

## Music for Literacy

### KMC Helps Your Child be Successful at School.

We know that music is very powerful in activating brain development but how can KMC music classes help a child on a day to day basis?

Think of a child in a typical situation in a 5 year old classroom: It is story writing time and the teacher asks the class to write about what they did in the weekend.

What are the skills involved in this seemingly simple task?

### Necessary Skills Underlying Classroom Success

Balance →

Core strength for Posture control →

Awareness and control of all body parts →

Crossing the bodies 3 mid-lines →

Independent control of left and right sides →

Social confidence →

Concentration →

Neck Strength for steady vision →

Eye strength →

Shoulder and arm control before fingers →

Fine muscle control →

Understanding of pressure →

Awareness of size and shape →



← Inner hearing

← Space perception

← Understanding the structure of words

← Good Vocabulary

← Understanding the structure of sentences

← Letter formation

← Short term memory

← Creative thinking

← Imagination

← Visualisation

← Sequencing skills

← Brain integration

← Sensory processing



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### What do these skills involve?

#### Balance

A child needs a well developed balance system. The balance (vestibular) system coordinates almost all other sensory input to the brain. In order to utilize sensory input a child must have a good balance system.

Good balance helps a child

- Stay upright,
- Understand how he/she fits into a space,
- Stay still while sitting, standing or lying, keep vision steady.

A child with a poorly developed vestibular system often can't sit still, wriggles and is often off task.

KMC helps:

Songs which involve moving and stopping (on two feet and on one) in different directions, on different levels and at different speeds, plus songs which include tipping, swaying, rolling and turning all develop the vestibular system

#### Core Strength, Posture Control

A child must have good posture to hold his body erect in the chair, and his vision steady

KMC helps:

Core muscles are coordinated and strengthened through movement.

#### Awareness and Control of All Body Parts

A child must understand which body parts belong to him and learn to control them all independently.

KMC helps:

Songs which isolate different body parts build awareness and control.

#### Crossing The Body's 3 Mid-lines

In order to control body parts independently children need to build connections across all the brain areas.

KMC helps:

Songs which have actions where the hands/arms/legs/feet must cross the left right mid-line, the top bottom mid-line and the front/back mid-line help build brain connections.



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### Independent Control of Left and Right Sides of The Body

In order to write with one hand and keep the rest of his body still a child must be able to move one side of his body at a time.

#### KMC helps:

Songs which move one side while keeping the other side still help develop laterality and independent control.

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### Social Confidence

A child needs to work effectively with others including interacting, respecting and sharing a learning setting

#### KMC helps:

KMC activities which are cooperative rather than competitive foster respect and interaction with others, while building self confidence.

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### Concentration

A child needs to be able to concentrate on the task in hand without distractions.

#### KMC helps:

Many KMC songs require focused listening and listening for a purpose. These include songs with changes in the music which act as a cue for a change in the child's response. Cues include stops; changes in pitch, direction, pressure (stamping/creeping), speed; type of actions to follow, instructions in the words of the songs, echo phrases to copy, and instrument playing with changes in speed/pitch/volume or type of instrument.

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### Neck Strength for Steady Vision

A child needs to have good posture to hold his head still enough to keep his vision steady.

#### KMC helps:

Coordination and strength of neck muscles comes through movement.

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### Eye Strength

A child needs to have good eye strength in order to constantly change focus from far-away stimuli in the classroom, to close-up written work.

Good peripheral vision helps a child be aware of all stimulation in the focal field.

#### KMC helps:

The development of eye strength is supported through

- Tracking a moving object: parachute games, balloons, bubbles.
  - Peripheral vision: dancing with ribbons, moving and dancing in a free space, with other people.
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### **Shoulder And Arm Control Is Necessary Before Control Of Fingers Develops**

Large muscle control develops before fine, and is necessary for finger control

A child must have control of his fingers in order to hold the pencil. That control comes first from control of the bigger muscles in the shoulder and arm which control the fingers.

#### KMC helps:

Lots of practice in the development of strength and coordination of shoulder and arm actions.

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### **Fine Muscle Control**

Accurate control of hand and finger muscles develops after arms and fingers.

#### KMC helps:

Songs and rhymes help a child become aware of his hands and fingers then specific actions for small muscles in the hands and fingers (required for later instrument playing) come later.

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### **Understanding of Pressure**

A child needs to understand how much or how little pressure to use on the pencil when writing the letters.

