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Family as a space for recognising and developing children’s musical talents

Rodzina jako przestrzeń rozpoznawania i rozwijania uzdolnień muzycznych dzieci

Abstract

Introduction. As the child’s basic environment, the family fulfills many functions that focus on the comprehensive development of its younger members. In the first years of a child’s life, parents can already notice the first signs of their child’s musical talents, which remain in the stage of development until the age of nine. Then they undergo changes that depend on the internal potential of the child and the influences of the surrounding environment. At a later age, talents stabilize and are no longer influenced by the environment. Older children learn based on the established potential of musical ability.

Aim. The aim of the article is to show the role of the family environment in the initial diagnosis and development of children’s musical abilities. Based on surveys conducted among parents of preschool and early school-age children, the most common ways parents understand the concept of musical abilities were established. Moreover, the importance parents attribute to their role in recognizing and developing them was also shown. The research presented in the article attempts to answer the questions: Do the surveyed parents recognise their child’s musical abilities? If so, then what elements of

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musical abilities are mentioned most often? Do parents assess their role in recognizing children's musical talents, and, if so, how? Are parents taking any actions to support and develop their children's musical talents?

Methods and materials. The research conducted for the purpose of this article was of a preliminary, quantitative nature. The diagnostic survey method was used. The survey research technique was applied, and the research tool was an original survey questionnaire containing closed-ended and semi-open-ended questions.

Results. The article presents the results of the conducted research exploration. It shows the trends that emerged from the quantitative analysis of answers, provided by parents, to the survey questions. This allowed us to determine what meaning parents give to the concept of a child's musical abilities, what methods they use to recognize them, and what methods they use to support their development.

Conclusion. Based on the research, it can be concluded that parents most often relate the meaning of the concept of musical abilities to several selected elements of these abilities. All respondents know that early recognition of a child's musical abilities facilitates the full use of their developmental potential. They often support their children's musical abilities by signing them up for additional, extracurricular music classes and practicing music together. Furthermore, parents expect support in the process of developing their children's musical talents.

Keywords: family, child, musical abilities, development support, education.

Abstrakt

Wprowadzenie. Rodzina jako podstawowe środowisko dziecka spełnia wiele funkcji, które koncentrują się na wszechstronnym rozwoju młodszych jej członków. Już w pierwszych latach życia dziecka rodzice mogą dostrzec przejawy jego uzdolnień muzycznych, które pozostają w stadium rozwoju do dziewiątego roku życia. Wówczas podlegają zmianom, które zależą od wewnętrznego potencjału dziecka i wpływów jego środowiska. W późniejszym wieku uzdolnienia stabilizują się i odtąd oddziaływanie środowiska nie ma już na nie wpływu. Starsze dzieci uczą się w oparciu o ustabilizowany potencjał zdolności muzycznych.

Cel. Celem artykułu było ukazanie roli środowiska rodzinnego we wstępnej diagnozie i rozwijaniu zdolności muzycznych dzieci. Na podstawie przeprowadzonych badań ankietowych wśród rodziców dzieci w wieku przedszkolnym i wczesnoszkolnym ustalono zarysowujące się sposoby rozumienia przez rodziców pojęcia zdolności muzycznych oraz ukazano znaczenie, jakie przypisują swojej roli w ich rozpoznawaniu i rozwijaniu. Badania zaprezentowane w artykule są próbą udzielenia odpowiedzi na pytania: Czy i jakie elementy zdolności muzycznych wymieniane są najczęściej przez badanych rodziców jako wskaźniki zdolności muzycznych dziecka? Czy i w jaki sposób rodzice oceniają swoją rolę w rozpoznawaniu uzdolnień muzycznych dzieci? Czy i jakie działania ukierunkowane na wspieranie i rozwijanie uzdolnień muzycznych dzieci są podejmowane przez rodziców?

Metody i materiały. Badania przeprowadzone na potrzeby niniejszego artykułu miały charakter przyczynkowy, wstępny o charakterze ilościowym. Zastosowano metodę sondażu diagnostycznego. Wykorzystano technikę badań ankietowych, a narzędziem badawczym był autorski kwestionariusz ankiety zawierający pytania, które miały charakter zamknięty i półotwarty.

