



# Vocal babies

**Course notes V1**



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# AIMS OF COURSE

## Vocal Babies Training aims to:

- ✓ Pass on the learning, experience and ethos of the Vocal Babies model to parents / carers and early years workers.
- ✓ Encourage parents / carers and early years workers to feel more comfortable using singing, music and Makaton signing to engage with their babies.
- ✓ Inspire individuals and organisations to set up a version of Vocal Babies in their own settings and communities.
- ✓ Advocate the emotional, social and physical benefits of using music, singing and signing with babies.



## The course will cover:

- ☐ Song Repertoire
- ☐ Singing with confidence
- ☐ Engagement Skills
- ☐ Interactions with Puppets
- ☐ Song Writing
- ☐ How to plan a session / course
- ☐ The health benefits of singing with babies
- ☐ Safeguarding & boundaries
- ☐ Basic Makaton training



# THE BACKGROUND

Vocal Babies is a singing workshop aimed at babies aged 3-24 months and their parents/carers. It is a fun workshop designed to help babies develop listening, co-ordination and social skills through action songs, rhymes, turn taking, sharing and making music together. Basic Makaton signs are included to aid a baby's communication and support their early language development.

Vocal Babies began in the spring of 2008. Victoria Fagg and Jo Kreeger came up with the idea after seeing a gap with their own babies. They really wanted a baby group that had a specific focal point but was still a place to meet and make friends with other parents/carers of similar aged babies. Having attended Sing and Sign sessions, they saw the benefits of singing and signing with their own children and set about creating Vocal Babies.

Victoria had studied music at University and was running the Vocal Expressions workshops at Pie Factory Music aimed at 3-18 years. Jo had studied Early Years and worked with the Junior Expressions group. This, together with hands on 'mum' experiences and frustrations, babies singing training and the Makaton tutor qualification, they were equipped to begin this journey of learning, fun, friendships and puppets!

The essence of Vocal Babies is a fun, personable and relaxed space. We really aim to see the babies, notice their interactions, encourage and equip parents and promote new friendships. We have various 'tools' to do this including original, fun and topical songs, puppets and props, Makaton signs, instruments and song sheets.

As workshop leaders we intend to be real, sharing life experiences without judgement – we feel the 20 minutes or so of social time at the end of each session is essential for participants to relax, interact and build new friendships / gain support. We are baby led; using our instincts to adapt the session where needed and we hope to promote an 'all learning' environment – as even the leaders learn something new most weeks. The workshops are free which help to make it accessible to everyone.

Since the establishment of Vocal Babies we have varied the delivery of the sessions from on-going term time sessions at Pie Factory HQ (averaging 40 weeks per year) to 8-week courses held at various venues such as Children's Centres. The benefits of long-term sessions are more evident learning outcomes and development opportunities for babies and primary carers. There are one particular group of mums who attended in the early days that still socialise and even go on holiday together. The benefits of delivering 8-week courses in the community are that more people are able to access the sessions and we've had to distil the essence of Vocal Babies to make it work over a shorter time period.

The sessions have always been popular, often over-subscribed and we've see parents return with new siblings.

Here are some of the personal, social and emotional development areas that are taken into consideration when planning the Vocal Babies programme:

Sharing, turn taking, social interaction, bonding, friendships, increased confidence/self esteem, self control, motor skills, choice making, imagination development, spacial awareness, listening, good manners, self awareness, personal skills, sensory, emotional development.

Here are some of the learning outcomes that regular singing of the songs can support:

Colour recognition, number familiarity, alphabet familiarity, Makaton signing, environmental awareness, family dynamics, basic musical skills, word comprehension, directions, name recognition, early language development.

Part of the idea behind this project is that Vocal Babies becomes sustainable beyond us as an organisation. We want to share our learning and impart all that we can to ensure that more parents and carers have the opportunity to enjoy and use the Vocal Babies model in the future.



# HEALTH BENEFITS OF SINGING WITH BABIES

There are many benefits from singing and it's good to know what they are so that you can advocate it and encourage parents and carers to use it as a tool in their baby's development.

