



 PercussionPlay  
Outdoor Musical Instruments

Outdoor Musical Instruments for  
Education Settings

# The Importance of Music Education

Encouraging music education programs in schools and providing children with access to musical instruments can help foster a positive attitude towards learning. Musical play can encourage children to take pride in their work, develop craftsmanship, ambition and self improvement; qualities that translate into other aspects of their academic work and social lives.

Studies suggest that exposure to music from a young age, particularly within a school or nursery, can offer many benefits including: fostering teamwork, building self-confidence, developing interpersonal and social skills, boosting communication skills, improving gross motor skills, and developing areas of the brain that are associated with speech and sound. Music education has a huge impact and influence on all areas of a child's life, not just time spent in the classroom.

For these reasons, it would seem fair to say that encouraging music education programs in schools and providing children with access to musical instruments would have far-reaching benefits for the individual and society as a whole.



# Bringing Outdoor Music To Your School

Music is like physical exercise: it's for all ages and for all people. Like physical exercise, participation in music leads to good health and wellbeing. An outdoor 'soundscape' excites and inspires young people musically. At the same time, they enjoy the obvious benefits of spending time in the natural environment - exploring new sounds while enjoying the fresh air!

Kids will love the fact that music can be used in a context outside of the classroom and the instrument's clever design and use of the [pentatonic scale](#) means they're so easy to play. The whole community will be able to develop musical skills without having to manage the technical demands of an instrument - subtly integrating music into the everyday experience of the children.

Creativity, imagination, and discovery should be facilitated and encouraged in music education and through hands-on active learning in a free-play environment; where there are no wrong notes, communication, cooperation, expression, and student confidence continues to grow. That's not all - music can be connected to many other subject areas. Through exploring music students can find natural connections to mathematics, science, reading, writing, and performing arts.

**“It's awesome to hear the music playing and it's a beautiful, engaging space for students.”**

♪ Sandy Rusher ♪

Principal of Park Hill Elementary



# The Outdoor Classroom

Classrooms without walls are a great way to promote time spent outside for both outdoor learning and play. There are countless physiological, social, and academic benefits to learning outside - for both pupils and teachers - that indoor classroom lessons cannot match. Some things work better outdoors, and music is one of them!

A great music program that uses your whole environment and musical instruments in your outdoor classroom/playground will encourage children to learn about music through free play and exploration - subtly integrating music and 'outdoor time' into their everyday school experience. Children revel in the freedom to explore the range of sounds, tempos, and dynamics of the musical instruments and free play is what gives them mastery.



Outdoor environments offer greater freedom of movement than a classroom and allow for less constraint to ways of behaving and thinking. Outdoor spaces and open-ended play activities can provide richer experiences, bringing children closer to nature and making this part of their learning environment.

Students feel less inhibited outdoors and musical playground equipment will help introduce basic musical concepts while being sure that the focus is on the fun. Cooperation is encouraged and students can work together to create new melodies and build a rhythm, fine-tune their listening skills outside, and develop confidence in projecting their voices across space.

Watching a class of children playing outdoor instruments proves that, when presented with the opportunity, life outdoors is still something children benefit greatly from and, more importantly, enjoy.

**“Our Music Teacher will hold lessons in the playground using the instruments. We are excited to see if we have any budding musicians and how we can help nurture their talent.”**

♪ Carmen Montero ♪

East Garner Elementary School Principal



# Music & Nature

It is well documented that exposure to nature and the great outdoors is one of the easiest and most sustainable ways to maintain or improve our overall health and wellbeing. Incorporating music into your outdoor classroom or playground is a great way to subtly integrate music and 'outdoor time' into a child's everyday school experience.

Here are some of the known benefits of using outdoor music to connect children with nature:

- ♪ Lack of exposure to green outdoor space is known to have an impact on children's health and can lead to nature deficit disorder. By encouraging free play and exploration in the great outdoors, we can help encourage more time spent outside.
- ♪ Children often feel less inhibited outdoors and musical playground equipment will help introduce basic musical concepts while being sure that the focus is on fun and creativity.
- ♪ Outdoor musical spaces or trails as part of a school's outdoor education program will help children discover the joy and empowerment of music-making while reaping the benefits of time in the natural environment.
- ♪ With sun protection, playing outdoor musical instruments increases a child's exposure to sunlight on their skin, triggering the body's vitamin D production. Vitamin D is needed to build and maintain healthy bones and helps with other body functions, including maintaining the muscles, heart health, brain function, and the immune system.



# Bright Horizons, NY

The Bright Horizons Day-care center abides by Reggio Emilia and Montessori philosophies and aims to consider what children need in a space and how they will use it. They have inviting classrooms and state-of-the-art facilities that include indoor play spaces guaranteed to keep children active no matter the weather.

Singing and music play an important role in the culture of all Bright Horizons Early Education Centres. Children can experiment with music and sounds by playing the [Rainbow Trio](#) instruments, which are installed indoors at just the right height along the wall - perfect for toddlers and younger children to discover music and express themselves with rhythm, melody, and tone.

This ensemble features the [Rainbow Trio Bongos](#), [Rainbow Metallophone](#), and [Rainbow Chimes](#). The Rainbow Bongos are percussive, and the Rainbow Metallophone and Rainbow Chimes are tuned to the pentatonic scale to create a safe musical haven for exploring new sounds. These can be installed indoors or outdoors and the size of the group makes it perfect for younger players.

