

Intergenerational Music Making

Family Hubs

Cheetham Hill & Crumpsall



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Introduction



This audit evaluates the impact of the Family Hubs funded project designed to strengthen family bonds, promote inclusivity, and enhance emotional well-being through music across Cheetham Hill & Crumpsall. Working closely with local partners, community think tanks, consultations, and referral pathways, we identified four key locations to deliver sessions between May 2024 and January 2025:

- Wai Yin/The Welcome Centre
- Woodville Family Centre
- Abraham Moss Library
- Manchester Jewish Museum

The project aimed to:

- Strengthen parent/carer-child relationships by exploring how music enhances communication and emotional connection.
- Increase engagement with fathers and minority groups, ensuring broader community participation.
- Provide music-infused group therapy sessions, led by certified music therapists, to support emotional expression and stress relief.
- Host intergenerational music workshops celebrating cultural traditions through song, instruments, and dance, fostering cultural appreciation and stronger community ties.

A key focus was expanding engagement among:

- Underrepresented communities.
- Parents and carers facing additional vulnerabilities.
- Fathers and co-parents.
- Families experiencing SEND (Special Educational Needs and Disabilities).
- Communities affected by racial inequalities, deprivation, and isolation.

This audit will assess the effectiveness of these initiatives, measuring their impact and identifying areas for future development.





Wai Yin
May 2024

Intergenerational Music Making Evaluation Form

Dates of Delivery:

1/05
8/05
15/05
22/05
29/05

Partners:

Wai Yin
The Welcome Centre

Overview of Project:

The project involved the delivery of 6 intergenerational workshops at Wai Yin/The Welcome Centre in Cheetham Hill. The aim was to use music to strengthen parent & child bonds and celebrate cultural identity within the community. The project engaged with parents and their children (aged 0 - 5). Activities were tailored to support interaction between parent and child, adopting a range of music therapy approaches to facilitate connect whilst introducing musical ideas to stimulate and support expression and child development.

Methodology & Results

Methodology:

- Quotes and feedback
- Video & pictures
- Written Feedback Forms

Engagement:

- Total Families Engaged: 9
- Total Adult Participants: 10 (8 mothers, 1 father, 1 grandfather)
- Total Children Participants: 14 (including toddlers, a baby, and older children in Session 5)

Quotes & Feedback

"The kids love coming, we want to come back every week!" - **Parent**

"Who knew dancing with ribbons could be so much fun" - **Parent**

"I really bonded with my children. It's great to have something like this available, it's hard to find activities to do with them." - **Mother**

"We had a great time!" - **Children**

"My child actually enjoyed this session more with the older children because she's advanced for her age." - **Mother**

"It was wonderful to see everyone enjoying themselves. The challenge is that we don't typically have children at the centre unless there's an activity planned. Lack of baby-changing facilities and cultural perceptions of music may also play a role in attendance." - **Wai Yin**

Intergenerational Music Making Evaluation Form

Case Studies

Case 1:

From the outset, one family had consistently attended every session—a mother and her two children. Initially, the mother felt nervous about participating, but she quickly found comfort with IMM Facilitator, Nicola's guidance. The mother expressed that the sessions were not only enjoyable for her children but for herself as well, enthusiastically noting, "Who knew dancing with ribbons could be so much fun."

She emphasised the meaningful moments of connection she experienced with her children, particularly with her baby, during activities using singing and phonics to build communication between parent and child. Engaging in interactive activities such as peekaboo and all around the garden had been adopted to strengthen bonds. This case highlights how the project fosters and enhances the emotional connections between mother and child through shared enjoyment and interaction.

Case 2:

During the first session, a father attended with his son and father-in-law. The father-in-law did not speak English, and the father did not speak his language. Initially, the grandfather was hesitant to get involved. However, he soon joined in, finding common ground through music and movement activities. As the sessions went on, the family were encouraged to share songs in their mother tongue, building connections with wider participants and sharing their culture and heritage through inclusive music making.

