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through music to emotions

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programme name:

Through music to emotions - series of workshops to support the emotional development and integration of children from foster care facilities

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analysis of the context:

[How is the situation now? What is the challenge?]

Common and a major problem in the development of children and adolescents in foster care are difficulties in recognising and expressing emotions, a low sense of belonging, and shame of expression among (Geras et al., 2014).

This programme was developed in the context of Poland where in 2024 there were 77.300 children in foster care (GUS, Piecza zastępcza w 2024 r.).

Taking into consideration the above challenge, the question arises if participation in group music workshops can have a positive impact on children's social-emotional well-being?

According to existing studies:

- group singing promotes children's well-being by building social bonds and boosting confidence (Glew et al., 2020;);
- children (7-10 year old) singing regularly in a group: were more likely to like their voice, showed higher levels of confidence in their abilities; were less likely to feel quiet, angry; reported relaxation and improved mood (Rinta, 2008);
- in the UK government's Sing Up programme for schools (11,000 children): teachers noted improvements in concentration, confidence and cooperation between pupils; there was an increased sense of belonging (social inclusion) in the group (Welch et al., 2014);

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- there were significant improvements in psychological well-being and life satisfaction (SLSS survey before and after the intervention, also among children with disabilities) (Davies et al., 2023);
- after the trauma of the earthquake, group singing interventions have enabled participants to: express emotions that are hard to put into words in a safe atmosphere, renew rituals, regain a sense of agency (Rickson et al., 2018);
- development of social skills, emotion regulation, empathy, cooperation in a commercial children's programme has been reported (Kindermusik Impact Study, 2016).

Keeping in mind the described above challenge and the existing studies, this programme has been developed as a programme “Through music to emotions” - a series of workshops to support the emotional development and integration of children from foster care facilities.

target group:

[For whom is the programme? Who will be participating?]

The programme is designed for a group of 15-20 children and adolescents from foster care facilities (aged 6-14 years old).

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learning objectives:

[Which competences of your participants you want to develop?]

“Through music to emotions” focuses on exploring musical group activities that promote emotional development and social integration in children from foster care facilities.

The objectives of the programme are:

- to develop sense of belonging and togetherness through common musical expression;
- to reshape the image of music (to express freedom rather than to experience shame);
- to raise self-awareness, expression of emotions, and self-connection through using instruments and voice.

methodology and sessions:

[What will be inside your programme? How will you make sure it is long term and not a one time workshop?]

Working methods will be based on the non-formal education approaches.

The following methodologies will be integrated in the programme:

- group singing: call and response; changing dynamics, tempo, timbre on simple melodies, voicings
- vocal and rhythmic improvisation
- movement and embodiment
- voice warm-up
- music-inspired conversations.

The programme could consist of the following sessions:

Session 1: Team building: getting to know each other and group building using rhythm and voice.

Session 2: Music creation: co-creating sounds and exploring what music can be made of.

Session 3: Emotional expression: emotional interpretation of music and expressing basic emotions with instruments, cards and circular singing.

Session 4: Repetition and reflection: repeating favourite activities and reflecting over lived experiences.

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format and timeframe:

The programme will be implemented in the format of one session per week (each session lasting around 60 minutes). The implementation requires close cooperation with the management of foster care facilities.

evaluation:

[What will be the impact/change you would like to see? How to measure it?

The evaluation of the programme is planned before and after its implementation (mixed method, pre-post).

Quantitative methods:

- well-being questionnaires (SLSS)
- visual scales of attitude to music, self-evaluation, feeling comfortable in a group

Qualitative methods:

- interviews with children (standardised questions and recording of answers)
- reports from tutors (changes in behaviours during the class)
- independent observer during the class (observation of engagement, enjoyment, resistance).

inspirations & further readings:

- Davies, J., Bentham, S., & Duah, F. (2023). The impact of group singing on children's subjective well-being: Mixed methods research. *Children & Society*, 37(4), 1252-1273
- Geras, E., Olejniczak, D., & Kielan, A. (2014). Uwarunkowania zdrowia i choroby u dzieci z domów dziecka. *Dziecko Krzywdzone: teoria, badania, praktyka*, 13/4, 94-115.
- Glew, S. G., Simonds, L. M., & Williams, E. I. (2020). The effects of group singing on the wellbeing and psychosocial outcomes of children and young people: A systematic integrative review. *Arts & Health*, 13(3), 240-262.
- Główny Urząd Statystyczny, Piecza zastępcza w 2024 r. (Warszawa: GUS, 2025)
- Kindermusik Impact Study (2016) - Music and Social-Emotional Development
- Rickson, D., Legg, R., & Reynolds, D. (b.d.). Daily Singing in a School Severely Affected by Earthquakes: Potentially Contributing to Both Wellbeing and Music Education Agendas
- Rinta, T. (2008). Potential use of singing in educational settings with pre-pubertal children possessing speech and voice disorders: A psychological perspective. *British Journal of Music Education*, 25(2), 139-158.
- Welch, G. F., Himonides, E., Saunders, J., Papageorgi, I., & Sarazin, M. (2014). Singing and social inclusion. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 5.