Wyniki. Artykuł prezentuje wyniki prowadzonej eksploracji badawczej. Przedstawia tendencje, jakie zarysowały się w wyniku przeprowadzonej analizy ilościowej odpowiedzi

udzielonych przez rodziców na sformułowane pytania ankietowe. Pozwoliło to ustalić, jakie znaczenie nadają rodzice pojęciu *zdolności muzyczne dziecka*, jakie stosują sposoby rozpoznawania i metody wspierania ich rozwoju.

Wnioski. Na podstawie przeprowadzonych badań można stwierdzić, że rodzice odnoszą znaczenie pojęcia *zdolności muzyczne* najczęściej do kilku wybranych elementów tychże zdolności wymienianych w literaturze przedmiotu. Wszyscy badani mają świadomość, że wczesne rozpoznanie zdolności muzycznych dziecka sprzyja pełnemu wykorzystaniu jego potencjału rozwojowego. Najczęściej wspierają zdolności muzyczne swoich dzieci poprzez zapisywanie dziecka na dodatkowe, pozaszkolne zajęcia muzyczne oraz wspólne uprawianie muzyki. Rodzice najczęściej oczekują wsparcia ze strony szkoły i specjalistów w procesie rozwijania uzdolnień muzycznych dzieci.

Słowa kluczowe: rodzina, dziecko, zdolności muzyczne, wspieranie rozwoju, edukacja.

Introduction

The family is the oldest social group, a natural and irreplaceable part of the social structure and is culturally determined. Contemporary family researchers encounter difficulties in formulating an unambiguous definition of the family. This is primarily due to the diversity of forms of family life, influenced by changes in the post-modern world, such as divorce, single parenting, reversal of the roles of husband and wife, as well as functioning foster or blended families. The variability of the functions performed by the family is also becoming an obstacle to a unified definition of the family, which is why the author of this paper has decided to cite a few of them. The first two define the family from a psychological point of view. According to Maria Ziemska, the family is: “a small natural social group in which the central roles are those of mother and father, constituting a relatively permanent whole, subject to dynamic transformations, based on established social traditions and newly created customs of its own” (Ziemska, 1975, p. 36). On the other hand, Józef Rembowski defines the family as “a small and at the same time primordial group with a peculiar organisation and a specific arrangement of roles between individual members, bound by mutual moral responsibility, aware of their own distinctiveness, having their own traditions and habits, united by love and accepting each other” (Rembowski, 1972 p. 83). A pedagogical approach in defining this concept is adopted by Wincenty Okoń, who writes that the family is: “a small social group consisting of parents, their children and relatives; parents are linked by the marital bond, parents with children by the parental bond, which is the basis of family upbringing, as well as by the formal bond defining the duties of parents and children towards each other” (Okoń, 2007, p. 355). The author of the last definition cited is Halina Zgółkowa, who defines the family as: “a social group consisting of

spouses and their children; also: persons who are related by consanguinity, affinity; relatives, affinities; a group of people related to each other, descended from a single male ancestor” (Zgólkowa, 2002, pp. 142–143).

The family as an institution has certain obligations towards its members. Teresa Rostowska distinguished five basic functions performed by the family: procreative, economic, caring and upbringing, educational and socialising, emotional and expressive. According to the scholar, some of these functions are permanent (e.g. procreative), while others are variable, depending on social, political, personal factors, among others (Rostowska, 2000, p. 22). On the other hand, Antonina Gurycka delineates the characteristics of the family that function in all environments of child development. The author writes that the family:

- Meets the child’s basic biological and psychological needs, such as the need for security, dependence, love. It shapes cognitive, emotional and social needs.
- It participates in the transmission of the cultural heritage of society.
- It provides behavioural patterns and personal models in everyday life situations.
- Communicates social values and norms.
- It is the child’s area of socialisation.
- It provides a ground for experience on which the child tries out his or her strengths and abilities, has support and role models in the parents, and can always count on their help and support (Gurycka, 1989, p. 33).

