



Listening!

Foundations of Musical Success!!!

And an Asset to Family Life

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March, 2017



WHAT IS HEARING?

Hearing is an act of auditory perception; the ability to perceive sound by detecting vibrations or sound waves. It is an involuntary action.



WHAT IS LISTENING?

Listening is a broad term used to refer to complex affective, cognitive, and behavioral processes. It is a conscious choice that prompts interpretative action, engaging the brain to potentially gain an understanding of the context or meaning of the sound waves.



Growing a Discerning Listener

Listening began on day one.

Listening evolves as a child responds to the environment.

Listening can be passive.

Listening should be active.

Active listening is an opportunity to promote critical thinking.



Becoming an “Active” Listener

Create an atmosphere without distraction.

Eliminate all other activity from the formal listening environment.

Active listening is intentional, focused and purposeful.

Develop a “respect for the art” culture with some ground rules for family listening and engagement.



Hearing is a precious perception and should be safe-guarded throughout life. Avoid extremely loud situations and long term exposure to loud sounds.

Hearing is a necessity to insure our safety.

Listening is an essential skill in all life environments.

Passive listening desensitizes us to critically analyzing what we hear.

Active listening in school and work is a key element in successful collaboration.



Creating a Listening Environment in Your Home

Setting the “stage” for active listening requires that all other activity must stop.

Cell phones, iPads, laptops, video games, books, magazines , etc. need to be left outside of the listening room to avoid temptation. Text messages, email and phone calls can wait!

It is also important that food not be a part of the listening experience.

Everyone should have comfortable personal space in the listening area.

It may also help to dim the lights to subdue visual distractions.



Initially, a parent must be the leader of the listening experience and should find a short selection. It would be a good idea for the leader to hear the music privately first so that he/she has sense of familiarity to facilitate a family discussion.

First, set up a “culture of respect” for the importance of listening by inviting everyone to settle into their own personal listening space.

Call for a minute or two of settling time, refraining from any conversation. This is a time to *clear the air and the ears*.

Start the music and focus.



Following the playing of the musical selection, ask some basic questions to promote critical thinking.

Be sure to accept all answers, right or wrong. Stick to questions that need a factual answer, rather than an opinion.

Also, ask questions that allow for connections to other life experiences. For example, the leader of the discussion could make a statement such as “I heard beats grouped in 4 and it reminded me of a march. What did you hear?”

Ask your musician children to use musical terms in their descriptions and to define the terms for those who may not be familiar with them.



“Active” Listeners Are Engaged in Critical Thinking

What instrument and/or voices do you hear?

How does the music make you feel and how would you describe the mood?

What is the texture...one instrument or theme, layered themes, or “competing” themes, and are they repeated?

Can you identify distinct sections in the music?

Is the beat fast or slow and how is it grouped?

Does the music change tempo?

Is the music bright and cheerful, or somber and dark?



“Active” Listeners Are Engaged in Critical Thinking

Can you identify any voices you hear as soprano, alto, tenor, bass or a combination of these types?

Are there words, syllables or both and is there a returning section between verses?

Can you identify the language being sung?

Is the music bright and cheerful, or somber and dark?

Is the beat fast or slow and how is it grouped?

Does the music give you impressions of images or scenes?



“Active” Listeners Are Engaged in Critical Thinking

Can you describe the size of the group performing?

Can you describe the dynamics changes, i.e. loud, soft?

Would you describe the music as being sacred or secular?

Do you think the music is “composed/written” or is it being improvised?

Can you identify the style or era of the music?

What images come to mind when you hear this music?

Do you know the “back story” of this music?

Do you know anything about the person who composed this music?



Every time you listen to a piece of music, you're actually giving yourself a deep, full-brain workout. Anyone who has heard a song knows that the feeling is unlike any other. Neurological research into music comprehension has glimpsed why that might be. A song starts with your ears and ends with the music resonating in some way through all four of the brain's major lobes, producing reactions throughout the body, evoking emotions and memory. Looking more closely at the pathways music takes through the brain only reveals why it's played such a powerful role in human life for so long.

~Tom Barnes, Online Writer



Four Lobes of the Brain

Frontal Lobe - **Higher Mental Function:** Concentration, Planning, Judgement, Emotional expression, Creativity, Inhibition

Parietal – **Sensory Area:** Sensations from muscles and skin

Temporal – **Association Area:** Short Term Memory, Emotions

Occipital – **Visual Area:** Sight, Image Recognition, Image Perception,

Music reaches all four lobes.



The effect of music on the brain is being given significant attention in research.

Please note the next two slides, which show the anatomy of the brain, as well as the functions of the various areas.

The implications of the value of music study, whether playing an instrument, singing or listening to music, on all facets of the development of the human brain and the education of human beings deserves your attention as a parent.

Listening is a life skill and should be nurtured along with all other learning.

