

## Sensational School age OT Tip of the Month Music

### Do you know children that ...

1. Cover their ears or seem to withdraw during music?
2. Get very silly or attention seeking in music class?
3. Have difficulty following a rhythm or imitating actions of a song?
4. Struggle to learn to play the recorder or other instruments?

These children might have sensory and/or motor struggles. Some children are sensitive to the specific frequencies or volume of sound. They may feel actual discomfort. Some children get very overstimulated by the music and/or the change in structure of class leading to challenging behavior. Motor planning difficulties can make it hard to imitate actions, particularly when two hands act together. Playing an instrument can involve oral motor control, shoulder stability and bilateral hand use.

### Sensational Ideas for Music

1. Use music as a calming organizing tool by watching the reaction of the group to various types of music – rhythmic, nature, classical
2. Ear plugs are available that block some sounds but still allow the child to hear what is going on.
3. Pre-teaching can be helpful if a new song with actions will be learned. Arrange for the child to watch a video of the song with actions to get exposure before class and extra opportunities to practice.
4. Provide heavy muscle work just before going into music class to help children feel calm and organized as they enter. (wall pushups, stretches, etc.)
5. Consider which instrument may be the best fit based on motor skills as well as interest.

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