As a child’s primary environment, the family fulfils many functions that focus on the all-round development of its younger members. It is worth emphasising that in the early period of a child’s development, the family environment is often the only group that influences and affects the child directly. Marcin Łączek notes that:

The influence of the family begins very early, when the child’s psyche is characterised by great plasticity. It is precisely because of the possibility of surrounding the child with individual care that the family environment is considered the best natural environment for human development (Łączek, 2010).

Parents, according to Ewa Kumik, are the first caregivers, teachers and educators, and each family has its own individual, distinctive style, way of intra-family life (Kumik, 2015). The child’s family is the first and natural environment to arouse and support the activation of the child’s potential musical abilities and the place of the child’s first musical experiences (Suświłło, 2001). What the child learns during the first five years of life gives him the foundation for his further education. If the

family environment is a musically rich environment for the child, an infant at the age of six months will display a higher level of musical aptitude than a child who is not provided with such an environment until he or she is eighteen months old. According to Edwin Elias Gordon, the effect of a musically rich environment on musical aptitude diminishes over time, and the importance of an early, musically rich environment cannot be overstated (Gordon, 1997, p. 14). It is therefore worth making parents aware of the important role they play in their offspring's musical development, as they are often unaware of their huge importance in supporting their child's development from birth. Sometimes they do not take any action that could contribute to optimising the development of their offspring's musical abilities. This is emphasised by Beata Bonna, who writes: "the human brain in terms of the regularity of the development of musical abilities does not know the concept of it too early. Therefore, any activities initiated in this area already in infancy create excellent conditions for their development" (Bonna, 2008). It is the family that shapes all the child's musical qualities and dispositions, which will determine his or her future fate (Czapow, 1968).

The aim of this article is to show the role of parents in the initial diagnosis and development of children's musical abilities. On the basis of a survey of parents of pre-school and early school-age children, the dominant ways in which parents understand the concept of *musical ability* are presented and the importance they attribute to their role in recognising and developing it is shown.

Around the concept of *musical ability*

In defining the notion of *musical aptitude*, a diversity of scientific approaches is apparent, as emphasised by Ewa Zwolińska, who writes: "although it is generally believed nowadays that musical aptitude is a complex phenomenon, researchers' opinions are divided as to the degree of this complexity" (Zwolińska, 1997, p. 63). According to Barbara Kamińska, the development of scientific theories related to the notion of musical aptitude contributed to the development of many tests in the 1940s. These tests did not explain the nature of the phenomenon in question, but contributed to the development of several theories. The first of these, called the general factor theory, was represented by Herbert Daniel Wing and Rosamund Shuter. They proclaimed that at the core of musical aptitude is one's general ability to perceive and evaluate music, which H. D. Wing called musical intelligence. The second theory, the multifactorial theory, which was represented by Richard Bentley and James Mainwaring, assumed that musical aptitude consists of a number of independent specifically musical abilities. The third was called the group factor theory,

and its premise was that musical aptitude consists of certain independent group factors. The representative of this vision was Lars Gunnar Holmström. Raleigh Drake, on the other hand, distinguished elementary abilities in musical aptitude in integrative factor theory. He argued that they are not equivalent, and proved that some of them have an overarching character, integrating the other factors like musical memory and a sense of rhythm (Kamińska, 2002).

Paweł Trzos also finds it interesting to look at the theory of musical ability of the representative of the Russian school of music psychology, Boris Tjeplov, which emphasises the significant role of a person's own activity in the development of musical ability and denies the claim of innate ability. According to B. Tjeplov, anatomical and physiological predispositions are innate, to which he attributes basic features of the central nervous system, such as strength, mobility and balance of nervous processes. These, according to the scholar, are the basis for the development of musical abilities (Trzos, 2009). According to B. Tjeplov an important role is played by musicality, which he perceives as the ability to react emotionally to music, enabling a subtle perception of it. He designates three fundamental musical abilities:

- 1) Tonal sense – the ability to distinguish the tonality of the sounds that make up a melody. It is directly related to the ability to recognise melody and intonational sensitivity. The author emphasised that: “The tonal sense, together with the sense of rhythm, forms the basis of emotional sensitivity to music” (Tjeplov, 1952, pp. 336–337).
- 2) Auditory imagery ability refers to the use of auditory imagery reflecting pitch and rhythmic movement of sounds, which enables melodies to be played by ear.
- 3) Sense of musical rhythm – the ability to experience musical phenomena in an active and motor way and to feel rhythmic structures and reproduce them correctly (Tjeplov, 1952).