Professor Graham Welch, Chair of Music Education at the Institute of Education (University College London), explains how singing can help people of all ages:

“

*Singing is one of the most positive forms of human activity; and it supports our physical, mental and social health. Not only is it highly enjoyable, it also helps us to learn more about the world around us, to communicate better and appreciate the complexity of music*

Here are five good reasons to sing:

## 1 Physical Health Benefits

- ✓ Improves the efficiency of our heart and circulatory system, helps increase the amount of oxygen in our blood and so makes us more alert
- ✓ Helps reduce stress and makes us feel better all round
- ✓ Is good for the brain because music and language use different parts of the brain and makes them work together

## 2 Psychological Benefits

- ✓ Allows us to experience and express emotion such as joy and sadness
- ✓ Provides an outlet for our feelings and helps us to feel better about ourselves and the world around us
- ✓ Generally enables children who sing well to have a more positive self-image and a greater sense of social inclusion, of belonging
- ✓ Means learning about how to use our voice and that, in turn, helps us to improve our communication

## 3 Social Benefits

- ✓ Can lead to better communication in our personal relationships
- ✓ Can lead to developing better relationships with those around us – especially if we sing in a group, such as Vocal Babies, where there is a group identity and a sense of doing something positive together



# HEALTH BENEFITS OF SINGING WITH BABIES

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## Musical Benefits

- ✓ Helps us to understand more about music, for example about rhythm, tone and volume
- ✓ Assists in developing our musical memory
- ✓ Helps us to understand others and ourselves through the kinds of songs that we experience

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## Educational Benefits

- ✓ Can help us learn about the world around us – about emotions, people, places, experiences, groups, history and events
- ✓ Helps to develop our language skills and is likely to make us more competent in our own language
- ✓ Can help with reading skills, especially if we have to read the text of songs

*Adapted from an article in London Inst Ed., Issue 6. Autumn 2008, published by Institute of Education, University of London.*



## Health Visitor Perspective

During the Vocal Babies project, we asked our local health visiting team to evaluate the health benefits of our programme from their perspective. As well as the benefits listed above, they also recognised emotional benefits to both primary carer and baby.

The Health Visitors recognised that our approach had very similar values to The Solihull Principles, which looks at patterns of behaviour management.

These are the principles within the Solihull Approach that are also evident in the Vocal Babies model:

- 1) Containment**
- 2) Reciprocity**
- 3) Attachment theory**



# HEALTH BENEFITS OF SINGING WITH BABIES

## Containment

One person is holding & supporting the emotional needs of the other. Both parties feel safe in a relationship. Within the Vocal Babies sessions the tutors contain both parent / carers and babies during the sessions and encourage the parents to contain their babies. The parents are welcomed, supported and made comfortable through the session. The baby is welcomed, given 1-1 moments of attention, positive interaction, fun and socialisation.

## Reciprocity

This is the interaction between primary carer and baby. This is key to communication and starts from birth. The stages of learning for babies are:

Initiation - State of attention – Excitement – Deceleration – Withdrawal

The shape of the Vocal Babies sessions follows this pattern, aids learning and supports primary carers in the stages of learning in their babies' development.

## Each session of Vocal Babies follows a learning arc:

Hello from Pepper and then welcome song every week (Initiation)

Personal 'Hello' to each baby by name (State of attention)

Songs build up to stand up songs and signing songs (Excitement)

Sit down and cuddle songs to calm the session (Deceleration)

Twinkle Twinkle and goodbye song every week (Withdrawal)

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## Attachment Theory

This is the special secure attachment each child must make with one person that they look to for support. Children find it very hard to learn when they are anxious so using music and singing helps to reinforce this bond and enables them to learn in a relaxed environment.

During a baby's first year, they are looking to their primary carer to:

- Meet basic needs
- Provide security
- Provide stimulation
- Ensure baby uses all senses
- Keep safe
- Form primary attachment
- Nurture

Vocal Babies helps to strengthen this bond, enabling the primary carer to meet the needs of their child.





