

Blog Entry from the parent of a music therapy student:

Cheering on Charlie

Charlie's Music Therapy

By [Rebecca Wood](#)

Lately, many readers have expressed curiosity about Charlie's music therapy. In the following post, I try to answer the questions that have been asked.

After lock down last year, Charlie and I ventured to [her first baby group](#). It was an experiment. She had serious sensory issues and her motor skill progress was at a standstill. I was looking for more ways to stimulate her in addition to Early Intervention. To my surprise, the baby group session went well... especially the musical portion.



Inspired by the success, I scoured the internet for a local baby music class. My web search led to a local nonprofit organization called [The Community Music School of The Piedmont](#). The music school offers music therapy and a [Music Together](#) class as well as other programs.

Charlie was almost a year old but had the motor skills of a four month old. I was not sure she could keep up with the rest of the Music Together class. Plus, I was concerned about her low sensory threshold. I sent an email to the school and asked which program would be the best fit for Charlie. The response was an invitation to sit in a Music Together class and to meet the music therapist. After Charlie and I met the music therapist, I immediately knew that music therapy was where she belonged.



Every Wednesday for the last nine months, Charlie has attended music therapy. She has benefited in several ways.

First, her sensory threshold has improved. The therapist has actively worked with Charlie on improving her tactile defensiveness and auditory tolerance. Charlie likes to feel the vibrations as she plays the drum, while the therapist plays the guitar, or the time a cello was played in her presence. The therapist also uses feathers, scarves, stuffed animals, and a bead bag in the musical play.

Additionally, her motor skills have progressed. There have been a few times when something was not registering with Charlie in PT or OT. For whatever reason, she did not understand the skill the EI therapist was trying to teach. The music therapist teaches similar skills using musical instruments. In music therapy, it is like seeing a light bulb go off above Charlie's head as she understands and performs the skill for the first time.



Finally, Charlie's speech development has benefited from the music therapy. Before

Charlie learned to open her mouth to vocalize sounds, she grunted to fill in a pause while the therapist sang. Now, she tries to fill in a missing word with the few sounds she has mastered. Charlie started "singing" before she tried to talk.

Whether Charlie progresses to learning an instrument or not will be a choice left up to Charlie. Music therapy is [right for us](#). Charlie enjoys music therapy and gets quite a bit out of it. Sometimes, she says, "Yay!" when I pull the car into the school's parking lot.



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