
**MUSIC AND DANCE: ASSESSING THEIR HEALTH BENEFITS TO THE
HEALTH OF A CHILD**

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ABSTRACT

Music and dance have long held a special place in the lives of children and adults alike. Beyond their artistic and cultural significance, these forms of expression offer a plethora of health benefits to children, contributing to their holistic development. The study analyzed music and dance: assessing their health benefits to the health of a child. The study revealed that a child's health encompasses their physical, mental, emotional, and social well-being, therefore the use of music and dance as therapeutic tools, educational mediums, and recreational activities holds the potential to address multiple dimensions of health simultaneously. The study concluded that music and dance are transformative forces that extend far beyond artistic expression. They are conduits through which children can enhance their physical vitality, mental strength, emotional balance, and social connectivity. Child health is evolving, recognizing that it encompasses not only the absence of disease but also the presence of holistic well-being. Parents, educators, and healthcare professionals have a unique opportunity to harness the power of music and dance to promote the health of children. One of the recommendations made was that schools should take proactive steps to integrate music and dance into their curricula. By doing so, children will have the opportunity to engage in these creative arts as part of their regular educational experience, promoting not only artistic expression but also physical activity, creativity, and teamwork.

KEYWORDS: Music, Dance, Health Benefits and Child

INTRODUCTION

Children and adults alike have traditionally valued music and dance in particular ways. Beyond their aesthetic and cultural significance, these modes of expression provide children with a wealth of health advantages that support their overall development. Understanding how participation in music and dance might benefit children's health and wellbeing has drawn more attention in recent years. According to Svalastog et al. (2017), "Human health is a state of complete physical, mental, and social well-being and not simply the absence of disease or infirmity." Epperson (2023) defines music as an art concerned with combining vocal or instrumental sounds for beauty of form or emotional expression, usually according to cultural standards of rhythm, melody, and, in most Western music, harmony. Music is the pleasing sound created by voices or instruments following some tonal structure. If you sing, whistle, or play an instrument, you are making music. You can also write music using the specific language of notes. Music is patterns of melody, rhythm, harmony, tempo/dynamics, and timbre combined to create repetition, variation, and contrast. The health benefits of music and dance for children are rooted in the recognition that health extends far beyond the absence of physical ailments. A child's health encompasses their physical, mental, emotional, and social well-being. The use of music and dance as therapeutic tools, educational mediums, and recreational activities holds the potential to address multiple dimensions of health simultaneously. Music and dance have always been an integral part of human culture, transcending boundaries and enriching our lives in countless ways. Dance is an art form, often classified as a sport, consisting of sequences of body movements with aesthetic and often symbolic value, either improvised or purposefully selected. Dance can be categorized and described by its choreography, by its repertoire of movements, or by its historical period or place of origin. Dance is typically performed with musical accompaniment, and sometimes with the dancer simultaneously using a musical instrument themselves (Foster, 2011). Beyond their artistic and recreational value, these expressive arts hold immense potential to enhance the health and well-being of children. The harmonious fusion of rhythm, melody, and movement can have a profound impact on various aspects of a child's health, including physical fitness, emotional well-being, cognitive development, and social integration.



CONCEPT OF MUSIC

According to New World Encyclopedia (2023) Music is an auditory art comprised of meaningful arrangements of sounds with a relation to pitch, rhythm, and tonality. Another definition of music is "a natural and intuitive phenomenon operating in the spheres of time, pitch, and energy, and under three distinct and interrelated organization structures of rhythm, harmony, and melody." Since music is natural, it can be produced in nature by various creatures; and since it is intuitive, humans can recognize their sounds as musical. Moreover, as music is intuitive, people can virtually perform and even hear music in their mind. Generally, music is known through the cognition of specific arrangements of sounds and the emotional reaction that it engenders. Whether the music is a complex and intellectually demanding orchestral composition or a plaintive folk song, the range of responses can encompass the full range of human emotions. This makes the musical arts a universal expression of human experience. Music is a vital aspect of culture. It has the ability to invoke age-old traditions or to incite people to social change. Music's ability to connect individuals to social and cultural experience is one of its most important characteristics. Responses to music can often be visceral, and in the twentieth century the global appeal of jazz, blues, folk music, and rock and roll advanced egalitarian values and contributed to loosening sexual mores.

