**Written by a Parent of a child with Autism age 8 (we have removed names to comply with Data Protection regulations)**

 **How to use Music as a Tool for SEN Children**My 8-year-old son has been communicating, playing, and now making music, from age 2. We have found that music has helped with his focus and his eye contact. My son was non-verbal until age 4 and using music as a tool has enabled him to become confident, happy and able to follow directions without words.

As his parent, I saw an opening and held on tight with both hands.

Throughout lockdown, Music and Art have played a large part with my son’s creativity and enhancement. Most poignant was when I told him “No more school” due to Covid-19; he screamed, it pierced my heart, he then ran to piano and devised an innovative, sad composition, he was sweating and hugged me after. No words.

Now verbal he says “Break Mummy! drink Mummy!” He is now so much more **relaxed, his body is not stiff, his eyes are a tad brighter** and he has started to play again. These are the signs we, as parents, should be looking for.

I was **allowed** to gently join in with him and he/we created our song **“Playground of Imagination**”, which you can hear here:

**Conclusion:**My son used **MUSIC** as a form of expression for HIS despair, his heartache, his sadness and his happiness. HIS and my song ends well. Phew!

 **Top tips that helped me at home**List of things you will need:

Toys to enhance human connections, eye contact, serenity, focus, happiness, laughter, sounds, speech and all should be instigated by the child.

**How to start:**

* small steps
* use household items and rattle, shake and bang
* noises are fun! Quiet noise, loud noise.

**Three top Toys/ Object**

1. **Apple**
* step 1 - bite the apple, make a sound. Yummy
* step 2 - swallow, comment YUMMY apple
* step 3 - say name, (child’s name) loves apple
1. **Shape toy**
* step 1 - choose a shape, push shape in slot, it makes a noise say “Down” pause “Down”.
* step 2 - say the colour of shape yellow square down, down.
* step 3 - turn shapes out, colours out, say colours, red out, etc
1. **Voice toy- Voice changer**

Hello (child’s name) say fav toy… (Thomas) Hello Thomas, (child’s name’s) turn