#### KMC helps:

Songs which use stamping or creeping, or loud and soft playing of instruments help a child have a practical understanding of pressure.

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### **Understand Size and Shape**

Children learn through practical experience. By moving using his own body in the 3-dimensional world, and understanding the size and shape of it and how much space it takes up, a child has a real understanding of size and shape. This knowledge can then be transferred to the 2-dimensional world of letters and numbers on a page.

#### KMC helps:

When a child moves in a 3-dimensional space, at different levels and in different directions he comes to understand concepts of size and shape.

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### **Inner Hearing**

A child needs to be able to hear the words he wants to use, in his head.

#### KMC helps:

Through focused listening to instructional words, or musical cues which require concentrated reactions or responses from the child, a child builds an aural memory.

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### Space Perception

A child needs to understand spatial concepts so letters in a word are not all squashed together, and words fit on a page in a readable fashion.

#### KMC helps:

An understanding of space must be developed through physical experiences before that understanding can be transferred to paper.

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### Good Vocabulary

A child needs a vocabulary of words to use in his story which he understands through experience.

#### KMC helps:

Vocabulary development through song words which describe actions: e.g. "Howdy Partner, shake like this"

All songs with specific vocabulary: positional language (above/below, in front/behind), colours, numbers, instructional language, as well as topical language in a song such as songs about space travel or gardening.

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### Understanding the Structure of Words

Understanding the structure of words helps spelling and reading.

#### KMC helps:

Songs which use the syllables of words to create rhythms help children break words into chunks and help them spell and read such words.

Songs which use alliteration (same beginning sound) and rhyme (same ending sound) help children become aware of similarities in the beginnings and endings of words, and support reading and spelling.

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### Understanding the Structure of Sentences

Children learn language by hearing and using the language in context.

#### KMC helps:

Songs include repetition of phrases which help children reinforce the learning.

Singing is generally slower than speech and gives children a greater chance to absorb sentence structure and basic grammar.

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### Directionality for Letter Formation

Letter formation is made up of drawing in different directions. Children must therefore understand directionality.

#### KMC helps:

How does a child write the letter "a" which goes around, up and down? What does "around" mean? Where is "up" and "down" on a flat piece of paper?

Directionality must be understood through movement. A child must experience concepts of "around, up and down" using large muscles in physical space.

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### Short Term Memory

Memory is essential for school work. Mathematical processing requires memory. Spelling requires memory as a child needs to have sufficient short term memory in order to think of the sounds which make up a word and find a letter that matches those sounds.

#### KMC helps:

Songs are full of sequences to develop memory; whether they are in movement, in words, in actions or in the playing of instruments.

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### Creative Thinking

A child needs to be able to think laterally and creatively in order to be able to create new ideas.

#### KMC helps:

Songs which ask children to demonstrate new or different ways of doing things, inside the structure of a song, extend a child's creative response.

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### Imagination and visualisation

A child needs to be able to visualize and imagine a picture or event in his head in order to be able to write about it.

#### KMC helps:

Songs about fictional settings help children develop visualisation and imagination (which is often robbed by television). e.g. digging in the garden or jumping in puddles.

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### Sequencing Skills

A child needs to have sequencing skills to put the events and words in the right order.

#### KMC helps:

KMC songs are full of sequences in words, actions, movements, melodies and rhythms.

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### Brain Integration

A child needs to develop an integrated brain in order to fully utilize the strengths of both his left (logical, numbers, letters) and right (ideas, experiences, concepts) hemispheres.

#### KMC helps:

By developing independent movements across the bodies 3 mid-lines (front/back, left/right, top/bottom) we help develop connections across all the brain areas. The coordination of movements, becomes more complex as a child progresses through KMC classes, and includes the progression from jumping to hopping to skipping which involves coordination of arms and legs on opposite sides of the body, at the same time. We also include other combinations of actions involving the whole body as well as arm and legs.

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### **Sensory Processing**

A child needs to be able to process sensory stimulation in all senses (including vestibular or balance, and proprioception) to maximize all learning opportunities.

#### KMC helps:

Through multi-sensory experiences a child builds a dense and efficient network of pathways, to process information quickly. KMC songs involve stimulation of the following senses: vision, touch, hearing, vestibular (balance through movement), and proprioception (understanding where you are in a physical space).

Remember: If a child is enjoying the activities the brain is open to learning.

A stressed child cannot learn efficiently.

We endeavour to make KMC enjoyable for children and families.