

MacPhail Center for Music – Online Sing Play Learn

2022-23 Evaluation Results

Sing Play Learn with MacPhail® Online Early Childhood Music Partnerships strives to increase access to high quality music education for early childhood students in greater Minnesota. The program is designed so that student participants benefit developmentally with gains in executive functioning, social-emotional skills, foundation in musical concepts, and cognition and language development through musical learning experiences. The virtual musical play experiences are customized to support classroom goals via collaboration with the early childhood classroom teachers and taught by MacPhail-trained early childhood music specialists. Classes range from 20-30 minutes with live, interactive musical activities. Additional opportunities include teacher workshops on music integration and parent education on the benefits of music on learning and development.

The program began serving greater Minnesota in 2013. In 2022-2023 the program had three teaching artists, partnered with three schools, and served 191 children. Teaching artists provided a total of 131 hours of instruction. Partner schools included early childhood programs at Kerkhoven-Murdock-Sunburg school district, Nerstrand Elementary, and Laker Prep preschool.

Evaluation

Wilder Research collaborated with MacPhail staff to develop an evaluation design for the program. The evaluation includes implementation and outcome components, and gathers qualitative and quantitative data to answer the following research questions.

Outcome evaluation key questions

- To what extent does participation affect students' listening skills?
- To what extent does participation affect students' self-regulatory skills?
- Does students' level of engagement with the lessons grow over the course of the year?

Implementation evaluation key questions

- Do child development centers benefit from their partnership with the MacPhail Center for Music?
- Do classroom teachers and teaching artists develop useful and meaningful relationships?

Methods

Wilder Research designed the data collection tools in partnership with MacPhail, MacPhail staff led data collection efforts by sending web survey links, and Wilder completed analysis and reporting with MacPhail support. This evaluation included the following data collection instruments:

- **Early childhood educator survey:** This survey was designed for the classroom educators who are partnering with MacPhail teaching artists for music education. The survey asked about the overall vision and goals of the program, the collaboration with the MacPhail Center for Music, successes of the Sing Play Learn program, and areas for improvement. MacPhail staff reached out to classroom teachers, asking them to complete the survey. Four out of seven educators completed the survey.
- **MacPhail teaching artist survey:** This survey was designed for MacPhail teaching artists who joined early childhood classrooms virtually to provide music education. The survey asked about value and successes of the program, collaboration with the partner schools, and suggestions for improvement. Three out of four MacPhail teaching artists completed the survey.

While the overall number of survey completes is relatively small, we were able to survey the majority of educators and teaching artists involved in the program. For this reason, we feel comfortable reporting on these results, though they should still be interpreted with caution, as they may not represent all potential respondents.

Evaluation results

Student outcomes

Classroom educators and MacPhail Teaching artists generally agree on key student outcomes (Figures 1 and 2). All classroom educators agreed that they've seen improvement in students' physical self-regulation and listening skills. Three out of four agreed they've seen improvement in emotional self-regulation skills and social development.

1. Student outcomes, according to classroom educators (N=4)

	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
Online Sing Play Learn has improved my students' physical self-regulatory skills .	0	4	0	0	0
Online Sing Play Learn has improved my students' emotional self-regulatory skills .	0	3	0	0	1
Online Sing Play Learn has improved my students' listening skills .	1	3	0	0	0
I have seen improvements in the children's social development , such as more instances of sharing or cooperating with their classmates.	0	3	0	0	1

Teaching artists are largely in alignment, though one teaching artist each disagreed in regards to listening and physical self-regulation skills (Figure 2). Teaching artists agreed that children are engaged during the online Sing Play Learn classes and that they have seen children become more engaged over the year.

