

Getting the most out of our visiting musicians – Early Years



Yorkshire Youth & Music employs highly skilled, trained and experienced musicians on its projects working with children and young people. Their skills vary; some have expertise in music technology, some in singing, some are folk musicians, some classical and some work in various styles. What they have in common is extensive skills, knowledge and understanding of how music ‘works’.

They bring all their musical skills to the projects, and in addition they are all extensively trained and knowledgeable about musical learning and progress, and working with children and young people. Many have additional training in working with children with additional needs and challenges. Our musicians know and understand the effect that good quality music making can bring to literacy, numeracy, social interaction and other areas of learning and development. They have ‘toolboxes’ of different musical pedagogies which they can use to ensure the best learning.

What Early Years settings can do to get the best value from projects

Our musicians are likely to be in a setting (Children’s Centre, Nursery, School or other care education provision) for a limited time – perhaps ten visits over ten weeks, or similar. To get the most out of their visits – and to ensure that music-making can continue after the project is finished, we recommend;



Initial staff CPD

Staff attend an initial staff CPD session (a briefing at the very least) to introduce the project, the plans and outcomes to staff, including any tracking and observations which will be needed, and some practical music-making. This session also allows you to get to know the musician and the way they work with children so that you can carry on the work between sessions.

Staff regularly attend sessions

Staff should attend consistently, so they can learn music-leading techniques and music being taught. They should feel free to ask any question of the musicians – about the thinking behind choices, progression and learning – to help develop their own skills

Staff join in at all times

Staff should join in with activities – even if they aren't confident themselves) – unless they're observing or documenting children's activity. It is a great example to children for adults to be seen learning and joining in. And if adults don't join in, children sometimes get the message that it is OK to not join in. Discipline for music sessions should be the same as other activities. Staff reinforcing this (by bringing children who wander back to the group, for example) is enormously helpful.

A clear and quiet place

Appropriate space to work in is essential; music can be noisy so could be a distraction in a room where other things are going on. We usually need clear spaces with any tempting items moved out of sight. Music activity is often in circles, and can involve movement if there is space (physical movement to music is a tool to reinforce musical ideas like steady pulse, or pace)

Timetable 30 – 40 mins a session

Music sessions should be for about 30-40 minutes for each group (musicians will help you plan this, based on the age and ability of the children and group size). In a morning, our musicians would expect to do at least four sessions; this might mean some minor changes to usual timings – but it means you can get the maximum value from their visits

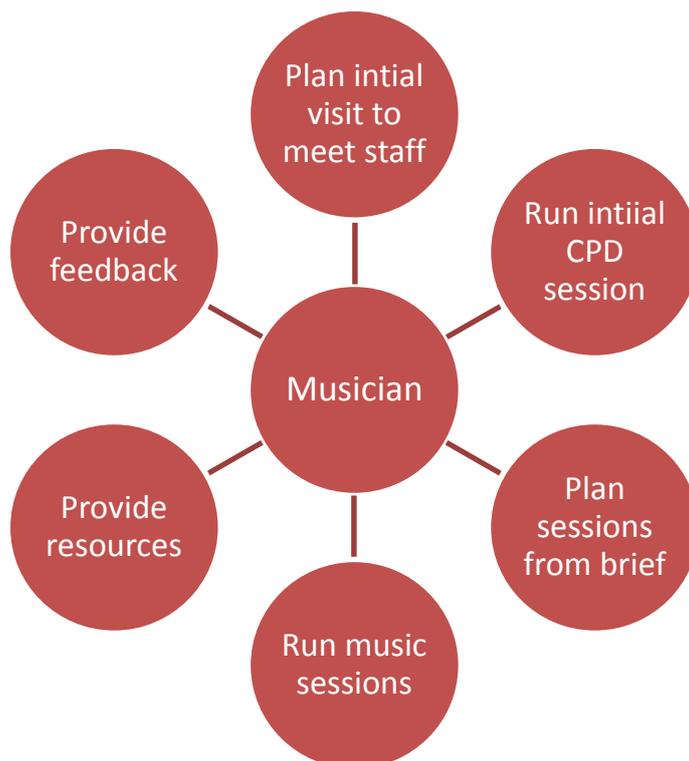
Ensure sensible size groups

Group sizes for music activity are carefully considered; the musicians need the time to hear or see each child's work in a session, so 10-12 children is ideal for a 30 minute session

Provide information to musicians

Settings staff know their children well; it helps the musicians to be given information about individual needs, but also commentary on children's reactions and responses during sessions 'H has not done this before' or 'J usually focusses on a task for ten minutes, but not more' helps the musicians to plan what to do, immediately in the session, and in the longer term.

