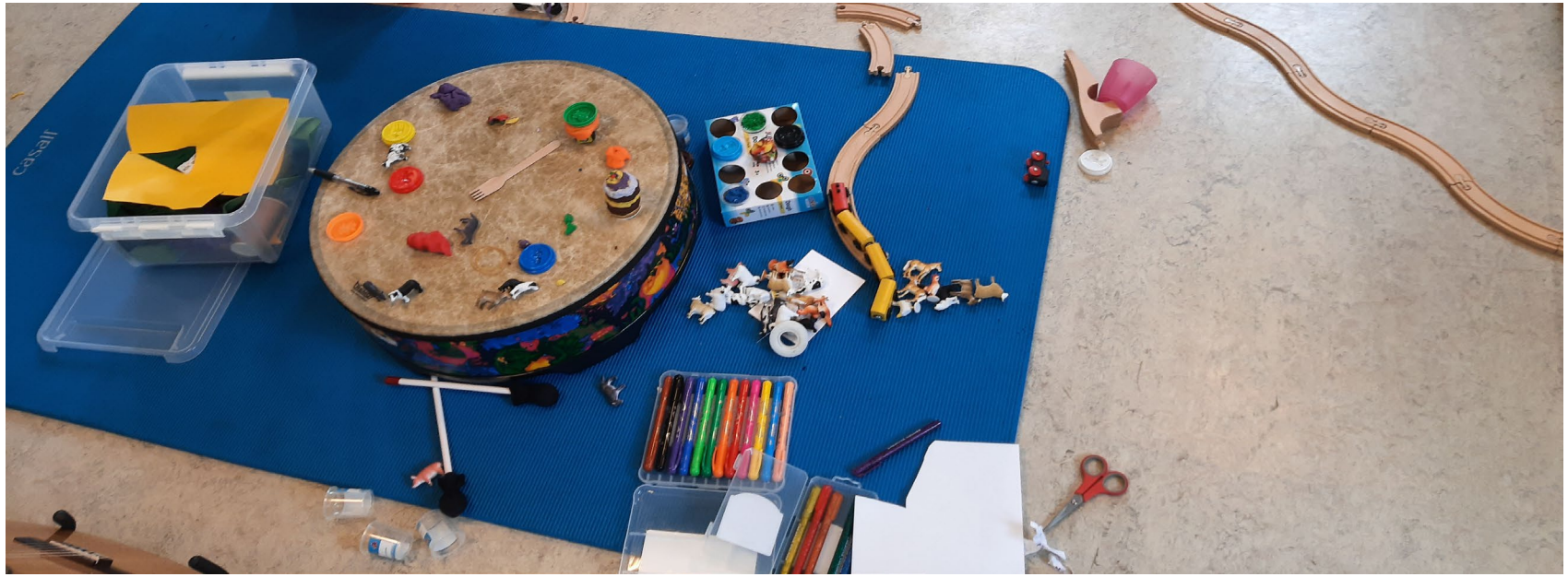
WCMT
WORLD CONGRESS OF MUSIC THERAPY
Connecting Borders
07 / 12 JULY 2026
BOLOGNA, ITALY
Creating networks and enhancing identities through Music Therapy

FUN AND PLAY

AS SHARED AND DISTINCT KNOWLEDGE IN INTERDISCIPLINARY COLLABORATION



FOCUS FOR THE PRESENTATION

- Clarify the role of music therapists in interdisciplinary collaboration.
- Discuss fun and play as forms of knowledge that can be shared across professions.
- Discuss why fun and play are legitimate focuses in music therapy.



WHAT DO WE MEAN BY FUN AND PLAY?



An activity…….an experience
…a state of being…





FILM

Interdisciplinary collaboration is very important!