Facilitator Feedback

The sessions have been a joy to facilitate, with both parents and toddlers showing genuine enthusiasm and engagement. The excitement is especially noticeable when the instruments come out—children eagerly reach for them, and parents join in, making music together in a way that strengthens their bond. Interactive activities like peekaboo and All Around the Garden have been particularly effective in fostering joyful connections, with shared laughter and engagement creating a warm, supportive environment.

It has been heartwarming to see how much these sessions mean to families. One mother shared that she truly bonded with her children during the sessions and appreciated having an activity like this available, as it can be difficult to find engaging opportunities for young children. Her children were so excited by the sessions that they would continue singing the songs throughout the week, eagerly anticipating the next one—Roly Poly being a clear favorite!

The staff also expressed how much they enjoyed the sessions, highlighting the diverse mix of families that attended. It was encouraging to see parents from different backgrounds coming together to share in the experience of music and play. Each session had its own highlights:

- Session 1: Families responded enthusiastically to the familiar song selection, particularly Bluey, Paw Patrol, and Baby Shark.
- Session 2: The bonding between parents and toddlers was evident, especially with interactive songs that encouraged playfulness and connection.
- Session 3: The introduction of Row, Row, Row Your Boat as a storybook element added a literacy component, keeping children engaged both visually and musically.
- Session 4: Instrument play and ribbons provided both a musical and sensory experience, strengthening interactions between parents and children.
- Session 5: Despite an unexpected mix of younger and older children, the session adapted well. The inclusion of dancing with scarves and playing the conductor role made it fun for all ages, demonstrating the flexibility of music-based activities.
- Session 6: Though a smaller session, it was particularly meaningful. A mother expressed feeling deeply connected to her children, reinforcing the importance of offering accessible, engaging activities for families.

Overall, the project successfully created a space where parents and children could share quality time, express themselves through music, and build lasting connections. It was a privilege to see the joy and growth that unfolded throughout the six weeks.

Intergenerational Music Making Evaluation Form

Meeting the project aims

1. Strengthening Parent-Child Bonds:

- Observations and participant feedback confirmed that sessions fostered meaningful interaction between parents and children.
- Songs, movement activities, and storytelling encouraged emotional connections and shared experiences.

2. Engaging Fathers & Minority Groups:

- While the majority of attendees were mothers, one father and a grandfather participated, indicating some success in engaging male caregivers.
- The sessions attracted a mix of families from different cultural backgrounds, supporting inclusivity.

3. Providing Therapeutic Musical Expression:

- Music facilitated emotional expression, relaxation, and social bonding.
- Parents appreciated the structured yet playful nature of the sessions, helping alleviate stress.

4. Promoting Intergenerational & Cultural Engagement:

- Interactions across different age groups in Session 5 showcased the adaptability of music to diverse family dynamics.
- The project successfully brought families together in a shared cultural and creative experience.

Challenges & Considerations for Future Sessions

- Low Attendance: Participation fluctuated due to factors such as limited awareness of the sessions, cultural perspectives on music, and lack of baby-changing facilities at the centre.
- Engaging Fathers Further: Future projects could implement targeted outreach to encourage greater male caregiver participation.
- Infrastructure Limitations: Addressing practical barriers (e.g., baby-changing stations) may improve accessibility and attendance.
- Filling in the registration forms seemed a barrier for some families, perhaps due to being a new organisation in the centre.

Conclusion

Despite challenges, the Wai Yin music project successfully met its core aims, fostering family connection, emotional expression, and cultural engagement through music. The positive feedback from participants highlights the value of such initiatives, and future efforts should focus on expanding accessibility and outreach to ensure even greater community impact.



**Woodville Family
Centre
July - August 2024**

Intergenerational Music Making Evaluation Form

Dates of Delivery:

29/07
05/08
12/08
19/08
26/08
02/09

Partners:

Woodville Family Centre

Overview of Project:

The project involved the delivery of 6 intergenerational workshops at Woodville Family Centre. The aim was to use music to strengthen parent & child bonds and celebrate cultural identity within the community. The project engaged with parents and their children (aged 0 - 5). Activities were tailored to support interaction between parent and child, adopting a range of music therapy approaches to facilitate connect whilst introducing musical ideas to stimulate and support expression and child development.