2. Student outcomes, according to MacPhail teaching artists (N=3)

	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
I have seen improvements in the children's physical self-regulatory skills .	0	2	1	0	0
I have seen improvements in the children's emotional self-regulatory skills .	0	1	0	0	2
I have seen improvements in the children's listening skills .	0	2	1	0	0
I have seen improvements in the children's social development , such as more instances of sharing or cooperating with their classmates.	0	3	0	0	0
I have seen the children become more engaged in online Sing Play Learn over the year.	1	2	0	0	0
I have seen the children become more engaged in online Sing Play Learn over the year.	1	2	0	0	0

When asked in open-ended questions what the benefits of online Sing Play Learn are to students and to the partner schools, classroom teachers and teaching artists reported exposure to music and music concepts (vocabulary, instruments, movements, music appreciation), access to music experiences they might otherwise not have, and having an additional method of learning and developing through music. It also provided an extra opportunity to engage with additional teachers and fellow students. One teacher also noted listening skills, and another noted students getting more comfortable with technology.

It's like having an expert come to our classroom and broaden our horizons. – Classroom educator

It teaches [the students] that music can be used for joy and learning in all areas of life--math, literacy, etc. - Classroom educator

I think there is the exploratory benefit for them by being exposed to instruments, songs, and vocabulary that their classroom teacher may not know. – MacPhail teaching artist

Implementation –partnership and relationship-building

Both classroom educators and teaching artists answered questions about the success and benefits of the partnership between them. All classroom educators agreed that MacPhail is a helpful resource for them, it's easy to collaborate with MacPhail, they've learned new strategies to use music in their classroom, and MacPhail has provided them with new tools and resources on how to use music in their classrooms (Figure 3). When asked what specific strategies, tools, or resources they've gained, educators mentioned using instruments to incorporate rhythm in the classroom, songs to review classroom topics, and opportunities to incorporate movement.

3. Partnership and relationship building, according to classroom educators (N=4)

	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
MacPhail is a helpful resource for me in my work as an early childhood educator.	2	2	0	0	0
It's easy for me to collaborate with MacPhail.	3	1	0	0	0
I've learned new strategies to use music in my classroom.	2	2	0	0	0
MacPhail has provided me with new tools and resources to use music in my classroom.	1	3	0	0	0

All MacPhail teaching artists agreed that online Sing Play Learn provides classroom teachers with resources (Figure 4). Two out of three teaching artists agreed that it is easy to collaborate with classroom teachers and they've built relationships with the teachers they interact with. Additionally, all teaching artists reported feeling supported by MacPhail in their partnership work.

4. Partnership and relationship building, according to MacPhail teaching artists (N=3)

	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
Online Sing Play Learn provides helpful resources to the classroom teachers we partner with.	1	2	0	0	0
I am able to collaborate easily with classroom teachers.	1	1	1	0	0
I have built relationships with classroom teachers I interact with.	0	2	1	0	0
As a teaching artist, I feel supported by MacPhail in my work with our partners.	1	2	0	0	0

Final thoughts and considerations

Overall, classroom educators and MacPhail teaching artists reported that online Sing Play Learn has a positive impact on students' self-regulation (physical and emotional), listening skills, and social development. Teaching artists also reported that students are engaged during lessons. In terms of the partnership, classroom educators reported that they've gained tools, strategies, and resources from the partnership, and that it's easy for them to collaborate with MacPhail. Teaching artists are mostly in agreement about the ease of collaboration and relationship-building, though this may be an area to explore further since there is some disagreement. These findings are in alignment with similar online Sing Play Learn evaluations over the last few years.

Some recommendations based on findings and suggestions from evaluation participants include:

- An opportunity for an in-person visit could further improve collaboration and connection
- Further alignment between online Sing Play Learn lessons and classroom curriculum, so the two can work together
- Increased support and coordination from MacPhail staff in setting up the partnership between teaching artists and classroom educators

Wilder Research

Information. Insight. Impact.

451 Lexington Parkway North
Saint Paul, Minnesota 55104
651-280-2700
www.wilderresearch.org

For more information

This summary presents highlights of the MacPhail Center for Music - Online Sing Play Learn: 2022-23 Evaluation Results.

For more information about this report, contact Julia Miller at Wilder Research, 651-280-2744 or julia.miller@wilder.org.

Author: Julia Miller

SEPTEMBER 2023