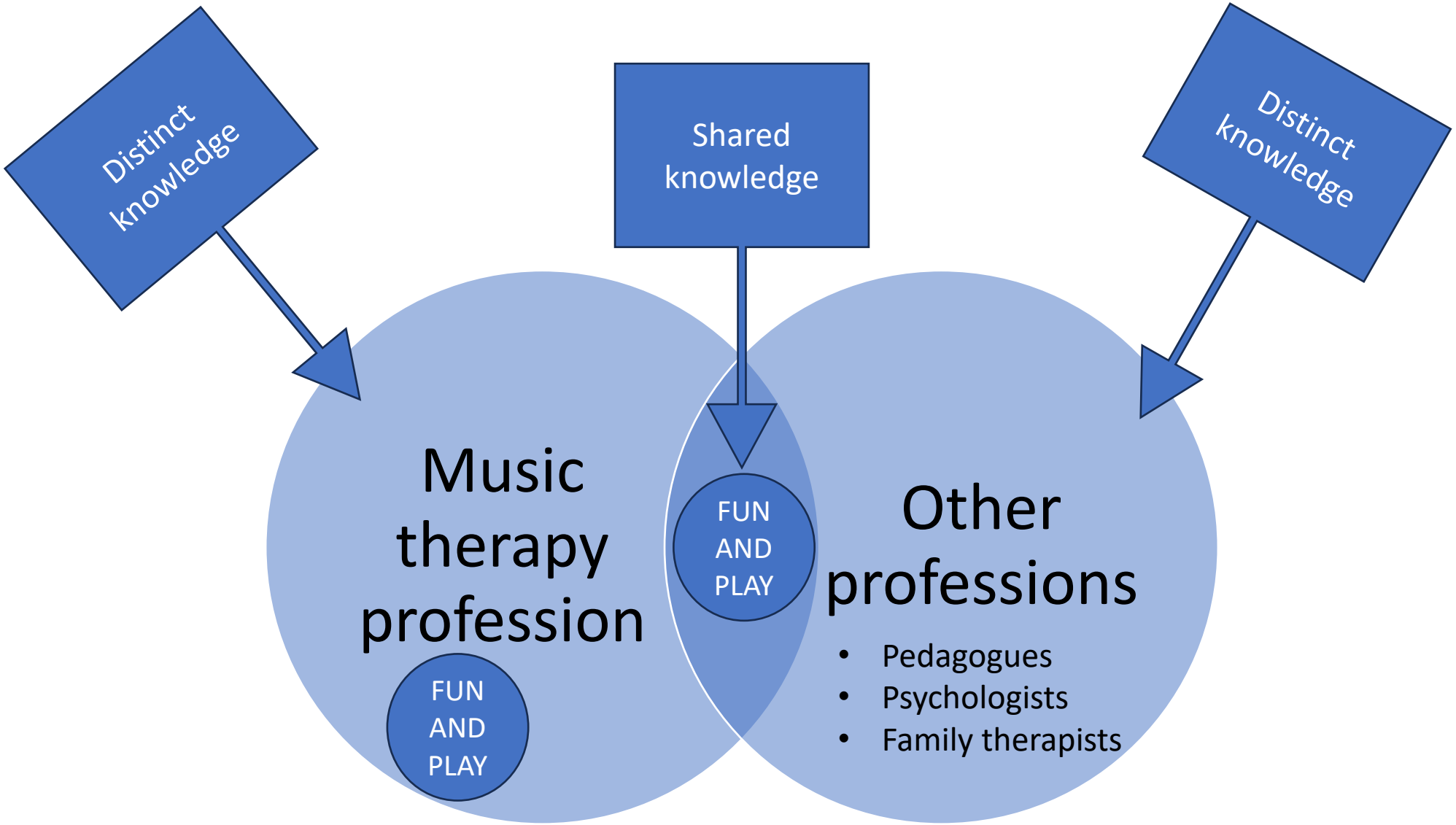
Described in national guidelines, strategies and laws, for instance:

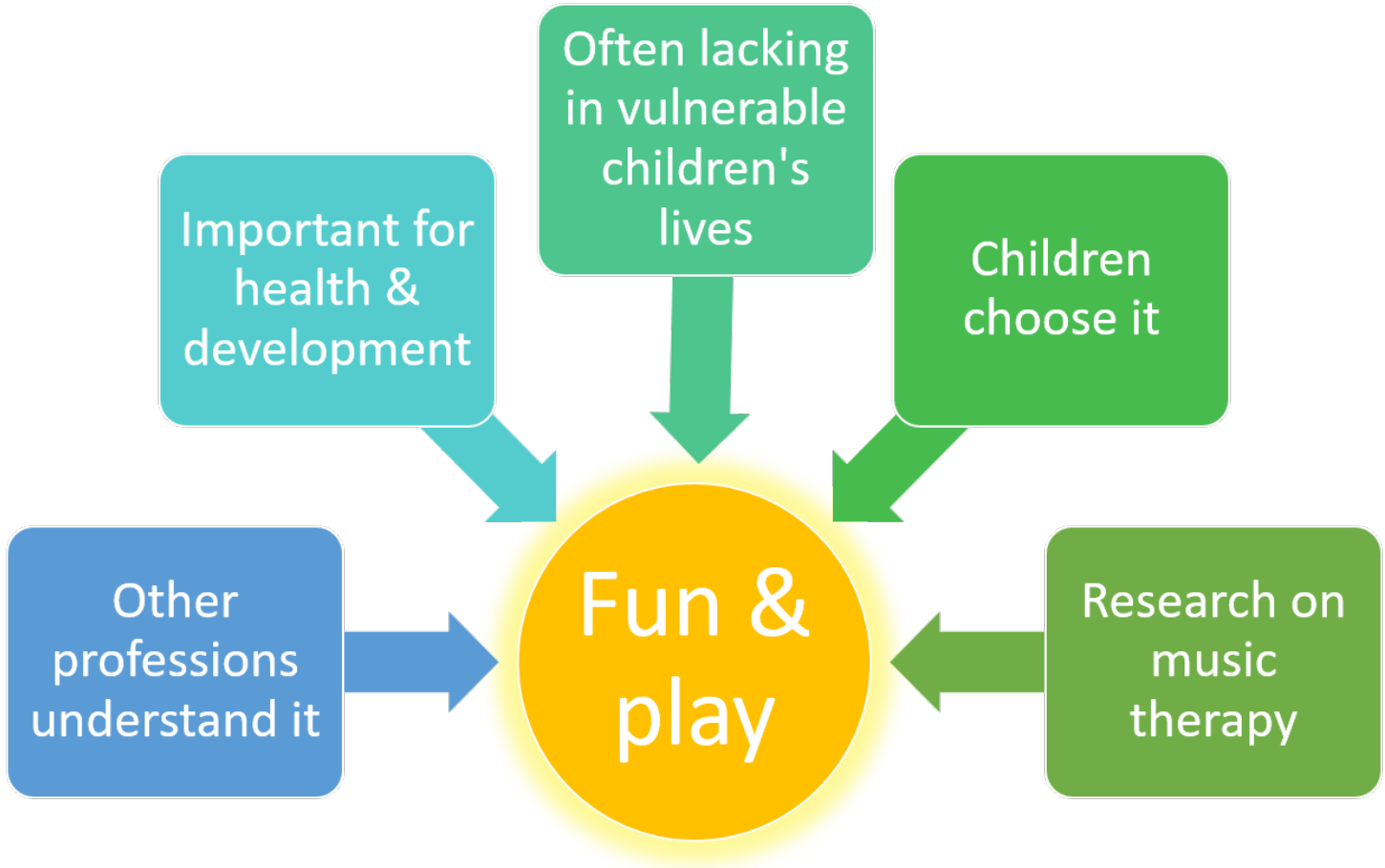
- National guidelines for mental health services for children and youth
- The Education Act

What is my role in the interdisciplinary collaboration?



You need three hands actually.....:)


Distinct knowledge
Shared knowledge
Distinct knowledge
Music therapy profession
FUN AND PLAY
FUN AND PLAY
Other professions
• Pedagogues
• Psychologists
• Family therapists


Often lacking in vulnerable children's lives
Important for health & development
Children choose it
Other professions understand it
Fun & play
Research on music therapy

Examples from music therapy research on participant perspectives:

Merete Hoel Roaldsnes

Musikk i helsefremmande arbeid med einslege mindreårige

Ein kvalitativ studie av ei musikkgruppe for ungdom med bakgrunn som einslege flyktningbarn

RESEARCH | PEER REVIEWED

Refugee Children's Perspectives on Participating in Music Therapy:

A Qualitative Study

Kaja Elise Aaslid Enge [1*], Brynjulf Stige [2], Dag Øystein Nordanger [3]

[1] Bergen kommune, Bergen, Norway

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NORDIC JOURNAL OF MUSIC THERAPY
https://doi.org/10.1080/08098131.2022.2055114

Routledge
Taylor & Francis Group

ORIGINAL RESEARCH ARTICLE

OPEN ACCESS Check for updates

Moments of fun: Narratives of children's experiences of music therapy in mental health care

Guro Parr Klyve and Randi Rolvsjord

The Grieg Academy – Department of Music, University of Bergen, Bergen, Norway

ABSTRACT

Introduction: Mental health issues in children involve complexities and life challenges for the child and their families. Music therapy as part of treatment in mental health care focuses on interaction and communication through music, with emphasis on the children's resources. There is a small, but growing amount of research in the field of music therapy with children in mental health care.