Methodology & Results

Methodology:

- Quotes and feedback
- Video & pictures
- Written Feedback Forms

Results:

Quotes & Feedback

*"My child absolutely loved coming to the sessions!" – **Parent***

*"I really needed this. I'm in the country alone with my baby and didn't know anyone yet—this helped me meet people and feel connected." – **Mother***

*"I think I enjoyed the sessions even more than my child—I had so much fun!" – **Mother***

*"Please let us know when there are more sessions! We'd love to bring our boy." - **Father***

Intergenerational Music Making Evaluation Form

Case Studies

Background

One of the key aims of this project was to support parents and carers who may be experiencing isolation, particularly those new to the country or without existing support networks. The music sessions at Woodville provided a welcoming space for families to come together, build relationships, and engage in meaningful activities with their children.

Participant Story

One mother who attended the sessions had recently moved to the country with her baby without her husband and did not yet know anyone. She was struggling with feelings of loneliness and was looking for ways to connect with others while providing enriching experiences for her child.

Upon attending the sessions, she quickly found a supportive environment where she and her baby could interact with other families. The structured musical activities, including sing-alongs, dancing, and instrument play, provided a natural way for her to bond with her child and engage with other parents.

She expressed how much the sessions meant to her: *"I really needed this. I'm in the country alone with my baby and didn't know anyone yet—this helped me meet people and feel connected."*

As the weeks progressed, she became more comfortable in the group, forming friendships with other parents and looking forward to each session. The sessions became a crucial part of her weekly routine, providing not just entertainment for her baby but also a sense of belonging for herself.

Facilitator Feedback

I felt that all the sessions went really well. There was strong engagement from both parents and children, and the atmosphere was joyful. The structured activities allowed for lots of interactive bonding moments, and everyone seemed to enjoy themselves.

In Week 2, we introduced a carpet to make the space feel more inviting and less clinical. This change made a huge difference—it improved participation and made it easier for the babies to move around safely. I kept the carpet for the rest of the sessions, as it really helped in creating a welcoming environment for the families.

Parent-Child Engagement Through Music & Movement

- I noticed that both parents and children responded really well to the sing-along and dance songs, especially favorites like Hokey Pokey, Incy Wincy Spider, Old MacDonald Had a Farm, and Baby Shark. I encouraged self-expression, and parents and children loved showing off their favorite dance moves at the end of each session. Instrument play and the conductor game also offered structured opportunities for fun and engagement.

Social Impact & Reducing Isolation

- The sessions provided a much-needed space for social connection, especially for parents who felt isolated. One mother, who was new to the country, shared how invaluable the sessions were for meeting other parents and building a support network.

Conclusion

The feedback I received highlighted the positive impact of the sessions in fostering parent-child bonding, encouraging self-expression, and creating a welcoming space for families—especially those experiencing isolation. The addition of a carpet made the space more comfortable and encouraged greater participation. Structured activities like sing-alongs, dancing, and instrument play created joyful, interactive experiences for both parents and children.



**Abraham Moss
Library
November -
December 2024**

Intergenerational Music Making Evaluation Form

Dates of Delivery:

13/11
20/11
27/11
4/12
11/12
18/12

Partners:

Abraham Moss Library (Manchester Libraries)

Overview of Project:

The project involved the delivery of 6 intergenerational workshops at Abraham Moss Library. The aim was to use music to strengthen parent & child bonds and celebrate cultural identity within the community. The project engaged with parents and their children (aged 0 - 5). Activities were tailored to support interaction between parent and child, adopting a range of music therapy approaches to facilitate connect whilst introducing musical ideas to stimulate and support expression and child development.