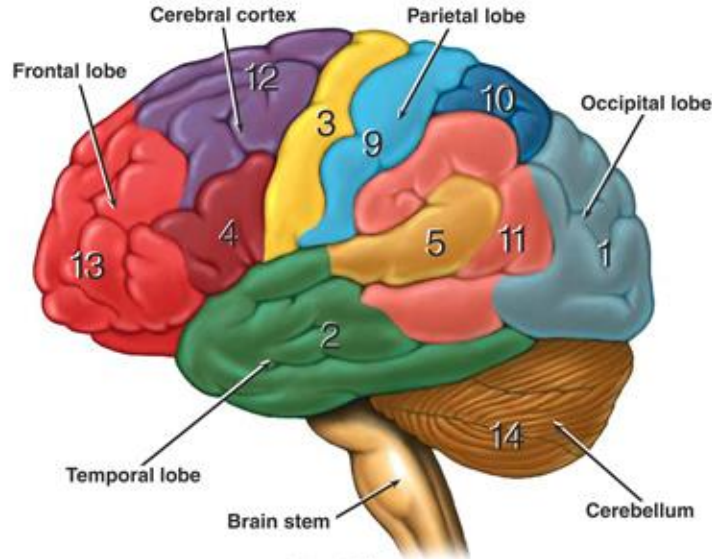
Anatomy and Functional Areas of the Brain

Functional Areas of the Cerebral Cortex

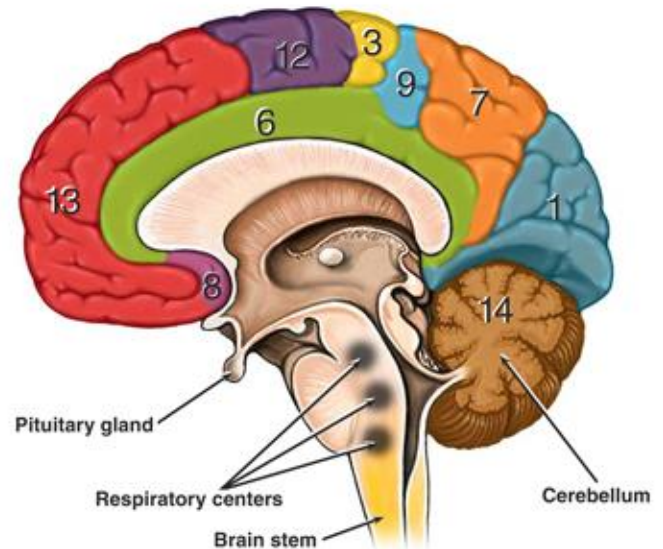
- 1 **Visual Area:**
Sight
Image recognition
Image perception
- 2 **Association Area**
Short-term memory
Equilibrium
Emotion
- 3 **Motor Function Area**
Initiation of voluntary muscles
- 4 **Broca's Area**
Muscles of speech
- 5 **Auditory Area**
Hearing
- 6 **Emotional Area**
Pain
Hunger
"Fight or flight" response
- 7 **Sensory Association Area**
- 8 **Olfactory Area**
Smelling
- 9 **Sensory Area**
Sensation from muscles and skin
- 10 **Somatosensory Association Area**
Evaluation of weight, texture, temperature, etc. for object recognition
- 11 **Wernicke's Area**
Written and spoken language comprehension
- 12 **Motor Function Area**
Eye movement and orientation
- 13 **Higher Mental Functions**
Concentration
Planning
Judgment
Emotional expression
Creativity
Inhibition

Functional Areas of the Cerebellum

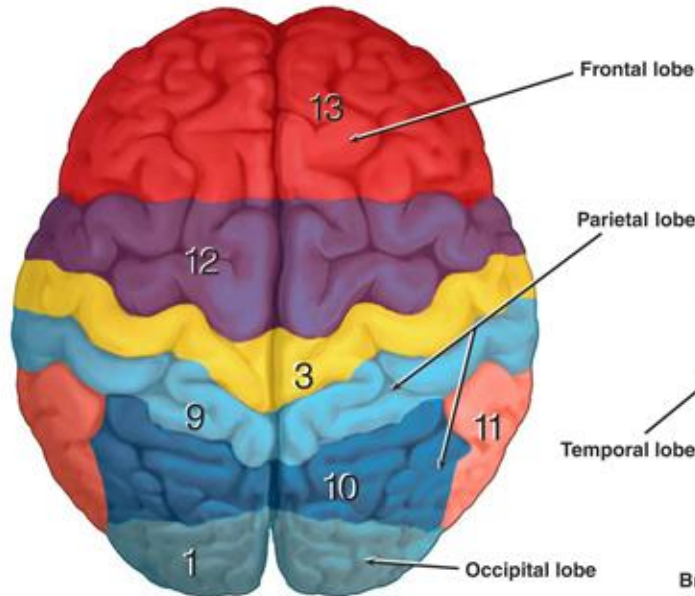
- 14 **Motor Functions**
Coordination of movement
Balance and equilibrium
Posture



