

**Title** – The Value of Music Education for Children in Foster Care

**Program of Study** – Music Studies

**Presentation Type** – Remote Oral Presentation

**Subtype** –Theoretical

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### **Abstract**

According to the African proverb of the Igbo and Yoruba people, they believed "It takes a village to raise a child." The message of the well-known African proverb is also applicable to the American foster care system. Unfortunately, the Child Welfare Information Gateway statistics confirm that many children in America need many villagers to assist them in their upbringing. Understanding the foster care system's function and purpose in America has led to an educational project that can benefit children during their developmental years. Many children will transition in and out of foster care throughout their childhood. This project will advocate for two music programs that demonstrate value through sociological and psychological insights. Examining *musicking's* sociological perspectives will emphasize the importance of group activity, the power of connection, and how practicing music positively affects social and interpersonal skills. Psychological views of *musicking* will be reviewed through improvisation, stimulated emotions created by music, and how the brain reacts to music. Two programs are proposed to help children in two different foster care types and consider future research. This project attempted to answer the following question, what benefits would a child in foster care gain from participating in a weekly music lesson or group activity facilitated by volunteer high school and college-level music students?

### **Christian Worldview**

"Let the children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these" (Mark 10:14 NIV). Jesus spoke these words to his disciples because they

were standing in the way of children who desired to receive Jesus' blessings. Just as he advocated for children to receive his gifts, it is in society's best interest to cultivate and nourish the emotional well-being of children who experience displacement from their families. Evidence shows that music can significantly benefit and contribute to the psychological and sociological development of children. For some children, familial removal is short-term, lasting only a few months with an outcome of successful reunification. For others, they will spend years in temporary foster homes or are relocated to an undisclosed protected facility that protects them from their own family. Many of these children experience their exit from the system by aging-out, after spending years navigating their way through it. By advocating for two models that serve children in both regular and protected foster care, displaced children have the opportunity to experience some level of joy on a psychological and sociological level. I feel strongly that an educational project like this provides evidence to support the need for programs that benefit children in foster care and society. Evidence will show that music's effects have multi-faceted outcomes: it can inspire positive change in marginalized youth, alleviate offending or anti-social behaviors, raise confidence and self-esteem for those at risk, increases intelligence scores, contributes to academic success, and creates better citizens, which benefits all.