## **What is the current understanding of the effect of infant-directed speech on musical development?**

Current research suggests that infant-directed speech (IDS) and infant-directed singing (IDSi) play important roles in early musical and language development. IDS and IDSi share musical qualities such as exaggerated pitch, rhythm, and emotional expressiveness, which are thought to support infants’ attention, emotional regulation, and learning. Studies show that infants are more engaged by music and rhythmically regular sounds than by speech alone, and that exposure to rich, variable, and resonant singing is associated with better sensorimotor, language, and socioemotional outcomes in infancy and beyond [2][5][7]. Musical interventions, including both active engagement and passive listening, can enhance infants’ neural processing of temporal structure in both music and speech, suggesting that early musical experiences may boost auditory pattern detection skills important for both domains [4][8]. Furthermore, infants exposed to higher levels of both music and infant-directed language at home show improved categorical perception of linguistic prominence, indicating cross-domain benefits [9]. Infant-directed song, in particular, is effective at sustaining infants’ attention and delaying distress, likely due to its regular beat and metrical organization [7][10]. The evolutionary perspective posits that musicality in human communication may have originated to facilitate parent-infant bonding and social interaction, with ongoing effects on both music and speech processing [6]. Overall, the evidence supports a close link between the musical features of IDS and the development of musical, language, and socioemotional skills in infancy [2][4][5][7][9][10].

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