

Determining the Appropriateness of a Music Therapy Evaluation

When considering a referral for a music therapy evaluation, the IEP team should consider and discuss a student's current performance in non-musical settings and any unique responses observed when music is used. Students who demonstrate differences in behavior, memory, speech and communication or motor movements when music is used would likely be appropriate for a music therapy evaluation. Consider the following characteristics to see if a music therapy evaluation may be appropriate for a student:

- ✓ Music appears to be a unique learning tool for the student; student learns skills first or most quickly through music activities and may display an excellent recall for song lyrics.
- ✓ Music is a significant motivator for this student; for example, he/she frequently chooses music activities as a reward, or demonstrates levels of engagement during music activities that are not typically seen at other times during the day.
- ✓ Student demonstrates difficulty attending and/or focusing, but displays significant improvements in attention and focus during music activities.
- ✓ Student has limited spoken language abilities and initiates communication through song, either by singing familiar songs or imitating sung phrases more readily; speech intelligibility and/or phrase length is considerably improved during singing activities.
- ✓ Music is frequently used for this student to address behavioral concerns.
- ✓ Student will readily attempt and perform actions in songs or with musical instruments despite significant challenges when faced with motor tasks.
- ✓ Student displays an extremely strong reaction, positive or negative to sound. Students who have trouble processing and integrating recorded, sung music or other sounds would also be an appropriate referral for music therapy to help address aural sensitivities that may disrupt learning.