Methodology & Results

Methodology:

- Quotes and feedback
- Video & pictures
- Written Feedback Forms

Results:

Total Participants: 22
Total Children: 14
Total Adults: 8

Quotes & Feedback

*"[The sessions are] quiet and gentle, leaving lots of space and time for the children to express and enjoy the music" - **Childminder***

*"its great that the children follow instructions [in the sessions] through music, without being verbally prompted' - i.e. the sessions are a space where children less confident with verbal communication can still express themselves." - **Parent***

Parent says she is now using the musical commands at home with the children too.

*"[the sessions are] calming and engaging. We looked forward to it all week!" 'Inclusive" - **Parent***

Intergenerational Music Making Evaluation Form

Case Studies

Dovi and Gila – Gaining Confidence and Expressing Themselves

Background:

Dovi and Gila started attending the sessions as quiet, non-verbal participants. During Week 1, they were hesitant to engage and preferred to observe rather than actively participate in the activities. Their lack of verbal interaction led me to initially assume they might not fully enjoy the sessions.

By Week 6, Dovi and Gila had become engaged in all activities, eagerly participating and even demonstrating a sense of ownership over some activities, coming into the middle of the group to model for some of the newer parents and children. In one memorable moment, they corrected me when I accidentally swapped their names, a sign of their increased confidence and comfort within the group.

Insight from Gabrielle (Childminder):

Through regular conversations with their childminder, Gabrielle, I learned that the consistent structure of the sessions played a crucial role in Dovi and Gila's development. Gabrielle mentioned that the repeated use of musical commands (such as "Can you please stand up?" and "It's time to tidy up") helped the children build confidence over time. Gabrielle even began using these commands at home, demonstrating how much the sessions had influenced her approach to their daily routine.

Key Takeaways:

The success of Dovi and Gila's journey highlights the importance of routine and non-verbal forms of communication. By using music and instruments, we created a space where they could express themselves without the pressure of verbal interaction. This environment of certainty, combined with the repetition of musical commands, allowed them to feel secure and encouraged to engage more actively.

Celebrating Culture Through Music – Gabrielle, Dovi, Gila, and the Group

Background:

Gabrielle, who had been a consistent participant, recognised that many families in the group were Jewish. She expressed interest in incorporating Hanukkah music into the sessions as a way to connect with the cultural backgrounds of the families.

Session Adaptation:

In response to Gabrielle's request, I introduced traditional Jewish melodies typically played during Hanukkah, performing them on the saxophone during the final session. The experience was meaningful not only for the families but also for me, as it deepened my connection with the group.

Feedback from Parents:

Both Gabrielle and Judy, who had attended the sessions regularly, commented positively on the cultural connection the music provided. It allowed children to make a link between the music they heard at home during holidays like Hanukkah and the music they encountered outside their homes. This moment of shared cultural expression made the children feel seen and included in the group.

Key Takeaways:

This experience reinforced the importance of acknowledging and celebrating cultural diversity within the group. By introducing music from various traditions, such as Hanukkah songs alongside Christmas music, I was able to create a space that was inclusive and supportive of all cultural backgrounds, further strengthening the bond between facilitator and participants.

Intergenerational Music Making Evaluation Form

Case Studies

Case Study 3: Hidaya – Communicating Through Music

Background:

Hidaya and her mother, Hajer, were regulars in the sessions. While both were quieter participants, they still contributed in their own way. Hidaya, around 2 years old, often chose to sit slightly apart from the circle, yet remained engaged and attentive during the activities.

Moment of Connection:

During the final “free play” session, where children could choose an instrument to explore, Hidaya selected a drum. At first, she hesitated, tapping the drum only once or twice before stopping. I decided to engage with her through music, mirroring her actions. For every tap she made, I responded by tapping the drum in the same pattern.

Development:

As I continued to mirror Hidaya’s drumming, I noticed her become increasingly happier, clapping her hands and smiling. She began tapping the drum more frequently, clearly enjoying the playful interaction. It was a moment of communication between us, despite her being largely non-verbal in other parts of the session. This interaction was an example of how music transcended verbal communication and allowed us to connect on a deeper level.