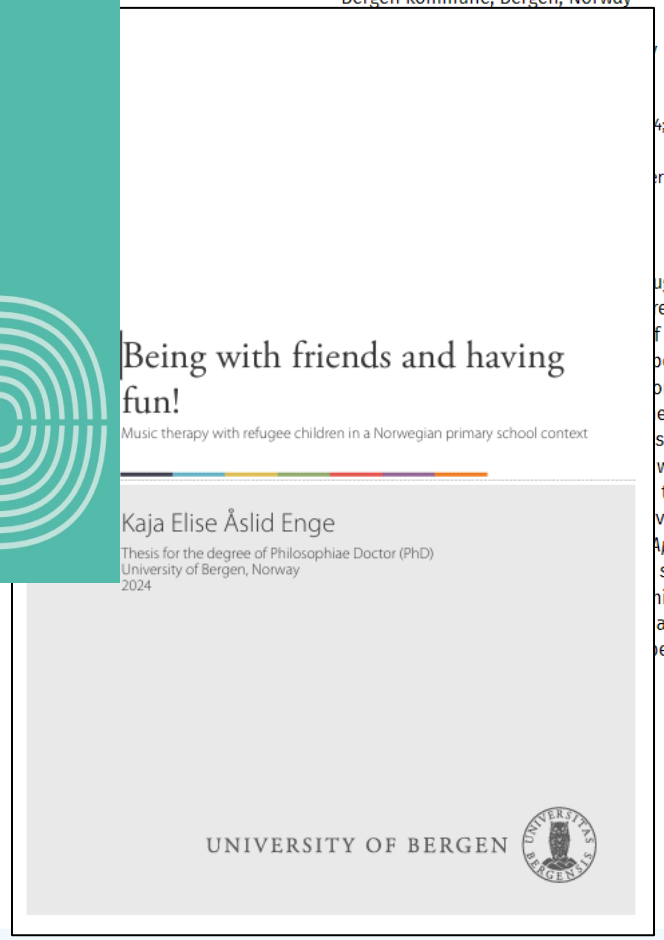
Method: This qualitative study explored children's own experiences of music therapy in mental health care at the hospital. This was done through a multiple case study design, including semi- structured interviews with seven children and participant observations. A narrative approach informed by "portraiture" was used in the analysis process in order to highlight non-dominant experiences and allow for multiple modalities in the analysis and in the presentation of findings.

Findings: The children's experiences were expressed through various modalities. These were displayed through narratives representing the core of the interview with each particular child. The word fun became a prominent emerging theme across the cases.

Discussion: In the children's expressions, the word fun seemed to be a container of experiences, with rich variations and multiple meanings. Through a thorough attention to this word and the children's actions before, after and while they spoke, multi-dimensional meanings of the word emerged. Through listening to the children's own experiences, fun proved to be an essential part of music therapy in mental health care with children, not as mere entertainment, but as something of existential importance and with great therapeutic potentials.

ARTICLE HISTORY Received 26 February 2021; Accepted 3 March 2022

KEYWORDS Music therapy; children; mental health care; children's experiences; positive emotions

