

Music Therapy Assessment Request for Student on an IEP

Date: _____

Attention: _____

This form is a request for a **music therapy assessment** conducted by a board-certified music therapist to support the educational goals of _____.

Music therapy is a related service when determined necessary to ensure a free and appropriate education for students with disabilities under the IDEA (see p3).

_____ shows improved motivation and responsiveness when music is present, which I think would translate to supporting their IEP goals.

Music has been observed to have a **positive effect** in the following areas:

Motivation to complete tasks

Attention/focus

Social engagement with peers

Verbal communication

Nonverbal communication

Emotional regulation

Ability to learn or retain information

Fine motor planning and execution

Gross motor planning and execution

Other _____

Based on these observations, I believe music therapy would benefit _____ in progress towards the following objectives (*list IEP goals*):

Thank you for your consideration. Please contact Earthtones NW directly for additional information about music therapy and this assessment: (503) 284-6794 | Info@Earthtonesnw.com

Sincerely,

Name: _____

Date: _____

Phone #: _____

Email address: _____

Music Therapy As a Related Service FAQ

What is music therapy?

Music therapy is a nationally recognized health profession in which a board-certified music therapist supports a client's goals through music and therapeutic relationship. School-based music therapists design and tailor unique music experiences to support students in reaching their socioemotional, communication, cognitive, physical, or academic goals.

What are music therapists' training and qualifications?

Music therapists complete a bachelor's degree in music therapy followed by a 1200-hour clinical internship and national board-certification exam. Music therapists are recognized by state licensure boards in some states.

Can another professional use music instead?

Other professionals should certainly incorporate music if they believe it would support the student's progress. However, they are not trained music therapists and cannot conduct music therapy assessments and are not trained thoroughly in how music impacts physiology, neurology, behavior, motivation, and emotions.

What is the music therapy assessment process for IEP/IFSPs?

1. A member of the IEP/IFSP team requests a music therapy assessment for the student.
2. A team member reaches out to a music therapist to complete an assessment. Note that this must be conducted by a board-certified music therapist and not another professional.
3. The music therapist completes an assessment, which may include observations, interviews, and music therapy sessions.
4. The music therapist compiles their findings and meets with the team to share findings.
5. The team member reviews recommendations and decides whether or not music therapy is deemed necessary for the student's right to a free and appropriate education.
6. If deemed necessary, the service is written into the IEP/IFSP and music therapy sessions will begin.
7. If deemed unnecessary, the family can pursue private music therapy sessions outside of the school, as often music therapy is still beneficial.

What types of services do music therapists provide in schools?

Music therapy can take place in a variety of formats, depending upon the student's goals:

- 15-90 minute sessions
- Individual sessions
- Peer dyads
- Small or large group
- Co-treatment sessions with PT, OT, SLP, music education, SED, or general education
- Consultation with team members in how to best incorporate music into their work

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act - Music Therapy as a Related Service

The [Individuals with Disabilities Education Act](#) guarantees a “free and appropriate education” to students with disabilities. Students have a right to learn in the least restrictive environment and are entitled to any related services deemed “required” and “necessary” to meet their educational objectives. This section will focus on a general overview of IDEA.

Section 300.34 of the IDEA defines related services as “...developmental, corrective, and other supportive services as are required to assist a child with a disability to benefit from special education...” The definition does not explicitly include music therapy, leading each state and school district to interpret the law differently. Thousands of people across the country commented on the IDEA, noting that music therapy, art therapy, and dance therapy were not listed, despite their significance in helping students achieve educational goals. The following is an excerpt of the writers’ response in [Federal Register vol. 71, no. 156 in August 2006](#):

“related services include other supportive services that are required to assist a child with a disability to benefit from special education...the list of services in Sec. 300.34 is not exhaustive and may include other developmental, corrective, or supportive services if they are required to assist a child with a disability from special education.... each child’s IEP Team...determines the instruction and services that are needed for an individual child to receive FAPE [free appropriate public education]. In all cases concerning related services, the IEP Team’s determination about appropriate services must be reflected in the child’s IEP, and those listed services must be provided in accordance with the IEP at public expense and at no cost to the parents.”

This response clarifies that the list is not exhaustive and **music therapy does qualify as a related service when necessary for a child’s education**. Despite this clarification, disputes on the state level continued, leading the authors to further address it in a [Q&A published in September 2011](#). In response to a question asking if “artistic and cultural services, such as music therapy” qualify as related services, they responded with:

“Related services can include artistic and cultural services that are therapeutic in nature...the list of related services in the IDEA...is not exhaustive and may include other developmental, corrective, or supportive services (such as artistic and cultural programs, art, music, and dance therapy), if they are required to assist a child with a disability to benefit from special education in order for the child to receive FAPE...If the child’s IEP specifies that an artistic or cultural service such as music therapy is a related service for the child, that related service must be provided at public expense and at no cost to the parents.”

In summary, **music therapy qualifies as a related service when determined by the IEP team to be necessary for a child to receive a free and appropriate education.** When listed on the IEP, music therapy must be provided at no cost to the family. The law is clear: children have a right to a music therapy assessment to determine whether it is required to meet their educational objectives under the IDEA.