Musical hearing is, according to B. Tjeplov, a synergy of tonal sense and auditory imagination ability, and the basis of musical sensitivity is tonal sense and sense of musical rhythm.

Among the many approaches and theories of musical aptitude, it is worth citing Maria Manturzevska's functionalist theory, which leans towards a dynamic-interactionist model. In the model described, sensory, intellectual, emotional-motivational and kinesthetic-motor components of giftedness interact with each other. The author gives them a dynamic character, undergoing changes that are difficult to predict in the process of an individual's development, and draws attention to other psychological features of a given person, their current life situa-

tion and environmental and biographical conditions (Kaminska, 2002). She also emphasises that individual musical abilities materialise at sensory perceptual, conceptual, executive and personality levels of cognitive organisation (Manturzevska, Kotarska, Miklaszewski, Miklaszewski, 1990). He defines them as follows: “musical abilities are relatively permanent properties that condition the effectiveness and quality of musical performance and individual differences in this field, as they appear to us in colloquial observation” (Manturzevska et al., 1990, p. 57). The scholar assumes that the components of musical aptitude are specialised auditory musical abilities, such as pitch hearing, both tonal and melodic, harmonic, rhythmic, musical memory, as well as performance abilities (Manturzevska et al., 1990).

M. Manturzevska's concept discussed above, as well as the considerations of E. E. Gordon and Heiner Gembris, are grounded in phenomenological and psychometric thinking (Kamińska, 2002). H. Gembris's considerations focus on the historical and cultural contexts of the variability of the content of the concept of musical aptitude. According to the scholar, the concept of musicality depends on the language of music and the aesthetic assumptions adopted in a particular era or culture (Kamińska, 2002).

Susan Hallam and Vanessa Prince (2003) link the notion of musical ability to a sense of rhythm, the ability to understand and interpret music, the ability to express thoughts and feelings through music, the ability to communicate through sound, the motivation to come into contact with music and a personal commitment to it. Less frequently, they relate the concept discussed to the ability to compose and improvise, the ability to read music and the understanding of musical concepts and structures.

In E. E. Gordon's view, the key to the concept of musical ability is the notion of audiation, which the scholar understands as musical thinking: “[...] audiation is to music what thinking is to speech” (Gordon, 1995, p. 32). On the other hand, E. Zwolińska emphasises that “[...] audiation abilities have an individual character, as they are closely related to and dependent on the level of musical aptitude” (Zwolińska, 1997, p. 65). According to E. E. Gordon, musical aptitude is a person's potential, his or her inner abilities to learn music. He emphasises the role of the early influence of the musical environment on their development. He also defines the critical period for the development of these abilities and divides a child's musical abilities into developing and stabilised:

- Developing abilities – tonal and rhythmic ability.
- Stabilised abilities – sense of melody, harmony, tempo, metre, phrasing, style and balance (Jordan–Szymanska, 1997).

According to E. E. Gordon, until around the age of nine a child's musical abilities remain in a developmental stage, subject to constant change, rising and falling, depending on his or her inner potential and the influences of the surrounding environment (Gordon, 2003). At a later age, talents stabilise and are no longer influenced by environmental influences. Older children learn on the basis of stabilised giftedness potential, which means that if the developing giftedness is formed at a low level, children have great difficulty in learning very complex musical skills (Kaminska, 2002).

Although Gordon's assumptions related to the critical age of development of musical ability have not been confirmed by other scholars, childhood is undeniably an important period in human musical development. Japanese music educator Shin-ichi Suzuki, founder of the Talent Training Institute, wrote:

No bird is born a good or bad singer. If a chick has a good teacher, it will learn to make sounds as beautifully as it does. If it encounters such a teacher only as an adult bird, raised by wild parents, it will not succeed – this has been proven more than once. This is consistent with the natural realisation of life's potential (Suzuki, 2010, p. 17).