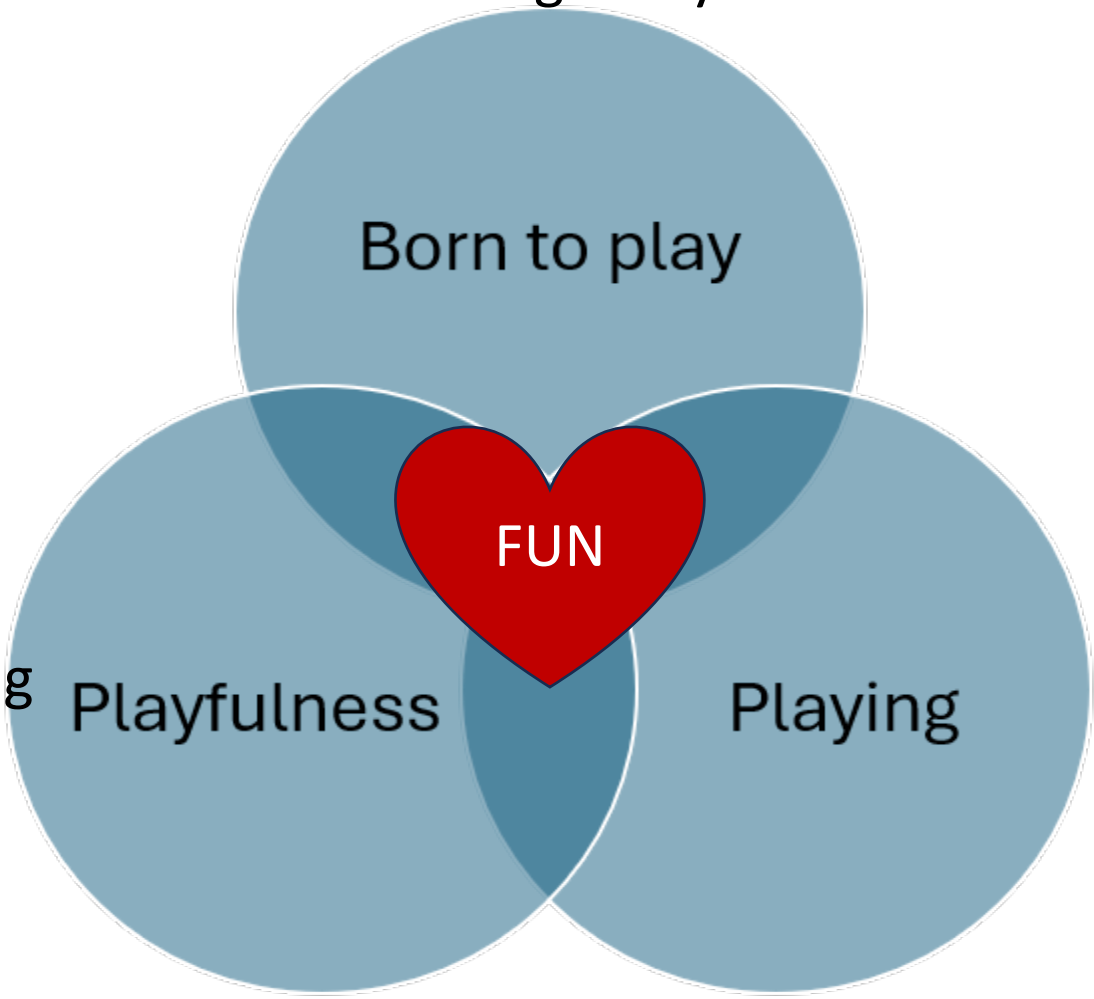




Theoretical inspiration

…Donald Winnicott…Alan Schore…Jack Panksepp…Daniel Siegel…Susan Hart…Daniel Stern…van der Kolk…Bruce Perry…