# HEALTH BENEFITS OF SINGING WITH BABIES



## Further Mental and Emotional Health Benefits

Good mental health is about feeling well and happy. Vocal Babies provides stimulation through sight, touch, colour, sound and 1:1 interaction with each baby. From the age of 12 – 18 months babies experience separation anxiety, losing and finding is great play at this point. Peek-a-boo provides a safe experience to lose and find something, as do puppet games and the treasure bag.

0 – 2 years is a major time period for brain development – experiences build neural pathways / neurones. At the age of 2 there is a natural trimming of neurones, more bonding experiences build more neural pathways. There is up to 25% difference displayed (neural pathways created) between best and worst cases.

Singing helps with expression, building confidence and reducing stress. If children experience a lot of stress they release Cortisol, which can lead to hyperactivity and anxiety.

Movement and interaction are also vital to development. Manual dexterity and fine motor skills are encouraged with the use of instruments,

scarves, cuddly toys and the treasure bag. Babies are encouraged to celebrate their successes and those of the other babies in the group.

Within each session there are landmarks – songs that stay the same throughout the course (Welcome song, Hokey Cokey, Zoom, Twinkle). These 'anchor songs' reassure baby that they know what is coming next.

Parents might be nervous (due to their own isolation or fear of singing), each week at the end of the session there is planned social time. At the beginning of each course the tutors initiate conversations, perform introductions and try to encourage interaction. By the end of the course the tutors will no longer initiate conversation, as the group will have formed individual bonds and friendships. The target on each course is to ensure that every parent (especially the hardest to reach) is made to feel secure and confident within the group.





# LEARNING OUTCOMES

**You can use this space to make a note of the songs you want to use and the learning outcomes they achieve**

## **LANGUAGE & COMMUNICATION DEVELOPMENT**

### **COLOUR RECOGNITION**

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### **NUMBER FAMILIARITY**

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### **ALPHABET FAMILIARITY**

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### **MAKATON SIGNING**

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### **ENVIRONMENTAL AWARENESS**

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# LEARNING OUTCOMES

## FAMILY DYNAMICS

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## BASIC MUSICAL SKILLS

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## WORD COMPREHENSION

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## EARLY LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT

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## DIRECTIONS

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# LEARNING OUTCOMES

## NAME RECOGNITION

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## PERSONAL, SOCIAL & EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

### SHARING

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### TURN TAKING

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### SOCIAL INTERACTION

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### BONDING

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# LEARNING OUTCOMES

## FRIENDSHIPS

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## INCREASED CONFIDENCE / SELF ESTEEM

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## SELF CONTROL

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## MOTOR SKILLS

--	--

## CHOICE MAKING

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# LEARNING OUTCOMES

## IMAGINATION DEVELOPMENT

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## SPACIAL AWARENESS

--	--

## LISTENING

--	--

## GOOD MANNERS

--	--

## SELF AWARENESS

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# LEARNING OUTCOMES

## PERSONAL SKILLS

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## SENSORY

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## EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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# SINGING WITH CONFIDENCE

Singing with confidence is more vital to running a singing workshop with babies than having a fabulous singing voice. Often people don't sing because they feel silly, believe they can't sing, or are worried about what other people think.

Here are some basic tips on how to increase your confidence in singing so you can focus on what's really important - connecting with the babies and families you are working with.

## PRACTICE - PRACTICE - PRACTICE

**Sing as much as you can in your day-to-day life.**

The more you do something, the more comfortable and better you get at doing it. And the more you sing, the more comfortable you get at hearing your own voice. The more you hear yourself sing, the less worried you become about others hearing it too.

## Vocal Health:

**Try to follow the principles below to develop good habits for healthy singing:**

- ✓ Practise good posture
- ✓ Breathe deeply – take time to fill your lungs before talking and catch another breath before you run out
- ✓ Stop when your voice feels strained
- ✓ Drink plenty of water
- ✓ Try not to scream/yell
- ✓ Warm up before heavy use – including speaking
- ✓ Try to quit or reduce the amount you smoke – apart from the well known health risks it also causes inflammation and polyps on the vocal chords
- ✓ Listen to your voice

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Although singing and speech both involve the larynx and the vocal cords modulating air as it is pushed out of the lungs, they stem from different sides of the brain.

When we speak, the left-hand side is involved – the part that controls word formation and sentence structure. But when we sing, it is the right hemisphere that we rely upon, to produce the rhythm and melody of music.

So someone with a speech impediment might find that it won't be there when they sing, because it's a different part

of the brain.

Singing seems simple, but it is actually an incredibly complicated motor activity. Like athletes, singers have to train their muscles to project their voice in a certain way.

The muscles in the larynx contract to change the pitch of the voice, and good singers have a wonderful athletic ability to do that as well as an ear that is well tuned for sound.





# SINGING WITH CONFIDENCE

## Before a session...

### Get to know your own voice.

Find your genre by trying out different styles of music. Practice specific songs – you will know when you find it as it will feel like coming home. You may be able to sing in a couple of different styles – try and combine them, play around and experiment. Make it fun!

### Find the right key that suits your voice.

If you have a smart phone, find a simple keyboard app to help you pitch songs correctly. It is quite easy to pitch songs too high and you don't usually find out until you are half way through so find a key that suits your voice before the session starts.

### Warm Ups

These are really important for vocal health and it can also help to calm nerves by following a routine.

### Physical Stretches

Concentrate on your core area – shoulder rolls, discus turns, facial stretches.

### Vocal Warm ups

(Watch shoulders don't move up)

Practise Breathing (Breathe in through nose, count 4, breathe out through mouth for 4. Do this again – releasing a vocal sound on breathe out. Get higher)

Trills/sirens/arpeggios – use whole body – e.g. relax jaw muscles by rubbing with fingers. Use arms to swing up on high notes – it really does help.

Humming exercise: hold really quietly – for 5 seconds, then 10 – increase as you go on. Also move up the scale. Be aware of gaps.

'I really like to sing' exercise up scale.

## During a session

KNOW YOUR SONGS REALLY WELL. This way you can concentrate on what you are doing – in this instance, on the babies.

Body language and eye contact holds up more of what we do than the quality of our voice.

Enjoy yourself as much as you can. People respect you more for your ability to engage with people over the quality of your singing voice.

Try different things – funny voices/characters to convey the message of the song.

## After the session

Self-evaluate – try to be positive (caution of being too negative). Learn from your mistakes but don't get bogged down.





# ENGAGEMENT SKILLS



*One of the Vocal Babies founders puts it like this...“I always think of engaging with babies like putting on stage makeup. Stage make up is so over the top to the natural eye – lets face it, you look more like a clown! But when you are on stage and the lights are on, it then looks very different. ‘Normal’ perhaps.”*

## Before a session...

### Tips for interacting with babies:

- ✓ exaggerated smiles
- ✓ big eyes
- ✓ happy voices
- ✓ Keep the session moving, having two leaders makes this much easier

These things all help to engage and keep their attention. It is also important to keep the session moving so that it is quite fast paced but at the same time not rushed.

One thing to make sure of is that you keep your eyes ‘open’. Look out for a baby responding in one way or another:

- ✓ Hitting their drum in time
- ✓ Attempting to sign
- ✓ Attempting to vocalise
- ✓ Clapping their hands
- ✓ Waving
- ✓ Copying an action

Never ignore these moments. It is absolutely OK to interrupt the session to respond to the baby in this moment. E.g. you could be singing a sit down song, not a specific instrument song, but you notice that someone is rhythmically banging away and has been for some time. Make a point of acknowledging that with the parent or carer, smile at the baby and say something like “Wow, you have rhythm – well done”. It is important you are specific when you acknowledge a child. For instance, you see a child attempt to sign – don’t just say well done. Instead,

stop and say “Well done, you signed ‘more’ (at this point sign ‘more’ yourself correctly) – have eye contact, smile, sign. You are acknowledging the effort, and letting them lead you whilst modelling the correct way to sign too – without the need to correct their efforts.

If a baby starts to vocalise, I would copy the sound they are creating. This will often lead to other babies copying it too and you get a bit of a call and response happening across the room that is baby led. We love this! It helps their self-expression, connection with others, speech and confidence.

If a baby is particularly vocal, the parent may be embarrassed or try to stop them. By encouraging the baby’s expression in this way you help the parent to relax and enjoy the achievements of their child.

When you are singing the hello song to each baby, this is a great opportunity to watch for that child to respond with their instruments or wave or clap. Encourage the others present to celebrate their achievements too. The look on a baby’s face when they do something and everyone claps them is just beautiful.

### Self care:

When leading a session where you’re very focussed on engagement it can leave you feeling quite ‘drained’. This is often because as you are putting in a lot, both physically (big movements, facial expressions etc) and mentally (focussing on each baby, noticing engagement, etc). Try to take some time after the session to breathe – be still – and evaluate how it went, what you did well, what you would do differently next time. Find something you did that makes you smile – and remember to say well done to yourself too!



# VOCAL BABIES SESSION PLANNING

## For your session you will need:

- ✓ A room large enough for your group to sit comfortably in a circle, clear of visible distractions (toys, books, etc)
- ✓ A selection of colourful mats (1 per baby & leader in your group)
- ✓ A selection of instruments such as shakers, drums, bells, rain-makers, maracas and tambourines
- ✓ 1 song sheet for each baby and each workshop leader (laminated if possible)
- ✓ A Mascot (puppet or cuddly toy to welcome the group)
- ✓ Puppets, cuddly toys and small toys to use as props within the songs
- ✓ A sheet decorated with stars for calming final song
- ✓ Brightly coloured scarves (1 per baby & leader in your group)
- ✓ A bag to hold all toys and props, with a second smaller bag for treasure bag songs
- ✓ Toys to play with following the session

## Room layout and preparation:

- ✓ Lay out the mats in a circle, one per baby
- ✓ Tuck a song sheet under and put instruments (1 or 2 depending on stock held) on top of each mat
- ✓ Clear the room of visible distractions (toys, books)
- ✓ Read through the song sheet one last time – and know your songs. If you are not confident leading the group, they will not join in and commit to the singing.

## Session breakdown:

Open doors with mascot puppet – use the puppet to greet and welcome adults and children. Allow people to select their own mat.

We don't let anyone in until we are ready to start.

Babies lose interest quickly and are hard to re-engage. Also, offering a structured session helps their sense of containment and security.

During week one, give out a welcome letter (*Appendix 1*) and briefly explain the format and expected benefits of the session. If appropriate talk through the guidelines around feeding / chatting, etc.

Start with your **welcome song**. This song stays the same every week. Things to include are date, time, singing, fun, possibly mascot name.



### Hello song

Welcome each child by name, signing the first letter of their name. This focuses attention on each individual baby, helping to engage and involve them in the session.



### Instrument songs

1 or 2 songs to encourage use of instruments and relax the group into making noise. These songs encourage listening, fine motor skills and turn taking. You can slow the session down here and have some fun by getting the babies to play and stop on command (week 1 this is grown-up led, but by week 8, the babies are listening and following that instruction)



### Sit down songs

Welcome each child by name, signing the first letter of their name. This focuses attention on each individual baby, helping to engage and involve them in the session.



# VOCAL BABIES SESSION PLANNING



## Stand up songs

3 to 4 songs, of which 2 stay the same each week throughout the run. We use Hokey Cokey and Zoom every week with one or two additional songs which change regularly through the course. Use well-known songs here as the parents / carers may struggle to read the song sheets while standing.



## Treasure bag / puppet / visual stimulation songs

Fun and colour, you can sing one song with several verses (1 puppet out of the bag per verse, e.g. Old MacDonald), or several short songs (1 puppet per song from the bag). Take the treasure bag out to the babies.



## Signing songs

2 to 3 songs which use Makaton signs to encourage communication. Always run through the songs to demonstrate each sign before each song, parents love to work on these signs outside of the sessions. Start simply and use 1 sign per line, build each time you use the song. Use each signing song for at least 3 weeks within the course to encourage knowledge retention.



## Quiet time songs

3 songs running to the end of the session. The last 1 (Twinkle) remains the same throughout the run. For Twinkle all babies lie in the centre and we gently waft a dark blue sheet with gold stars painted onto it above them.

At the end of the song we continue to wave the sheet and count how many seconds the babies stay calmly engaged and watching the 'sky'. This encourages the babies to remain still which is a very valuable skill and teaches the

parents that this is possible.

### After the session:

This is time to chat and aid relationship building. Get out some toys for the babies and try to start conversations around the group.

For the first couple of weeks, tutor presence within the group will encourage the parents to talk to each other and bond. Gradually as the sessions progress you can let them take the lead as a group and by week 8 you should not be necessary to the chat.

There will be parents within the group who are less integrated (for various reasons), try to gradually encourage these parents into group conversations which will build confidence or remove perceived barriers.

### Helpful reminders:

Be over the top with your facial expressions and enthusiasm – if you are having fun it will be contagious. Babies respond to exaggerated facial expressions and it helps their learning.

Think of creative ways to go from one song to the next, try not to say "and next we have...". Group your songs so that they flow well (Yummy Mummy and Daddy Cool), when working in pairs you can banter back and forth or use the puppets to have some fun in that gap.

Keep your eyes open. Look out for a baby doing something or responding to something new – vocalising, waving or banging their drum in time. Always focus on baby successes – it is okay to interrupt the session to highlight things to the parent/carer and the group. If you notice 'Mia' signing more for example, stop and say "Well done Mia! You signed 'More' (while signing 'More' yourself correctly). You have eye contact; you are acknowledging their effort and letting the babies lead the session.

Try to use a mixture of original and well-known songs – repeat original songs at least 3-4 times through the course to maximise knowledge retention. It is important to ensure that what you are offering is unique enough for them to want to come back.



# SAFEGUARDING & BOUNDARIES

## Safeguarding

When working with children of any age, it is everyone's responsibility to ensure that they work in a safe way and that the welfare of the child is paramount. If you are working in a centre / organisation which already works with children they will have a safeguarding policy in place. Ask the centre / venue you're working in for a copy of this policy and familiarise yourself with their procedures before running workshops. If you are unsure of anything, you should discuss this with a manager from that organisation.



**Make sure you are clear on how to report a concern before you start any sessions. Speak to your local Social Services Duty team if you are unsure and they can advise you.**

## Boundaries

### Physical boundaries in a space

- ✓ Be consistent, the same boundaries apply to all – think about how you would handle this if there were some people in the group that you already know.
- ✓ Always ask before any sort of physical contact is made with anyone in a group, both children and adults.
- ✓ Physical contact should be kept to a minimum.

### Emotional boundaries

- ✓ Signpost at the earliest opportunity if someone requires further support.
- ✓ Remember that you are not a counsellor.
- ✓ Try not to get into a situation where boundaries are blurred and someone is opening up too much about an issue either in a session or outside of a session.

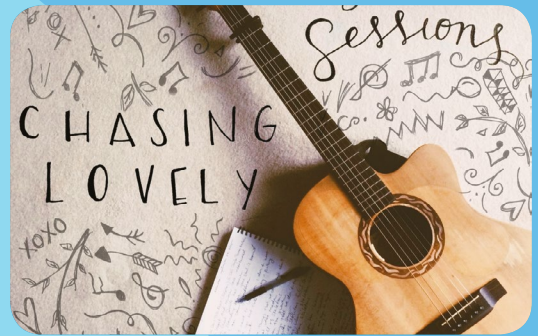
### Social boundaries

- ✓ Consider your interactions on social media – our social media policy means that we do not add / accept requests from anyone who is a client. Consider starting a Facebook 'page' to allow interaction rather than on a personal profile.
- ✓ Friendships – be aware that if you are delivering a service you have a 'duty of care' to the people who use that service, both children and adults. Think about having clear boundaries before you start a session.