Research conducted (Turska, 2006; Łukasiewicz–Wieleba, 2018; Subotnik, Olszewski–Kubilius, Worrell, 2011) shows that parents are able to point to a number of areas in which they believe children show exceptional potential, including music. In particular, parents perceive their children's positive excitement about a particular area, their high degree of concentration on these activities, their high level of commitment and their willingness to devote time to activities in the chosen area. Parents are good observers of their children's interests and passions, their opinions and assessments in this area are accurate and can be helpful to teachers. Another important indicator of their child's abilities is their objective achievements, mainly results in competitions. In addition, parents are careful observers of how the child is doing at school and notice those factors that could potentially be a manifestation of aptitude, including musical aptitude.

Already in the first years of a child's life, parents can notice signs of musical talent, e.g. the child's willing and correct reproduction of a musical sequence with body movements, coordinated dancing to the rhythm of the music, clear singing, willing playing of instruments, motor and instrumental improvisation, as well as the child's willingness to listen to music. Recognising a child's ability to interact with music is the first step in diagnosing their musical talents. The next step is a professional diagnosis, which can be carried out by trained musicians, and it is therefore worthwhile going with the child to a music school or music centre, for example,

to seek professional advice. An important factor in the development of children's musical abilities is a supportive environment in the family. Joanna Łukasiewicz-Wieleba (2018, pp. 336–337) lists the following actions taken by parents aimed at supporting the development of children's abilities:

- fostering a child's love of a particular area, for example music;
- spending time together, for example making music together;
- encouraging and expressing approval when a child is involved in a particular area, such as music;
- ensuring access to the necessary aids, instruments, etc;
- providing a space in the home to pursue passions and develop abilities (e.g. a music activity station) and enhancing children's creativity;
- taking your child to places of interest, allowing them to attend concerts, etc;
- strengthening the child's psychosocial qualities, including motivation, coping with winning and failure and competition and public performance, etc;
- use of external resources: school, extra-curricular activities, school music, community centres and others.

However, taking such measures to support the development of musical abilities by parents is possible when they receive professional help in diagnosing their children's abilities.

Self-study procedure

The aim of the causal research was to establish the ways in which parents of pre-school and early school-aged children understand the concept of *musical ability* and to investigate what role parents ascribe to themselves in recognising and developing their children's musical talents. In the course of the research, conducted using the diagnostic survey method, answers were sought to the following research problems:

- Do parents most often identify the term *musical ability* in their child, and with which components?
- What activities do parents declare in relation to supporting and developing their children's musical talents, if any?
- What is parents' self-assessment of their children's ability to recognise musical talents?
- Do parents, in the declarative layer, recognise their children's musical talents, and to what extent?
- What activities do parents declare in terms of diagnosing their child's musical talents, if any?

- How would parents rate the preschool/school establishment's assistance in identifying and developing their children's musical talents?

A questionnaire survey technique was used as a part of the diagnostic survey method. The study involved 124 randomly selected parents of pre-school and early school-age children, including 93 mothers and 31 fathers. In the study group, six parents declared that they had a musical education, two of them higher education and the others secondary education. Several parents (13) had also previously participated in additional extracurricular musical activities related to playing an instrument. The survey questionnaires were completed directly in a stationary form in the presence of the researcher in kindergartens and schools in Bielsko-Biała and Czechowice-Dziedzice. The questions included in the survey questionnaire were closed and semi-open with conjunctive and disjunctive cafeteria. The answer cafeterias were developed on the basis of the available literature, cited in the theoretical introduction to the article and in the introduction to the interpretation of the answers obtained from the parents. Due to the preliminary nature of the study and the associated small number of respondents, data are presented in the form of numerical summaries.