In the twenty-first century the dissemination of emotionally charged music through new electronic media provides musicians and composer's unprecedented worldwide exposure and influence. Music is often defined by contrast with noise or speech. Music is generally defined as the art of arranging sound to create some combination of form, harmony, melody, rhythm, or otherwise expressive content. Epperson, (2023) define music as an art concerned with combining vocal or instrumental sounds for beauty of form or emotional expression, usually according to cultural standards of rhythm, melody, and, in most Western music, harmony. Music is the pleasing sound created by voices or instruments following some tonal structure. If you sing, whistle, or play an instrument, you are making music. You can also write music using the specific language of notes. Music is patterns of melody, rhythm, harmony, tempo/dynamics, and timbre combined to create repetition, variation and contrast. We use these patterns to create music and we respond emotionally and intellectually to our perceptions and interpretations of these patterns of music. Music varies depending on culture, though it is an aspect of all human societies and a cultural universal (Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia 2023).

CONCEPT OF DANCE

Dance is an art form, often classified as a sport, consisting of sequences of body movements with aesthetic and often symbolic value, either improvised or purposefully selected. Dance can be categorized and described by its choreography, by its repertoire of movements or by its historical period or place of origin. Dance is typically performed with musical accompaniment, and sometimes with the dancer simultaneously using a musical instrument themselves (Foster, 2011). An important distinction is to be drawn between theatrical and participatory dance, although these two categories are not always completely separate; both may have special functions, whether social, ceremonial, competitive, erotic, martial, sacred or liturgical. Other forms of human movement are sometimes said to have a dance-like quality, including martial arts, gymnastics, cheerleading, figure skating, synchronized swimming, marching bands, and many other forms of athletics. Dance is not solely restricted to performance, as dance is used as a form of exercise and occasionally training for other sports and activities. Dance has become a sport for some, with dancing competitions found across the world exhibiting various different styles and standards. Dance has an aesthetic appeal to many people (Carey, Moran & Rooney, 2019).

Dance has a rich and diverse history that dates back thousands of years. It is believed to have originated as a form of ritualistic expression and storytelling in various ancient civilizations. For example, in ancient Egypt, dance was used in religious ceremonies and to honor the gods. In India, classical dance forms like Bharatanatyam have been practiced for over 2,000 years, intertwining spirituality and storytelling. In Europe, traditional folk dances like the waltz, polka, and jig emerged as a way to celebrate and connect communities. African and African-American dance forms, such as the rhythmic and energetic African dance and the jazz and hip-hop styles born in the United States, have greatly impacted modern dance worldwide. Dance is incredibly diverse, with numerous styles reflecting the unique cultural, regional, and individual preferences of practitioners. Some well-known dance forms include: Ballet, Hip-Hop Flamenco, Kathak, and Salsa. Dance serves as a universal language that connects people across cultures and backgrounds. It transcends linguistic barriers by conveying emotions, stories, and ideas through movement and music. For example, ballet performances can tell complex narratives without a single word, relying solely on the language of movement. In this way, dance has the power to communicate and unite people globally. Global events such as the Olympics and World Dance Day celebrate and promote the diversity of dance forms from around the world, emphasizing their importance as a means of cross-cultural understanding and appreciation. Dance is a universal language that has evolved and flourished throughout history, showcasing the richness of human culture and expression.

CONCEPT OF HUMAN HEALTH

According to the World Health Organization (2023) human health refers to the state of well-being and optimal functioning of an individual's physical, mental, and social aspects. It encompasses a person's ability to maintain balance and adapt to various environmental, social, and psychological challenges. The World Health Organization (WHO) defines health as "a state of complete physical, mental, and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity". "Human health is a state of complete physical, mental, and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity" (Svalastog et al., 2017). Human health is defined not only by the physical state of individuals; rather, it is a state of complete physical, psychological, and social wellbeing. A state of complete physical, mental, and social well-being is not merely the absence of disease or infirmity. The health of a whole community or population is reflected in measurements of disease incidence and prevalence, age-specific death rates, and life expectancy (GreenFacts 2023).

