



1) Music Therapy as a Related Service Overview

Music therapy is the clinical and evidence-based use of music-cued interventions to accomplish individualized goals. As indicated in a clarification statement provided by the U.S. Department of Education (OSERS, 2000 & 2010) and within the California Code of Regulations (Title 5 section § 3051.21), music therapy can be provided as a related service for students who require it in order to benefit from their educational program. The purpose of music therapy services in the special education setting is to help facilitate functional educational outcomes in IEP goal areas such as academic learning, communication, social skills, motor development, behavior, and daily living skills. The music therapist also assists with the fading of musical cues and generalization of skills to the non-music setting. Coast Music Therapy supports the integration of research-driven techniques in its programming and recommendations, including Neurologic Music Therapy interventions, Applied Behavior Analysis approaches, and best-practice autism strategies. Music therapy as a related service does not include provision of music education or sound therapy programs.

2) Staff Qualifications

Director, Michelle Lazar, MA, MT-BC is a Board Certified Music Therapist and Autism Specialist with an undergraduate degree in Music Therapy from Western Michigan University and a Master's Degree in Special Education and Autism from San Diego State University. Michelle has advanced level training in Applied Behavior Analysis through her graduate studies.

Coast Music Therapy staff have a minimum of a Baccalaureate degree in Music Therapy from an accredited University including 1200 hours of clinical training and Board Certification through the Certification Board for Music Therapists, which is accredited by NCCA; the same governing body for Occupational Therapy, and Board Certified Behavior Analyst certification. In addition, staff are certified Neurologic Music Therapists through Colorado State University.

3) Assessment Procedures & Eligibility Criteria

A music therapy eligibility assessment is conducted to determine whether music therapy as a related service is required in order to accommodate the student's strengths, interests, and learning preferences and make progress in IEP goal areas. Assessment procedures include records review, staff/parent input, observation, and direct trials with IEP-aligned music therapy interventions.

The following criteria are considered when determining the necessity of music therapy as a related service within the IEP:

- a) Can the student's IEP goal areas be functionally supported through music therapy interventions?
- b) Is additional support required to address relevant goals based on factors such as slow or insufficient progress, interfering behaviors, or a limited number of instructional approaches the student has been responsive to?
- c) Is music a documented learning strength for the student?
- d) Given the music-assisted learning supports available in the student's current program, are modifications or additional specialization necessary to access this learning strength?

4) Recommendations

When making recommendations, a continuum of options is explored based on the student's individual needs, and in consideration of the least restrictive environment where music-based educational strategies can be integrated. An emphasis is placed on strategies that can be most easily implemented across settings in order to ensure continuity for the student and maximize the opportunities for generalization of skills.