Findings

In order to determine what meaning parents give to the concept of *their child's musical ability*, they were asked to answer a semi-open survey question with a conjunctive cafeteria. In the proposed response categories, established on the basis of the literature and previous research on children's musical ability (Teplow, 1952; Manturzevska et al, 1990; Jordan-Szymanska, 1997; Hallam, Prince, 2003), the option of *other was* also included in order not to impose all possible answers in advance.

In interpreting the concept of *a child's musical ability*, parents most often pointed to a few selected elements as components of musical ability.

Table 1
Content elements of the concept of musical ability as assessed by the parents surveyed

Response category	Number of indications	% (N=124)
Musical hearing (ability to reproduce melodic lines faithfully)	36	29
Sense of rhythm	75	60,5
Agogic sensitivity (to the tempo of the music)	22	17,7
Dynamic sensitivity	13	10,5
Instrumental capacities	82	66,1
Vocal abilities	91	73,4
Emotional sensitivity of perceived music	37	29,8
Musical memory	49	39,5

Source: Own research (multiple choice question).

The ways in which parents define musical ability are characterised by the variety of components that appeared in the respondents' statements. Most often, respondents indicated two to three components of musical ability. In the opinion of the most numerous group of respondents (91 persons, i.e. 73.4%), the indicator of a child's musical abilities is vocal abilities, which are expressed by frequent singing of songs, repeating songs heard, inventing songs, and, with regard to performance, playing them cleanly and faithfully (36 persons, i.e. 29%). This is related to the children's musical hearing, to which some respondents (75 persons, i.e. 60.5%) link a sense of rhythm, understood as the children's movement according to the rhythm of music and the reproduction of rhythmic patterns. According to the respondents, a child's possession of musical abilities is also evidenced by musical memory (faithful reproduction of melodic lines, rhythmic reproduction of musical pieces). An indicator of the child's musical ability is also, in the opinion of the parents (82 persons, i.e. 66.1%), the ability to play musical instruments.

The survey shows that the vast majority of respondents (111 people, i.e. 89.5%) acknowledge that it is difficult for parents to recognise their children's musical talents. To substantiate this answer, only a part of the respondents indicated a lack of musical education and competence in this area (32 persons, i.e. 25.8%). Only parents with musical education and those who used to learn to play an instrument

rated positively their ability to diagnose their children's musical abilities. The majority of respondents (98 persons, i.e. 79%) stated that they definitely did not have such skills. A few respondents (7 persons, i.e. 5.6%) did not give a clear answer. The cited results indicate that parents rate their ability to diagnose their children's musical talents poorly.

In response to the question "Do you think your child has musical talents?" as many as 47 people (i.e. 37.9%) answered that they did not know or had no opinion on the subject. Only 12 parents (i.e. 9.7%) with a musical background or who had attended music classes in the past declared that their children definitely had musical talents, while 20 (i.e. 16.1%) answered rather yes. In contrast, 37 parents (i.e. 29.8%) responded that their children were rather not musically talented.

The fifth question in the survey questionnaire was a closed question with a conjunctive cafeteria. It concerned the ways in which parents diagnose their child's musical talents. As in question one, the answer cafeteria was established on the basis of a literature analysis (Turska, 2006; Łukasiewicz-Wieleba, 2018; Subotnik et al., 2011). The respondents' statements regarding the support and development of children's musical talents took into account both their self-efficacy in this process and the need to consult their insights with teachers or specialists – musicians.

Table 2
Ways for parents to recognise children's musical abilities

Response categories	Number of indications	% (N=124)
Observation of children's musical activities	105	84,7
Guided by the opinion of the nursery/ school teacher	111	89,5
Consulting their findings with specialists, e.g. at a music school, community centre, etc.	32	25,8
Motivation of the child to learn to play an instrument (reporting the need by the child)	71	57,2
Independent frequent involvement of the child in musical activities (dancing, singing, listening to music, playing an instrument)	39	31,4

Source: Own research (multiple choice question).