Human health, as defined by the World Health Organization (WHO), goes beyond the mere absence of disease. It emphasizes a state of complete well-being, encompassing physical, mental, and social dimensions. This holistic perspective recognizes that good health is not solely about being free from illness but also includes an individual's capacity to lead a fulfilling and productive life. The WHO's broader conceptualization of health in its 1948 definition highlighted the interconnection of physical, mental, and social well-being. This definition underscores the importance of a balanced, harmonious existence and acknowledges that health is not a static state but a dynamic and ever-changing condition influenced by various factors. Throughout history, different cultures and civilizations have had their own interpretations of health and wellness. This illustrates the cultural and contextual nature of health and the fact that its understanding can vary from one society to another. Contemporary health research, healthcare practices, and public health initiatives aim to promote and enhance the multidimensional aspects of health, recognizing the importance of preventive measures, early intervention, and the provision of healthcare services to address physical, mental, and social well-being. Health promotion and disease prevention strategies are aligned with this comprehensive view of health, emphasizing not only medical treatments but also lifestyle, nutrition, mental health support, and social inclusion. Human health is a complex and multifaceted concept that extends beyond the absence of illness. It is an all-encompassing state of physical, mental, and social well-being, reflecting an individual's capacity to thrive in various aspects of life. This perspective on health is central to modern healthcare and public health initiatives aimed at improving the quality of life for individuals and communities worldwide.

TYPES OF HEALTH BENEFITS OF MUSIC

Music has been recognized for its therapeutic and health-promoting benefits for centuries. It can have a profound impact on our physical, mental, and emotional well-being. Here are various types of health benefits associated with music (Jespersen et al 2015):

- **Stress Reduction:** Music has the ability to reduce stress by lowering cortisol levels in the body. Slow, calming music can trigger a relaxation response and reduce the perception of stress.
- **Pain Management:** Music therapy can alleviate pain in clinical settings. It helps distract patients from pain, reducing the need for pain medication.
- **Emotional Regulation:** Music has a powerful influence on emotions. It can help regulate mood, reduce symptoms of depression, and enhance emotional well-being.
- **Cognitive Enhancement:** Music can improve cognitive functions, including memory, attention, and problem-solving skills.
- **Aid in Sleep:** Relaxing music can improve sleep quality by reducing anxiety and promoting a peaceful environment.
- **Enhanced Physical Performance:** Upbeat music can boost physical performance by increasing motivation and endurance.
- **Social Connection:** Participating in group music-making, such as singing in a choir or playing in a band, promotes social bonding and reduces feelings of loneliness.
- **Speech and Language Development:** Music exposure and early music education can support the development of speech and language skills in children.
- **Mental Health Therapy:** Music therapy is used in the treatment of mental health issues, such as anxiety, depression, and post-traumatic stress disorder.
- **Dementia and Alzheimer's Care:** Music can enhance the quality of life for individuals with dementia and Alzheimer's disease, improving memory and reducing behavioral

TYPES OF HEALTH BENEFIT TO DANCE

Dance is a physically demanding and expressive art form that offers a wide range of health benefits. It not only provides an enjoyable way to stay active but also contributes to overall well-being. Here are some of the key health benefits of dance

- **Improved Cardiovascular Health:** Dance is an aerobic activity that can help improve cardiovascular health by increasing heart rate and promoting better circulation. Studies have shown that regular dance participation can lead to decreased risk of cardiovascular diseases.
- **Enhanced Flexibility:** Dancing involves a wide range of movements that can improve flexibility and joint mobility. This can help reduce the risk of injuries and improve overall physical function.
- **Increased Strength and Endurance:** Many forms of dance require participants to build and maintain muscular strength and endurance. Ballet, for example, focuses on core strength and leg muscles.
- **Stress Reduction:** Dance can serve as a form of stress relief. The physical activity releases endorphins, which are known as "feel-good" hormones, reducing stress and promoting a positive mood.
- **Social Engagement:** Participating in group dance classes or attending social dance events can enhance social interactions, reduce feelings of loneliness, and promote a sense of belonging and community.
- **Enhanced Cognitive Function:** Learning and remembering dance choreography can stimulate cognitive function, improve memory, and boost mental agility.
- **Improved Posture and Balance:** Dance requires participants to maintain good posture and balance, which can lead to better body alignment and a reduced risk of falls, especially in older adults.
- **Weight Management:** Regular dance sessions can help with weight management and contribute to a healthy body composition by burning calories and promoting lean muscle development.
- **Emotional Expression:** Dance provides an outlet for emotional expression and creativity, which can help individuals better understand and manage their emotions.

