**Music Program Associated with Self-Regulatory Advantage for Young Children**

**Facing Economic Hardship**

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Purpose

School success depends on the ability to regulate emotions, behavior, and attention in the service of learning. This study examines the impact of MacPhail’s Learning with Music Program on the development of self-regulatory skills for young children at risk via economic hardship.

Design

In Learning with Music, MacPhail music teachers visit partner preschool classrooms and model music integration for early childhood educators. We used a two-year, quasi-experimental waitlist control design to examine the impact of Learning with Music on children’s development of self-regulatory skills. In Year 1, both participating preschool programs received their preschool programming as usual, and in Year 2, both participating preschool programs additionally received Learning with Music.

Method

Ethical standards were followed, and all procedures were approved by the appropriate institutional review boards. The study included 234 preschool children, 104 of whom received Learning with Music and 130 of whom did not. All children were from families facing economic hardship, with income-to-needs ratios less than 2X the federal poverty threshold.

Measures included a parent demographic interview and standardized child assessments of the inhibitory control aspect of self-regulation completed at the start, middle, and end of the year.

Results

Analyses involved latent growth curve modeling to examine initial status and growth in child inhibitory control as a function of receipt of the music program. Learning with Music was associated with greater growth in inhibitory control. The study highlights opportunities for using music to ameliorate negative effects of poverty and promote self-regulatory skill development for young children.