Key Takeaways:

Hidaya’s experience demonstrates the power of music as a universal language. By mirroring her drumming and playing along with her, I was able to foster a sense of connection and confidence. This case highlights how non-verbal communication through music can be just as meaningful and impactful, especially for children who may not express themselves verbally.

Facilitator Feedback

Session 1: Introduction and Early Engagement

- Despite some initial hesitation, children like Dovi and Gila began to open up by interacting with Marley the Monkey, engaging in songs and social play. The use of instruments during free play allowed children to connect with the music and the space, even if they were more reserved initially. Ameer particularly enjoyed tapping the drum in time with the beat, showing early signs of confidence and joy through music.
- The parachute activity, combined with the singing bowl, was especially stimulating for the babies, fostering a connection between parents and children as they moved together to the sounds.

Session 2: Confidence and Storytelling

- The story of Peter the Polar Bear, enhanced by flute sound effects, captivated the children, leading to improved focus and engagement compared to the previous session. The children responded confidently to the musical cues, especially when it came to singing and following commands.
- Parents were more engaged, helping hold the parachute and participating in the movement with their children. This activity reinforced the parent-child bond, as they worked together to raise and lower the parachute in time with the music.

Session 3: Exploration and Movement

- The introduction of the clarinet as the instrument of the week offered a new way for children to explore sound and movement. As the children followed musical cues, they enjoyed watching the sound get closer or further away, especially effective for babies.
- The scarves activity, where children and parents moved together while listening to the music, was a key moment of bonding. The parents' active participation with the children helped deepen their connection, providing a shared musical experience.

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Facilitator Feedback

Session 4: Creative Engagement and Movement

- The “Hickety Tickety Bumblebee” song with its silly actions encouraged laughter and imitation, helping the children express themselves in a fun and creative way. The flute continued to be a favorite, linking sound to movement with scarves.
- During the winding-down session with the Hoberman ball, the children and parents engaged in breathing exercises together. This visual cue was effective in helping children focus, while also creating a calming and connected moment between parents and their little ones.

Session 5: Familiar Routines and New Experiences

- Dovi took pride in finding Ollie the Octopus before I even finished introducing the activity, demonstrating his growing confidence in the routine. The addition of classical music, such as “Aquarium” from Carnival of the Animals, created a multisensory experience that delighted the children and parents alike.
- The saxophone’s performance of Christmas songs during free play encouraged children to join in with the music, further solidifying the connection between parents, children, and the musical activities.

Session 6: Celebrating Cultural Diversity and Joyful Connection

- In response to Gabrielle and Hadassa’s request for Hanukkah music, I introduced traditional songs like “I Have a Little Dreidel,” which was a meaningful way for children and parents to share their culture. The joy of singing along and playing instruments together highlighted the cultural inclusivity of the sessions.
- The final session, with a focus on Hanukkah songs and music, created an environment where parents and children could connect not only through music but also through shared cultural experiences, reinforcing the sense of community and togetherness.

Each session provided unique moments where children and parents connected through music, movement, and shared activities, fostering an inclusive and engaging environment that encouraged growth, confidence, and expression.





**Manchester Jewish
Museum
January - February
2025**

Intergenerational Music Making Evaluation Form

Dates of Delivery:

08/01
14/01
21/01
29/01
05/02
12/02

Partners:

Manchester Jewish Museum

Overview of Project:

The project involved the delivery of 6 intergenerational workshops at Manchester Jewish Museum. The aim was to use music to strengthen parent & child bonds and celebrate cultural identity within the community. The project engaged with parents and their children (aged 0 - 5). Activities were tailored to support interaction between parent and child, adopting a range of music therapy approaches to facilitate connect whilst introducing musical ideas to stimulate and support expression and child development.