- **Pain Management:** Some forms of dance, such as dance therapy, can be used to manage and reduce chronic pain, helping individuals cope with conditions like arthritis and fibromyalgia.
- **Bone Health:** Weight-bearing dance forms, such as hip-hop or tap, can improve bone density and reduce the risk of osteoporosis.
- **Improved Confidence and Self-Esteem:** Success in learning and performing dance moves can boost self-confidence and self-esteem, leading to a more positive self-image

EFFECT OF MUSIC OF HUMAN HEALTH

Music has a multifaceted influence on human health, affecting aspects of physical, emotional, and mental well-being. It can reduce stress, manage pain, enhance mood, improve cognitive function, and even foster social connections.

- **Stress Reduction and Relaxation:** Music has been shown to reduce stress and promote relaxation. Listening to soothing music can lead to a decrease in the stress hormone cortisol and a lowering of blood pressure.
- **Pain Management:** Music therapy is often used as a complementary treatment for pain management. Music therapy can effectively reduce pain intensity and opioid usage in various clinical settings, such as post-surgery and during labor.
- **Mood Enhancement and Emotional Regulation:** Music can have a profound impact on mood and emotional well-being. Listening to music with positive lyrics can lead to an improvement in mood and overall happiness.
- **Cognitive Benefits:** Music also has cognitive benefits, particularly in enhancing memory and learning. The "Mozart effect," which suggests that listening to classical music may temporarily boost spatial-temporal reasoning skills.
- **Sleep Quality:** Music is often used to improve sleep quality. Listening to soothing music before bedtime can improve sleep quality in individuals with sleep disturbances.
- **Social Connection:** Participating in group music-making activities, such as singing in a choir or playing in a band, can enhance social connection and feelings of belonging.
- **Rehabilitation and Motor Skills:** Music therapy is employed in physical rehabilitation to improve motor skills and coordination. The effectiveness of music therapy in motor rehabilitation after a stroke.
- **Emotional Expression and Coping:** Music can serve as a form of emotional expression and coping, helping individuals process and manage their emotions.
- **Psychological Well-being:** Music can have a positive impact on psychological well-being. The efficacy of music therapy for depression. Music has a multifaceted influence on human health, affecting aspects of physical, emotional, and mental well-being. It



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EFFECTS OF DANCE TO HUMAN HEALTH

- **Dance Boosts Cardiovascular Health:** Like other aerobic exercise, dancing is great for improving cardiovascular function. A study published in 2016 in the American Journal of Preventive Medicine found that people who engaged in moderate-intensity dancing (defined in the study as enough to make you out of breath or sweaty) were 46 percent less likely to develop heart disease or die from it than no dancers over 10 years of follow-up, according to population-based survey data of adults ages 40 and up. In comparison, moderate-intensity walkers were just 25 percent less likely to suffer heart health issues.
- **Dancing Builds Core Strength:** Dance requires balance and helps build core strength, which helps promote good posture and prevent muscle injuries and back pain, according to Mayo Clinic. Granger adds that this is particularly true for ballet. "In ballet, you train your body to stand still, often on one leg. This helps you train the deep muscles in your body, which you would not work otherwise," she says. You are also engaging your abs, "which are an essential part to balancing," she notes.
- **Dance Promotes Flexibility:** In addition to building strength, many forms of dance stretch the limbs of the body, which improves flexibility, says Elizabeth C Gardner, MD, an orthopedic sports medicine surgeon at Yale Medicine and associate professor at Yale School of Medicine in New Haven, Connecticut. "Both of these (improved strength and flexibility) contribute to improved balance, which can help to avoid falls and reduce the risk of injury in other aspects of life," she explains. This is especially true for ballet dancers. "Ballet training involves a great deal of flexibility training. Flexibility means improved mobility, which means that any type of daily activity will be more enjoyable, whether you take yoga or you are trying to reach for the top cabinet in your kitchen," says Granger.
- **Dance Can Help with Weight Loss:** Dancing is also a form of both aerobic and anaerobic exercise, which is a great calorie burner, Dr. Gardner says. "Jumping and twirling movements are great aerobic training, while holding positions of squatting and balance positions can turn on the anaerobic energy system," she explains. In general, the more up-tempo the dance style, the more calories and energy will be burned. Depending on the style of dance and your bodyweight, 30 minutes of dancing can burn between 90 and 252 calories, according to Harvard Medical School. This type of high-intensity calorie burning can help support weight loss if you're trying to shed pounds. If you want to maximize calorie burn, Granger suggests

taking a dance cardio class, designed to blast calories and improve physical fitness.

