

# The effect of music and movement on mother-infant interactions

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## **arts and culture**

This research was conducted by **Wendy Vlismas, Stephen Malloch** and **Denis Burnham** at the **University of Western Sydney, Australia**.

## **Summary:**

In this work, a group of researchers investigated the effects of music and movement (M&M) on the interactions between first time mothers and their 2-6-month-old infants. They also evaluated the effects of performing the M&M programme both in a group and as a self-instructed method. They found that the M&M programme resulted in changes to both mothers' and children's behaviour. Mothers reported increased perception of attachment with their infants over time, and this was also true when M&M was performed in groups.

## **The study assessed maternal postnatal attachment**

The mothers' emotional attachment to their children was examined through considering their reported experience regarding music and enjoyment, play, social, movement, and touch after the M&M activities, which included lullabies that incorporated rocking/swaying and gentle use of touch and playful gestural interactions (e.g. tickling). The programme was carried out over a period of 5 weeks.

## **Mother-infant musical interactions are positive for their relationship**

How mothers express their affection in the mother-infant relationship is reliant on the reciprocity of their interactions: taking turns to respond, displaying mutual pleasure and satisfaction. Embodied mother-infant musical interactions seem to have a positive impact on their relationships and might be essential for future child development.

This summary is by **Ailin Buzzi, King's Knowledge Exchange Associate.**

## Keywords

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