

# Music therapy

Music is a wonderful way to have fun and enjoy time doing something creative.

ECHO introduced and funded a specialist music therapist for 3 years Evelina London and the role has now continued, run by the cardiac team.

Children receiving treatment for heart conditions are often very afraid – of being in a strange place with unfamiliar people and of the painful procedures they sometimes have to undergo. That fear is shared by their parents, who can also feel a sense of helplessness for their children.

Music therapy is an amazing way to help both children and parents deal with these fears, allowing them to express their feelings without having to put them into words and doing so in a way that's fun for everyone.

A typical music therapy session might include known songs, musical games, and improvised music-making. Children and parents don't need any musical skill to benefit from music therapy. A music therapist follows the child's lead as much as possible, giving them a sense of creativity and engagement in a place where so much is out of their control.

*My daughter was so afraid of being in hospital and the painful tests but then the music therapist arrived, she looked forward to her weekly session so much and got out of bed each time for her, even after surgery... although this therapy may not fix bones or mend a heart it did help to rebuild by daughter's spirit.*

**MOTHER OF TODDLER AT EVELINA LONDON**

*I never realised I hadn't sung to my baby, the music therapist taught me how to ignore the PICU noise and the people and just spend time singing to my baby.*

**MOTHER OF NEW-BORN BABY IN PICU**