and motor skills through playing instruments



Tom and Jack are twins with profound physical and learning disabilities that leave them confined to wheelchairs. Their visual impairment also means responses to external stimuli can be limited.

Both children love music and their parents often play music for them at home. Jack in particular loves Lady Gaga!

Their social worker referred Tom and Jack to music therapy as she thought it might be an effective 'way in'.

Tom and Jack received music therapy each week for 12 weeks. The therapist had chatted with the parents and knew the twins love of music and the strong rhythmic quality of Lady Gaga's music.

During the first session the music therapist incorporated this strong pulse to evoke a physical response. Tom and Jack reacted by both kicking their legs out and playing the wind chimes the music therapist had placed near their feet.

Over the weeks their kicks became stronger, more consistent and more controlled. This movement can now begin to be used outside therapy sessions as a way for the twins to begin to make simple choices – an important development.

As well as this, the twins shrieked with laughter throughout as the sessions offered a wonderful opportunity for them to express themselves.

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