Parents recognise their children's musical talents mainly by observing their children's musical activities in terms of the components of musical talents mentioned earlier, both in the family environment and during the kindergarten and school celebrations to which they are invited (105 persons, i.e. 84.7%). Some of the respondents consider the kindergarten group or the school class as a comparative background for assessing their child's musical aptitude. For a significant proportion of respondents (71 people, i.e. 57.2%), the most prominent indicator of a child's musical ability is the motivation and ability to play an instrument and the accompanying perseverance needed to master this skill. Less than 1/3 of the respondents (39 persons, i.e. 31.4%) emphasised in their statements the attentiveness of the parents to the child's spontaneous musical activity undertaken during various daily activities and actions, e.g. during free play, helping with household chores, etc.

An important task of parents is to support their child's potential, to care for the development of their child's talents, including musical talents. In response to question six, which was a question with a semi-open conjunctive cafeteria, the parents' task was to indicate the activities they undertake in the development of their children's musical talents. The suggested answers were formulated on the basis of the classification of activities supporting children's abilities listed by J. Łukasiewicz-Wieleba (2018). In the declarative layer, parents seek teachers' support in supporting the development of their children's cognitive abilities. Hence, following the identification of musical talents, the largest group of respondents (68 persons, i.e. 54.8%) would enrol their child in additional musical activities organised outside the kindergarten or school, e.g. in a community centre or music centre.

Table 3
Ways of supporting and developing musical talents as declared by parents

Response categories	Number of indications	% (N=124)
Enrolling a child in a music school	16	12,9
Enrolling your child in extra-curricular music activities	68	54,8
Purchase of a musical instrument	31	25
Making children musical through participation in concerts, musical performances, etc.	42	33,9
Making music together	51	41,1
Private lessons	25	20,2

Source: Own research (multiple choice question).

Respondents declare (51 people, i.e. 41.1%) to undertake activities on their own in the home environment, mainly by practising music together in the form of singing songs, dances, listening to different genres of music. Some of the respondents (42 persons, i.e. 33.0%) declared concern for the musicalisation of their children in the form of joint participation in events such as concerts, musical stories for children, etc. In addition, 31 parents (i.e. 25%) declared their willingness to purchase a musical instrument when requested by the child or as suggested by the teacher, while 25% of the respondents are most likely to use or would use private lessons for musical education.

Parents mostly rated the teachers' efforts to support, recognise and develop their children's musical talents as good (50 persons or 40.3%) and very good (31 persons or 25%). Only 18 people (i.e. 14.5%) indicated a poor response and 25 people (i.e. 20.2%) had no opinion on the subject. The results therefore demonstrate parents' confidence in the competence of pre-school and early childhood education teachers in this area.

Conclusion

Reflections and explorations by music psychologists on the essence of musical abilities are ongoing, as both the definition of the concept in question and other contexts, e.g. concerning the interdependence of musical abilities with the level of intelligence, have not been resolved. The analysis of the respondents' statements on the role of the family environment in the initial diagnosis and development of children's musical abilities came out positively in the declarative layer. Parents interpreting the concept of *musical abilities*, most often pointed to a few selected elements of these abilities. All respondents were aware that early diagnosis of a child's musical abilities promotes the full realisation of the child's developmental potential. Parents most often expect the support of a music specialist in the process of developing their children's musical talents.

The declarations of the surveyed parents are not dissimilar to those described by B. Bonna in the aspect of selected factors determining the development of musical abilities of pre-school (Bonna, 2005) and early school-age children (Bonna, 2008). The scholar states that: "[...] the family is not the place that provides the right conditions for the child's musical development" (Bonna, 2008, p. 56). According to her, parents play an important role in the musical development of the child; unfortunately, they are often not aware of this role and do not take any measures that would contribute to optimising this process.

Based on the results of my own research and that of other researchers addressing the topic of musical aptitude in children, there is a need to educate parents about this issue and to try to show them the importance of the family environment and its support for the musical development of younger family members. The basis for the development of young children's musical talents is a family home filled with music, where the first diagnosis of the child's musical talents should take place, supported, if necessary, by a specialist's opinion. Musically gifted children need to be given a development perspective by, among other things, providing them with the opportunity for individual music education in music schools. The joint action of the family and school environment can make a significant contribution to the development of children's talents in the course of their education and also in their adult life.

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