

## Music Therapy Can Comfort and Soothe Premature Infants and Parents

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Specific elements of music have therapeutic qualities that may be beneficial to a growing premature infant. Recorded music has a fixed meter and decibel level, which cannot be adapted to meet the needs of a compromised infant the way live music can. According to a study in the May 2013 issue of Pediatrics, “The Effects of Music Therapy on Vital Signs, Feeding, and Sleep in Premature Infants,” (published online April 15) three different types of music therapy interventions - live ocean disc whoosh sounds, gator box rhythms, and parent's sung lullabies -- had a positive health effect on preemies. Researchers studied 272 infants in 11 hospital neonatal intensive care units (NICUs), and found that live music provided by a certified music therapist can increase a premature infant's capacity to feed, sleep, and self-regulate, whereas noise can have a negative impact on growth and development. Music therapy -- in particular, the use of live, entrained (matched, in the moment with the infant's breathing rate) breath and heart beat sounds -- as well as parent-preferred lullabies can enhance a premature infant's vitals and provide opportunities for bonding. Lullabies, especially the singing of 'songs of kin' (parent-selected -- culturally relevant songs) also eases the stress and anxiety of mothers and fathers, enhancing ease and attachment through NICU stays. Study authors determine that music therapy programs provide a valuable service to premature infants in the NICU. Parents should be encouraged to sing to their babies, providing a familiar and comforting voice, with a familiar theme, to help develop the emotional bond between the premature infant and parent. - See more at: <https://www.aap.org/en-us/about-the-aap/aap-press-room/Pages/Music-Therapy-Can-Comfort-and-Soothe-Premature-Infants-and-Parents.aspx#sthash.M908mHJp.dpuf>

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The American Academy of Pediatrics is an organization of 60,000 primary care pediatricians, pediatric medical subspecialists and pediatric surgical specialists dedicated to the health, safety and well-being of infants, children, adolescents and young adults. For more information, visit [www.aap.org](http://www.aap.org). - See more at: <https://www.aap.org/en-us/about-the-aap/aap-press-room/Pages/Music-Therapy-Can-Comfort-and-Soothe-Premature-Infants-and-Parents.aspx#sthash.M908mHJp.dpuf>

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