What our musicians do to make projects successful



Plan intial visit to meet staff

Musicians will visit a setting to familiarise themselves with the children, discuss the project brief, and make a contribution to planning and timetabling. This can include taking account of topics or planned events if they are informed.

Run initial CPD session

The musicians will introduce some music and skills and knowledge building with staff, discuss and agree ways of working, and get to know the staff and their expectations for the sessions

Plan sessions from brief

Plan and vary activities according to the abilities and needs of the children present. Decide what equipment (including iPads and specialist music technology), instruments and other resources are needed, including any in the setting, and any which needs to be brought in. These are regularly checked for damage and cleaned.

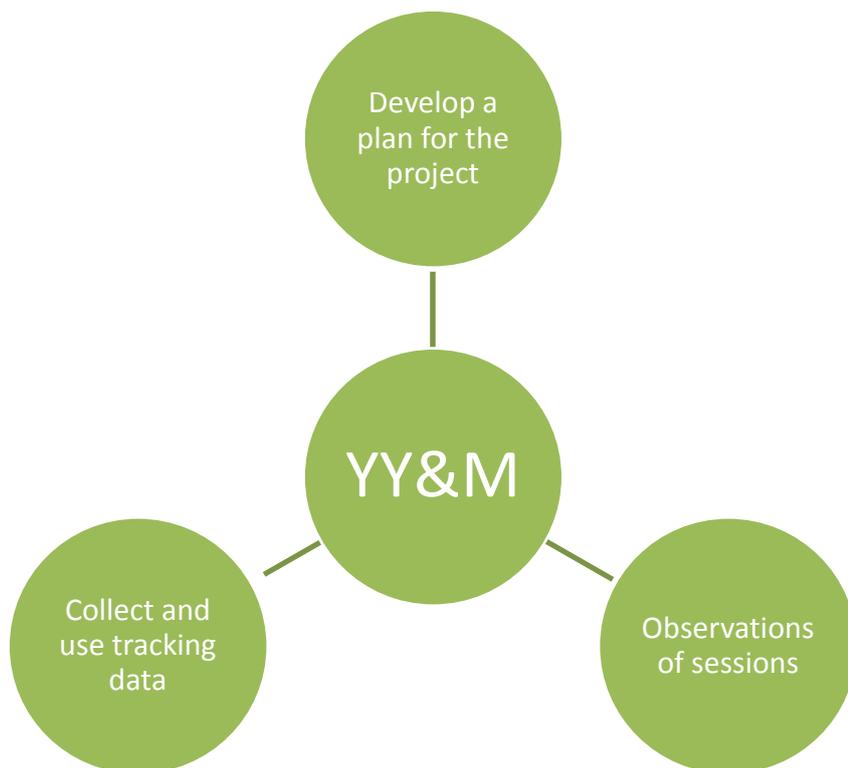
Run music sessions

Control the music activities and ensure fairness and turn-taking, as well as developing listening skills and musical skills. Our musicians work on the basis of positive feedback, reinforcing positive behaviour and achievement and 'trying again', and it is helpful if staff support this during music sessions.

Provide feedback

Musicians will make time for short feedback and review at each visit

What Yorkshire Youth & Music will do



Develop a plan for the project

Develop and agree a plan for projects – which takes account of musical, social and learning outcomes. Partners in the plan often include settings staff, local authority staff, and the funders of the project to whom YY&M is accountable. Our projects are built on the wealth of academic and practical research developed and shared over many years with the music-making community

Observations of sessions

Make observation visits to sessions to give feedback to the musicians and to the setting about any aspect of activity, from the suitability of spaces, to staff engagement, children's responses and the musician's leadership

Collect and use tracking data

We will ask for, and collect and use tracking data **ONLY** for the purposes of reporting on the project to funders and partners. All our data is anonymised.

We think this information will result in an excellent experience of working in partnership with our musicians.