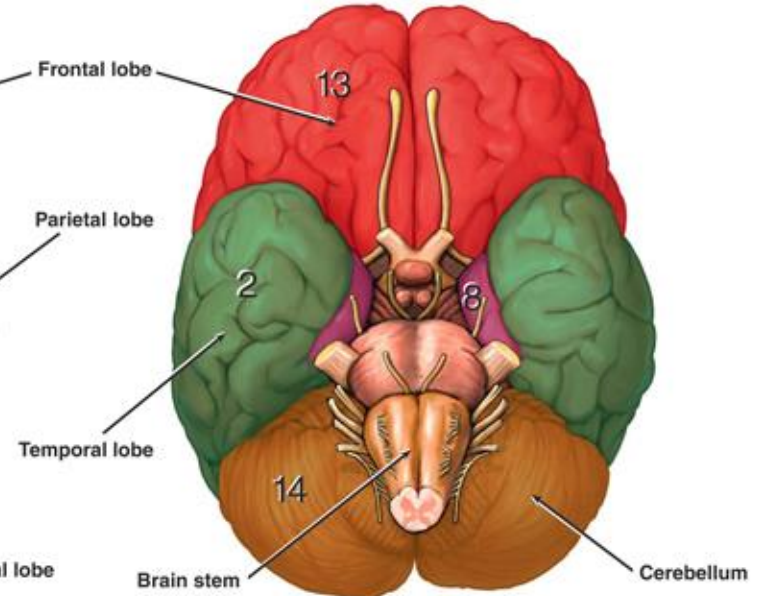
Lateral View



Sagittal View



Superior View



Inferior View

LOGICAL
VERBAL
PART AND DETAIL
DIGITAL
SYMBOLIC
ORDER
MATH
RATIONAL
OBJECTIVE
LINEAR
TARGET AND DIRECTION
SYSTEM
ANALYTIC



art
RANDOM
AND
FREE **BIG**
PICTURE
Music
emotion
IMAGINATION
DREAM
SUR-REAL
NOVEL
Colors
Creative
analog
FUN





Families can use a worksheet like this to begin to think critically about the music they hear.

Analysis of Listening Sample

Meter
4 / 4
3 / 4
2 / 4
6 / 8

Tonality
Major
Minor
Modal

Articulations
Staccato
Detached
Legato
Accented

Dynamics
Fortissimo
Forte
Mezzo Forte
Mezzo Piano
Piano
Pianissimo

Tempo
Adagio
Andante
Moderato
Allegro
Presto
Other:

Form
Verse/Refrain
ABA
Theme Variation
Rondo - ABACA

Woodwinds
Flute
Piccolo
Oboe
Clarinet
Bassoon

Strings
Violin
Viola
Cello
Bass
Harp

Grand Forms
Sonata
Concerto
Overture
Symphony

Brass
French Horn
Trumpet
Trombone
Tuba

Percussion
Snare
Bass Drum
Timpani
Cymbals
Bells/Xylophone
Other

Texture
Single Theme/Melody
Melody/Accompaniment
Theme against Theme
Rondo - ABACA

Title of Selection:
Composer:

Things to Consider When Selecting Music for Family Listen

Find selections by specific composers.

Handel

Chopin

Bach

Liszt

Haydn

Wagner

Mozart

Brahms

Beethoven

Tchaikovsky

Berlioz

Debussy

Find selections for specific instruments.

Piano/Organ/Harp

Violin/Viola/Cello/Bass

Flute/Oboe/Clarinet/Bassoon

French Horn/Trumpet/Trombone/Tuba

Snare/Bass Drum/Bells/Timpani/Marimba

Voice

Find Music in a wide variety of styles.

Renaissance/Baroque/Classical/Romantic

Neo-Classical/Modern/Popular/Jazz

Contemporary, Popular





Today, we listened to selections from
“The Carnival of the Animals”
by Camille Saint-Saens.

We heard the March of the Royal Lions,
The Aviary, Personages with Long Ears, and
The Elephant.

Make a specific time each week for
family listening.

There will come a time when the
children in the family can make the
selection and lead the discussion.

Encourage and enjoy their leadership!

Encouraging everyone to write
reflections using musical terminology is
a future step in the process.



Help the family to develop a listening library with a wide variety of musical styles.

Be daring and introduce new things to the family.

Conduct some research on the selections you present.

Consider listening to a piece a second time following discussion to validate what they heard and to allow them to discover, with the help of the discussion, things they may have missed the first time.

It is also interesting to listen to two different versions of the same piece.

Most importantly, hear music **LIVE**. Go to concerts and hear it in real time. And discuss it afterwards.

HAVE MANY HAPPY ADVENTURES IN FAMILY LISTENING, ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION!