

**UNDERLYING MECHANISMS LINKING MEDIATED MUSIC
LESSONS AND LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY AMONG
KINDERGARTEN CHILDREN OF MIGRANT WORKERS**

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This study evaluated the impact of music classes conducted as Mediated Learning Environments on musical aptitude, general learning skills, and language proficiency. Mediated Learning is a didactic approach intended to nurture quality and synchronized teacher-child interactions while focusing on enhancing children's general learning skills. Extensive research has confirmed positive interactions between music education and general learning skills (Hallam, 2010) as well as between mediated learning and enhanced learning abilities (Feurstien, 1988, Klein, 1987). This study is innovative in that it evaluated the combined effect of music lessons (content) and mediated learning pedagogy (approach), on the learning skills and language proficiency of at-risk children. The participants included 63 kindergarten children of migrant workers growing up in an urban area of Tel-Aviv, Israel. The children studied in two classes in two schools, which were randomly assigned to control and experimental groups. Children in the experimental group (n=31) studied music for 2 hours a week for four months with a certified music teacher who was also a trained mediator. Children in the control group (n=32) studied music for the same period of time with a certified music teacher, who, however, was not a trained mediator. Pre- and Post assessments evaluated the development of music aptitude (Gordon), executive functions (working memory, self-inhibition, and cognitive flexibility) (Diamond) and language proficiency (Gorelnik). Findings indicated significant differences between the groups in musical aptitude; the most difficult tasks in the Executive Functions assessments; and the most advanced subsections of the language proficiency assessment (Storytelling). These findings are significant in that they indicate that skills developed within mediated music contexts are transferable to other areas of learning and that it is possible to achieve good results within a short period of time.