- **Dancing Is Good for Bone Health:** “As a form of weight-bearing activity, unlike a stationary bike or swimming, dancing can help to maintain bone density,” says Gardner. Per the National Osteoporosis Foundation, high-impact and weight-bearing exercises, including some forms of dance, help you effectively maintain and even build new bone mass. Some research suggests for older adults with osteoporosis, dancing can help reverse some of the damage of that chronic condition. Other research in children suggests that those who took ballet had better bone mineral content after a three-year period compared with children who didn’t do ballet.
- **Dancing May Help Prevent Memory Loss:** “There’s actually some very good evidence that social dancing can reduce the risk of cognitive decline as we get older,” says Carolyn Fredericks, MD, a neurologist at Yale Medicine, citing a study published in the New England Journal of Medicine involving 469 people over the age of 75. Out of all the physical activities, including walking, bicycling, stair climbing, swimming, and group exercise classes, dancing was the only activity associated with a lower risk of dementia. “We always recommend that older adults seek out cardiovascular exercise and social engagement, and cognitive challenge — social dancing gets all three of these,” Dr. Fredericks says.
- **Dance Is Good for Mental Health:** Research shows that dance can help decrease anxiety, increase self-esteem, and improve psychological well-being. And certain types of dances have even been used as treatment for depression. Research published in 2019 in *Frontiers in Psychology* found that dance movement therapy (DMT) — defined by the American Dance Therapy Association as the psychotherapeutic use of movement to promote emotional, social, cognitive, and physical integration of the individual, for the purpose of improving health and well-being — was effective in treating depression.
- **Dance Can Help Bust Stress:** If you’ve had a tough day, have you ever cranked up your favorite tunes and busted a move to blow off some steam? Any type of movement can help bust stress, according to Mayo Clinic. But dance may be particularly good for doing this.



- **Dance Can Help Us Feel More Socially Connected:** Social connectedness and interaction are a really important part of mental and physical health. Much research shows that feeling lonely or socially isolated can have myriad negative health effects.

CONCLUSION

The study concludes that music and dance are transformative forces that extend far beyond artistic expression. They are conduits through which children can enhance their physical vitality, mental strength, emotional balance, and social connectivity. Child health is evolving, recognizing that it encompasses not only the absence of disease but also the presence of holistic well-being. Parents, educators, and healthcare professionals have a unique opportunity to harness the power of music and dance to promote the health of children. These art forms serve as bridges connecting children to their inner selves, their peers, and the world around them. By embracing music and dance, children can experience joy, find a means of expression, nurture their bodies, and cultivate their minds in ways that are enriching, empowering, and health-enhancing.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Schools should take proactive steps to integrate music and dance into their curricula. By doing so, children will have the opportunity to engage in these creative arts as part of their regular educational experience, promoting not only artistic expression but also physical activity, creativity, and teamwork.
- Schools and communities should strive to establish and maintain well-funded music and dance programs. These initiatives should cater to a diverse range of interests and abilities, allowing children to explore and develop their talents. Adequate funding and resources are essential to ensure that these programs can flourish and provide children with the space and guidance they need to thrive in the world of music and dance.
- Encouraging parents to participate in music and dance activities with their children not only fosters strong bonds but also cultivates a lifelong appreciation for the arts. Parents should be encouraged to explore their own creativity alongside their children, creating a shared journey of discovery and growth.
- Access to music and dance programs should be made available to all, irrespective of their economic circumstances or geographical location. Community-based initiatives that offer affordable music and dance classes and programs can play a pivotal role in achieving this goal. Such initiatives foster a sense of belonging and create opportunities for children to explore their artistic talents.

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