A biological system

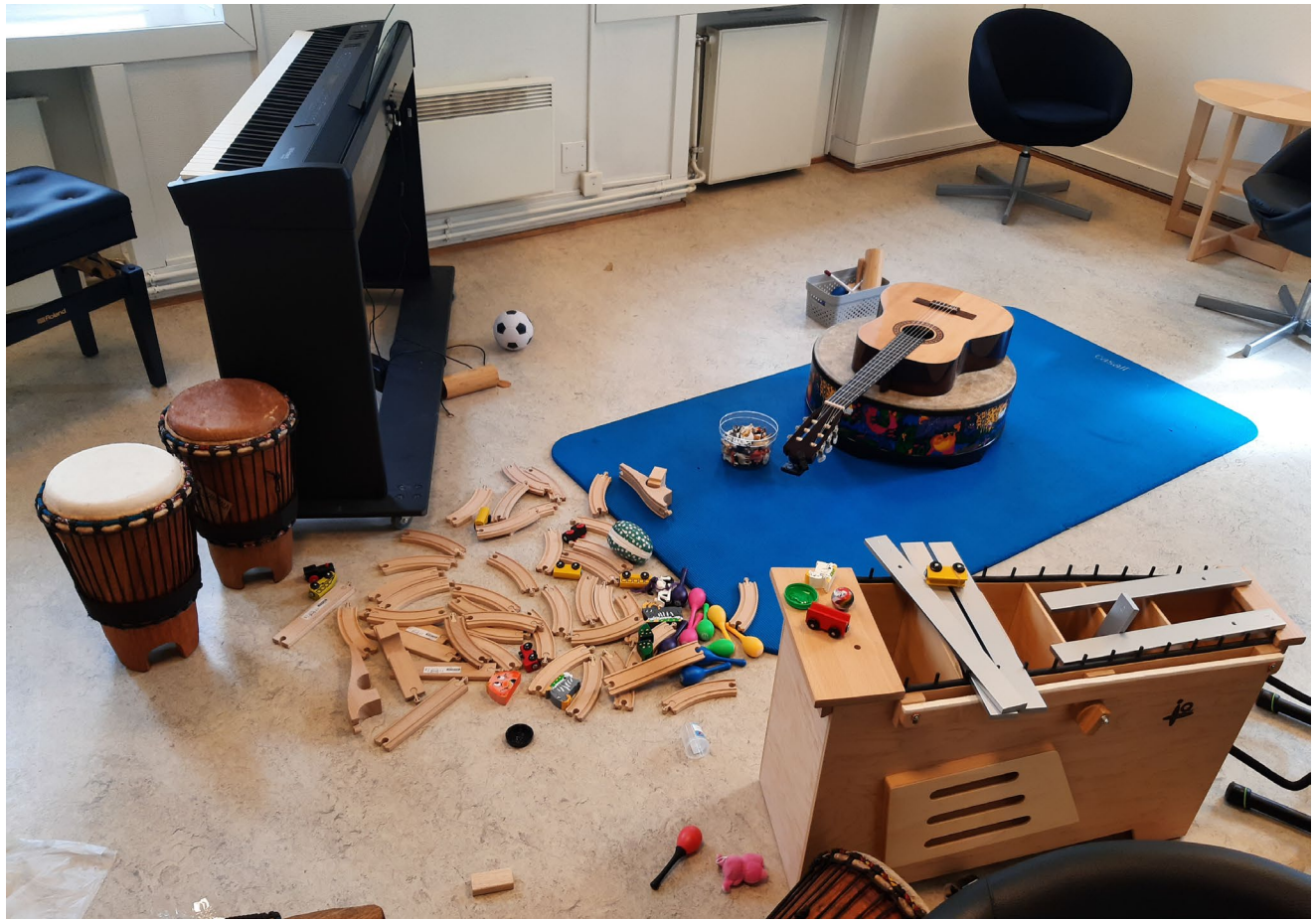


Experience
State of being

A shared activity

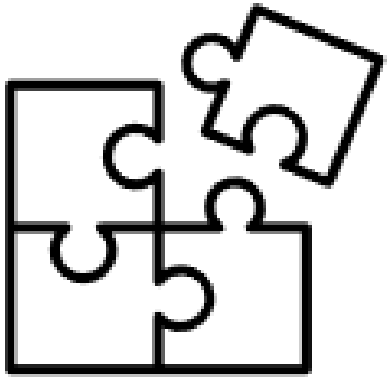
Fun and play as distinct knowledge for music therapists

- Musical engagement affords *finding* a playful state of being
- Following the child's lead often opens up some kind of playfulness
- Nonverbal communication and collaboration



Take home points:

- Fun and play nurture health and development
- Fun and play is a legitimate focus in therapy
- Fulfils a need in interdisciplinary collaboration – not many other professions are as well suited to do this
- It is lacking in many children's lives
- A focus on fun and play can clarify the role of the music therapist in interdisciplinary collaboration



Next step:
An understanding of music therapy, that includes the importance of play and fun.
Will clarify the role of music therapists in an interdisciplinary team
Will help other professionals understanding of the contribution of music therapy
Will help clarirfy the role of music therapy in the organizational context.

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