Methodology & Results

Methodology:

- Quotes and feedback
- Video & pictures
- Written Feedback Forms

Results:

Total Participants: 51
Total Children: 38
Total Adults: 13 (1 father)

Quotes & Feedback

"(Child name) has asked if we can have the Beyonce song again" **Childminder**

"That's the best music session I've ever attended with the children" **Childminder**

"You really kept the children's attention for the whole session. That doesn't usually happen!" **Childminder**

"I don't think it's possible to overstate how incredibly joyful an experience you've provided us with. We've made memories for life and found a home away from home." - **Parent**

Intergenerational Music Making Evaluation Form

Case Studies

Raphael, a two-year-old boy, attended the sessions with his father. During his first visit, he appeared overwhelmed by the sound of the guitar, reacting with visible discomfort and wanting the music to stop. His father provided reassurance, but Raphael remained cautious, keeping his distance from the instrument.

By his third session, however, a noticeable transformation had taken place. With the familiarity of the routine and the gentle encouragement of his father, Raphael grew more comfortable in the musical environment. He became visibly more engaged, watching intently and showing curiosity rather than fear. As the sessions progressed, he moved closer during musical activities, demonstrating increased confidence and enjoyment.

Raphael's journey highlights the importance of a supportive and consistent space where children can build confidence at their own pace, transforming initial hesitation into curiosity and engagement.

Facilitator Feedback

The sessions initially faced low attendance, with no participants in Week 1 and only a single child-adult pair in Weeks 2 and 3. However, by Week 4, attendance significantly increased as a local childminder brought a group of five children. Her positive experience led to further word-of-mouth promotion, bringing even larger groups in subsequent weeks, peaking at 21 attendees by Week 6.

A key funding aim was to foster intergenerational connection through shared musical experiences between children and their caregivers. While the presence of childminders helped boost numbers, their role as spectators rather than active participants meant this dynamic was less prominent. However, the children themselves were highly engaged, particularly in imaginative play and interactive percussion activities, where they explored loud and quiet sounds with enthusiasm.

The venue played a crucial role in enhancing the experience. The former synagogue's acoustics provided a rich musical environment, and the ample space allowed for movement-based activities. Additionally, the museum staff's involvement in creating a calming wind-down area with soft mats and art materials further contributed to a welcoming and inclusive atmosphere.

Going forward, a focus on increasing parental participation and strengthening intergenerational engagement could further align the sessions with their intended outcomes. Despite early challenges, the steady growth in attendance and strong child engagement highlight the sessions' success in providing a joyful, creative space for early years music-making.



Conclusion



Despite initial challenges, the Family Hubs music project successfully met its aims, fostering deepened parent-child connections, encouraging inclusivity, and providing a safe space for emotional expression through music. Across Cheetham Hill & Crumpsall, families from diverse backgrounds came together to share in joyful experiences, creating lasting memories through song, movement, and play.

The overwhelmingly positive feedback from parents, childminders, and children alike demonstrates the value of these sessions. Parents reported strengthened bonds with their children, while caregivers highlighted the unique ability of music to engage even the most hesitant participants. One mother shared, “I really needed this. I’m in the country alone with my baby and didn’t know anyone yet—this helped me meet people and feel connected.” Another reflected, “I think I enjoyed the sessions even more than my child—I had so much fun!”

Case studies further illustrate the impact of these sessions. From a father, grandfather, and child bridging language barriers through music to the transformation of non-verbal participants like Dovi and Gila, the project demonstrated music’s universal power to connect, heal, and inspire. Raphael’s journey—initially fearful of musical instruments but later actively engaged—showcases how a safe and familiar environment can build confidence over time.

While attendance fluctuated, lessons have been learned for future programming, such as increasing targeted outreach for fathers and improving infrastructure to remove practical barriers. The integration of cultural traditions, such as Hanukkah music alongside mainstream nursery rhymes, proved highly meaningful, reinforcing the importance of culturally responsive programming.

Ultimately, this project provided a vital space for families to come together, express themselves, and build relationships through music. The smiles, laughter, and stories shared throughout these sessions are a testament to their success. As one parent enthusiastically put it, “Please let us know when there are more sessions! We’d love to bring our boy.”

With continued support and refinement, these music sessions can grow to reach even more families, fostering connection, confidence, and joy for years to come.



Intergenerational Music Making Evaluation Form

Pictures



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Pictures



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