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Empowering differently abled children through music education: A study of the Savika Foundation initiative

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Background: The Savika Foundation is dedicated to fostering inclusivity and empowerment for differently abled children, particularly those with autism, Downs syndrome, and other developmental challenges, through structured music education. This study examined the role of music as a therapeutic and developmental tool, focusing on its impact on cognitive, emotional, and social growth.

Method: A mixed-method approach was utilized, involving 28 children aged 6–13 with autism spectrum disorder, Downs syndrome, and developmental delays. Weekly structured music sessions included singing, rhythm-based exercises, movement, and instrumental play. Data collection included pre- and post-intervention assessments using adapted behavioral checklists, engagement scales, and caregiver interviews. Quantitative results were statistically analyzed using paired t-tests to measure developmental change.

Results: Quantitative analysis revealed statistically significant improvements in several developmental domains. For instance, attention span scores increased by an average of 32% ($P < 0.01$), and memory retention improved by 27% ($P < 0.05$). Non-verbal children showed a 40% increase in responsive gestures to musical prompts. Emotional regulation improved in 75% of participants, with caregivers reporting reduced tantrums and anxiety. Group sessions promoted peer interaction, and 68% of children were noted to initiate or respond to social cues during music-based activities up from 39% at baseline.

Conclusion: The findings underscore the transformative potential of music education in special needs interventions. Structured music sessions not only support emotional and cognitive growth but also enhance social integration. This study advocates for incorporating music therapy into inclusive education policy and training educators in music-based approaches. Further longitudinal studies are recommended to evaluate sustained developmental impact and program scalability.

Keywords: Music education, autism, differently abled children, emotional regulation, inclusive learning, cognitive development.