Currently, there are 126 members of the Danish Association of Music Therapists. Thirty of these members are working with children with developmental disabilities and disorders. Of these thirty, half are working with children under the age of 5.

**Background Information**
The Master’s program at Aalborg University is where most music therapists are educated in Denmark. One semester of the training program focuses on children and adults with developmental disabilities including research and research methods applied. The Master’s program was established in 1982 and the Doctoral program in 1995. Still, music therapy is not widely recognized in Denmark and there is no possibility of becoming either certified or registered as a music therapist. However, music therapists are employed by the state and counties. Aalborg University and the Danish Association of Music Therapists are currently working on establishing official recognition from the Danish government.

**Common Approaches**
Music therapists provide services to young children in a variety of clinical settings including child development services, special needs daycare centers, and preschools. A smaller number of music therapists have temporary contracts with family care centers, refugee centers, rehabilitation centers, and hospital units. Early childhood music therapy is a developing field and not yet fully established within the Danish healthcare system.

Early childhood music therapy interventions include assessment of the needs of the child, development of social, emotional, physical and cognitive competences, educational and emotional support to parents, and building healthy parent-child relationships. Music therapists often work in multidisciplinary teams in collaboration with physical therapists, occupational therapists, psychologists, pediatricians, psychiatrists, and speech language pathologists to find the best possible treatment option for the individual child. Some music therapists are employed in permanent positions by the state and counties while others are employed on a temporary basis through funding for research projects. It is also common for music therapists to have private contracts with various health agencies and/or individual families.
At the 5-year Master’s program at Aalborg University, students study an eclectic approach with an emphasis on psychotherapeutic training inspired by Julien Alvin, Mary Priestley, Nordoff and Robbins, and Carl Orff for early childhood practice. Improvisational techniques and child/therapist led activities are considered essential for work with children with developmental disabilities.

Imitating, mirroring, matching, and variations of these are seen as vital for the young child’s development of communicational skills. Within other areas of early childhood, music therapists also use gestural, familiar and improvised songs, turn-taking activities, and different kinds of receptive interventions.

Prominent Publications


About the Author

Stine Lindahl Jacobsen finished her Ph.D. in 2012. Her clinical area focuses on children and families at risk. Jacobsen teaches in the Masters program of Music Therapy, Aalborg University and is also a board member of the Danish Association of Music Therapists.

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