

A Child like Verity

AMBER continues to help even the very youngest children, such as two-year-old Verity, who has severe sight problems, as well as global development delay and epilepsy. However, Verity responds to sound and light, and has always enjoyed the sound of music. An AMBER Music Award has enabled Verity to have Music Therapy Lessons with a professional teacher, Linda. The aim of these vital lessons is to provide a safe space in which Verity can build a trusting relationship with Linda, using shared music-making and improvisation to increase social interaction, communication skills, self-expression and self-awareness. Verity becomes excited as soon as Linda arrives for a lesson, kicking her feet in anticipation. She makes good use of the instruments and usually sustains attention and focus for the whole session. Verity often reaches for the guitar during the "Hello" song and she has recently started to pluck the strings of the guitar with care and intention, making a loud, clear sound. She has also discovered that she can 'strum' the guitar with her foot and will sometimes bang the strings with her whole hand. She plays the ocean drum, cymbal and Turkish drum with both feet in rhythmic bursts.

Verity's music therapy teacher, Linda, says:

"Verity continues to grow more confident and expressive in her use of the instruments, as well as becoming more communicative vocally and interacting more closely with me. She uses the medium of music to process the difficult feelings of anger and frustration she inevitably experiences and often reaches a state of calm and enjoyment through musical interaction and sharing.

Funding from AMBER has also allowed Verity's mother to buy her a Musical Sensory Tub containing all sorts of brightly coloured musical instrument that Verity can hold, shake, rattle and bang. These have encouraged her to smile and make noises as she listens to the sounds they make.

Verity's mother,
Natalie, says
"It is difficult to put
into words how much
the Musical Sensory
Tub has helped Verity.
She now picks up and
shakes the chimes and
the shakers, which is
amazing considering
her hand and eye
coordination just a
few months ago."

Verity's Musical Sensory Tub