# SONGWRITING FOR BABIES

The key to writing good songs for use in a Vocal Babies session is to keep it simple. The idea is that all the songs that we use are catchy and memorable so that parents and carers feel confident to use them outside of the sessions.



## Songwriting Tips:

- ✓ Think of a theme – do you want to address an issue or look at a specific topic e.g. colour / bedtime / healthy eating?
- ✓ Think of a tune - sometimes it is easier to use an existing tune e.g. a well-known nursery rhyme and then write the lyrics around this tune. Once you feel more confident you can start to make up your own tunes.
- ✓ Look at writing 4 lines with lines 2 & 4 rhyming to start with.
- ✓ Don't write more than 3 verses – sometimes writing one verse repeated can be very effective
- ✓ Have a go at writing a narrative / story – this is a fab opportunity to grab their attention with strong expressions, quiet voices, pauses, actions. This is also good if you're not so confident with singing. A great example of this is 'Going on a Bear Hunt'.
- ✓ Make sure it flows well – don't be afraid of cutting out words if it becomes tricky to sing.
- ✓ Try your songs out and then get feedback. It's really useful to try songs out with children, you'll know very quickly if they are simple enough to sing and children are very honest!
- ✓ Keep it simple and have fun.





# MONITORING & EVALUATION

As an organisation we consider the monitoring and evaluation of our services a priority.

## Monitoring & Evaluation allows us to:

- ✓ Track the impact of our work
- ✓ Use a reflective practice approach with staff and participants
- ✓ Regularly consider improvements & developments to our service
- ✓ Evidence why the work we do is important, enabling advocating opportunities to service users and future funders
- ✓ Keep a transparent record of all of our interactions
- ✓ Operate safely

## Monitoring

During a Vocal Babies course we also capture the following data:

- ✓ Names of parents & children (using a register)
- ✓ Age of children
- ✓ Attendance figures
- ✓ Gender
- ✓ Ethnicity
- ✓ If the participants face any challenging circumstances such as disabilities, mental health issues, language barriers, rurally isolated etc.
- ✓ Highlights & Challenges from a workshop leader perspective

This information is collated and analysed during reflection & planning meetings with staff.

## Evaluation

Due to the nature of our Vocal Babies model and the funding we've received from Youth Music we have developed an assessment framework to track the progress of the babies throughout the courses we offer. This has been developed with the support of the local Health Visiting team who have shared their expertise in the area of child development. Appendix 2 shows an example assessment form for a 6-month-old baby. We would encourage a parent or carer to fill this form out on the first and last week of an 8-week course so that we can track a baby's development. This can all be done anonymously.

*We also have a feedback form (appendix 3) for parents to fill out at the end of a course.*





# APPENDIX 1



## Pie Factory Music

Ramsgate Youth Centre, High Street, St Lawrence,  
RAMSGATE Kent CT11 0QG

**Tel:** 01843 596777 / 596998

**Email:** [info@piefactorymusic.com](mailto:info@piefactorymusic.com)

[www.piefactorymusic.com](http://www.piefactorymusic.com)

Registered Charity No. 1097561

Company Limited by Guarantee No. 4602033

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Dear Parent / Carer and Baby,

A very warm welcome to Vocal Babies! We are sure you're going to enjoy the workshop and encourage you to make the most of it by joining in with all the songs and actions.

Vocal Babies caters for babies aged 3 to 24 months and has been running since 2008. The workshop is designed to help babies with listening, co-ordination and social skills through action songs, rhymes, taking turns, sharing and making music together.

You and your baby will learn some Makaton signs, which will aid communication, supporting early language development. It is also a place for you to meet other parents / carers and share your experiences, advice and funny stories.

