

# Educational Benefits of Playing Marimbas

by Jesse Rowan

- Music is often under-represented in the curriculum, but research shows that learning and experiencing playing music helps children's academic performance, thinking and problem-solving skills.
- Music can be a creative experience of problem-solving to work out parts that sound good together.
- Children are highly motivated to play marimbas -it's fun! Children learn best when having fun.
- Playing music helps improve concentration and memory. Marimba playing is strongly based on learning patterns and sequences.
- Regardless of their musical level, children can play simple patterns that can be added together to make a great musical sound.
- Listening skills are greatly enhanced when playing marimbas: players need to listen carefully to play in time together.
- Both sides of the brain are exercised - the hands are alternated most of the time, and crossing of the midline becomes second nature.
- Two or three children can play parts on one marimba together, making them a social and co-operative activity.
- Teachers can teach music with marimbas without extensive musical expertise.
- The science of sound production can be demonstrated and studied through the marimba.
- Marimbas make it easy for children to learn short repeating patterns which work under a melody. A third child can put in simple notes that sound 'right' for the bass. Mozart as a young child put it like this: "I am looking for two notes that love each other."
- Learning small parts that contribute to the whole sound of a performance is possible without the usual years of hard work it takes for a musician to have the pleasure of making music with others.
- A whole class can be involved by adding in other percussion instruments, singing and movements for a performance.

