

## Music as an education and communication tool for students with Autism

Italy – Istituto Comprensivo Via Dei Boschi

### SUMMARY OF PROJECT

The project uses music as a means for the social integration of students with autism spectrum disorder by allowing them to participate in basic classroom musical activities. The process begins with the issues of perception and stimulation, which then leads to changes in behaviour, a greater sense of personal well-being, and improved academic achievement. Music functions as a tool to unify a student's emotional, mental, and physical experience, bypassing the symbolic importance of verbal language and providing children with autism the opportunity to use alternative communication methods.

*“Music is a fantastic resource for inclusion: It brings down communication barriers through its magic and enables social interaction without any difficulties.”*

—Ms. Mariagiulia Morlacchi, Head of Project

### FACTS & FIGURES:

The project received the *Premio Abbiati per la Scuola* award in 2012 and 2015, awarded each year by Italy's National Association of Music Critics for the best projects in Italian schools.

### PROBLEMS TARGETED:

In general, terms, children with autism spectrum disorder lack the basic motivation to relate and interact with others. The interaction of music can stimulate the active participation of an autistic child by inducing a desire for communication that is different from the mechanical responses that he or she is instinctively led to give.

### SOLUTION & METHODOLOGY

The project is based on an educational/didactical approach, employing elaborate games with music to implement Inclusive Education. Without the need for words, music includes emotional, mental, and physical dimensions – all of which contribute to the well-being and progress of children with autism. Starting with game practices, one can aim at developing a real communicative liaison using

the medium of music to facilitate and develop communication through sound experiences – both with the voice and with musical instruments. Moreover, this project increases stimulating and enhancing forms of child interaction, encouraging their spontaneity, promoting inclusion in schools, enabling the development of a positive focus, and developing attitudes of solidarity, tolerance, and acceptance among peers.

### OUTLOOK & TRANSFERABILITY

By including music in the early stages of personal development, children with autism can feel free to develop a greater level of comfort and inclusion through musical expression. The project is easily replicable at little to no cost, as it does not require the need of experts to intervene in the project; it only requires the teacher to possess musical skills and basic instruments.

Photo: Yes

Life story: Yes

### CONTACT

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