In order for everyone to get the most out of Vocal Babies, we have a few requests for the workshop:

1. Try and join in with the songs. You will learn the lyrics and signs quickly, and your participation will encourage your child's.
2. Please save chats for before the workshop and during the break so that you, your child and others don't miss out.
3. Try to give your child snacks before the workshop or within the play and chat so as not to disturb your baby and others (breastfeeding & bottle feeding is fine at any point).
4. Relax and have fun! Take this opportunity to make new friends.

Working with your babies is a real privilege and we look forward to all having the best time together!

Kirsty and Caroline



# APPENDIX 2

## 6 MONTHS

Name of child:

Age:

Today's Date:

		Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Quite Often	Regularly
<b>Personal, social, emotional development</b>	Knows familiar faces and begins to know if someone is a stranger					
	Likes to play with others, especially parents					
	Responds to other people's emotions and often seems happy					
	Likes to look at self in a mirror					
<b>Communication and Language</b>	Responds to sounds by making sounds					
	Strings vowels together when babbling ("ah", "eh", "oh") and likes taking turns with parent while making sounds					
	Responds to own name					
	Makes sounds to show joy and displeasure					
	Begins to say consonant sounds (jabbering with "m", "b")					
<b>Cognitive (learning, thinking, problem-solving)</b>	Looks around at things nearby					
	Brings things to mouth					
	Shows curiosity about things and tries to get things that are out of reach					
	Begins to pass things from one hand to the other					
<b>Movement / Physical Development</b>	Rolls over in both directions (front to back, back to front)					
	Begins to sit without support					
	When standing, supports weight on legs and might bounce					
	Rocks back and forth, sometimes crawling backward before moving forward					



# APPENDIX 3

## VOCAL BABIES FEEDBACK

Please circle the statements that best apply to you & include any applicable extra comments:

**1. Was the course what you expected? Please explain why:**



Better than expected



Exactly



Almost



Didn't know what to expect



More or less



Not at all

**2. Did you learn:**



A lot



A little



Not much



Nothing

**3. How has what you've learnt impacted on you and your baby/babies?**

**4. How was the pace of the sessions:**



Just right



A bit too fast/slow



Too fast/slow



Muct too fast/slow

**5. Did you find the sessions useful and why/why not?**



## APPENDIX 3

# VOCAL BABIES FEEDBACK

Please circle the statements that best apply to you & include any applicable extra comments:

**6. Will you use some of the signs/songs/actions with your baby/babies at home?**



Definitely



Maybe



Probably not



No

**7. What did you like most about the course and what were your favourite songs?**

**8. What could we do to make the course better for you?**

**9. If available, would you be interested in a cd or dv resource of Vocal Babies music, songs & signs to purchase?**

**10. Any other comments, suggestions or feedback?**



# VOCAL BABIES CONTACT

## **Pie Factory Music: "Changing the lives of young people"**

Pie Factory Music is a charity set up to provide free accessible music and related arts workshops for young people across East Kent. These are primarily but not exclusively for people aged between 0-25 years.

We believe music is a superb tool for creativity, motivation, inclusion and self-confidence. As a result of our years of experience and partnership work we specialise in working with young people from challenging circumstances such as those in care, young people with disabilities and those who face emotional and social difficulties.

The charity has been in existence since 2001 and has grown to become a high quality, well respected and established organisation, having seen over 125,000 workshop spaces filled since we began. We accomplish this by offering sets of progression workshops at all levels of ability, and long-term projects for specific groups of young people.

We have also secured more than £3 million in funding for the East Kent area since our establishment and this has enabled us to provide FREE workshops for over 14 years.

### **WE AIM TO PROVIDE SERVICES WHICH:**

- ✓ Reduce barriers to participation
- ✓ Increase social inclusion
- ✓ Increase social responsibility
- ✓ Encourage creativity
- ✓ Increase skills and employability

### **Contact us for more information:**



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[www.piefactorymusic.com](http://www.piefactorymusic.com)

Follow us on Twitter: **@piefactorymusic**

Like us on Facebook: **facebook.com/piefactorymusic**

Follow us on Instagram: **@piefactorymusic**

The production of this resource was part of our Vocal Babies programme 2014-2016 and kindly Funded by Youth Music.



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