Exposing young children to musical instruments can help develop hand-eye coordination, improve listening skills, increase gross and fine motor skills, and help develop muscle tone in the hands and arms. Young children have an instinct to create their own melodies and explore their imaginations by hearing and making music first, then reading and writing it later, in the same way that they learn language.



# Flauenskjold School, Denmark

The idea of creating a musical garden within the school grounds was proposed by Julien Aen, the music teacher of Flauenskjold School. Julie wanted to increase the children's creativity and arouse their musical curiosity to create and play music during lessons and recess.

With the help of Percussion Play Denmark, the local community, the city's support association, and Nordea Foundation - who each contributed financially - plans for a colorful music garden began to take shape.

Children of the school voted for the instruments they would most like to see installed in their new music garden. Due to their bright colors, tone, and playability, they chose the [Calypso Chimes](#) and [Rainbow Cavatina](#) with [Music Book](#) from Percussion Play. By combining these instruments, up to ten children can play at any time. The instruments are diatonically tuned, and their versatility provides a vast range of musical expressions suited to beginners and more experienced musicians.





Once the instruments were received, another initiative to involve the children and support their learning took place. Pupils from Flauenskjold School got fully involved in the creation of their new music garden. They used their math skills to measure the area and stake out where the instruments should go. Holes were then dug out in the allocated areas prior to the arrival and installation of the outdoor musical instruments.

Julie explained that “We think it was very important that the children were involved in the process so that they could gain ownership of the instruments and take good care of them. At the same time, it was an obvious opportunity for us to include practical mathematics for the students. So, in collaboration with the school janitors, we had a working day where we measured out, marked where the instruments should stand, and then the hard work of digging began. The school janitor assembled and cast the instruments. To celebrate the installation, we had a small inauguration ceremony to great cheers.”

The instruments have already proved to be very popular with the children, and they love that they can enjoy them between class during break times and in lessons. Students can now make the most of the fresh air whilst improving their musical curriculum experience.

**“We are so excited about our colorful outdoor instruments from Percussion Play. They bring life, color, and lots of musical joy!”**

♪ Julie Aen ♪

Music Teacher at Flauenskjold School



# Lift For Life Academy, MO

'Educate, Empower, Uplift' is the motto for the Lift For Life Academy (LFLA) a charter school located in St Louis, MO, and their newly installed outdoor musical instruments are helping students achieve all three of these goals.

Marshall Cohen, LFLA executive director and co-founder explained that he wanted the outdoor musical instruments to serve as reinvestment in exposing the younger students to music while adding new energy to the playground. With the diverse range of instruments now available, students can interact with each other through the instruments, playing them in unison to form a greater sound.



“The experience heightens their understanding of audio and shows how music can bring them all together, and add a further sense of community within the academy.”

The academy chose outdoor musical instruments because it is proven that music can help encourage interaction and teamwork, improve memory, grow self-confidence, increase empathy, and support the development of communication skills. Also, the basics of playing musical instruments help to build dexterity and motor skills while offering students a unique way to express themselves.

“Melodies will continue to be heard outside of the walls of Lift for Life Academy and our kids will have the opportunity to experience both greater community and success through music. The new additions have been a big hit for the children who have long needed to stay home given the pandemic.”

**“The musical instruments give students the chance to play on real instruments during recess, and lesson-times benefit not only their musical skills but also impact their social, linguistic, and behavioral development.”**

♪Marshall Cohen♪

LFLA, Executive Director and Co-founder



# Why Music is Better Outdoors?

- ♪ A great music program uses your whole environment, and musical instruments in your outdoor area will encourage children to learn about music through free play and exploration, subtly integrating music into their everyday school experience.
- ♪ Children enjoy music-inspired free-play because they can explore the different ranges of sounds, tempos, and dynamics of the musical instruments. This gives children the chance to build musical knowledge in a fun and informal way.
- ♪ Music is an intensely social experience; children learn to cooperate by making music together whilst also learning about taking turns and sharing the musical instruments with their peers.
- ♪ Introducing an outdoor musical space or trail will help children discover the joy and empowerment of music-making while enjoying the benefits of spending time in the natural environment.
- ♪ Outdoor musical play builds a child's body awareness and improves core stability.



- ♪ Music also has an inherently physical dynamic; movement to music is a wonderful way to get kids up and active - offering opportunities for both fine and gross motor activity. They'll learn that the instruments can be played in a number of different ways and that they are in control of how the instrument sounds.
- ♪ Children can learn to explore their emotions through music and share these emotions with others; plus they will learn that they can use music to affect their own emotional state. When you are feeling angry, nothing makes you feel better than playing the drum really loudly right?
- ♪ Introduces a variety of instruments, languages, clothing, and celebrations from places across the world and is a powerful vehicle for storytelling and upholding traditions.
- ♪ Helps to develop emotional intelligence and enables children to recognize emotions. Offers opportunities for children to discover ways to express their thoughts, ideas, and feelings, and improvising with music is a wonderful way to foster open-ended play.

**“Pupils have independent access to the instruments to develop their play. It offers more creative activities and alternative opportunities when they are out on the playground.”**

♪ Rachel Hayden ♪

Deputy DSL at Medina House Community Special School



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