

FREE|NOTES

HARMONY PARK™

A PLAYCORE Company



White Papers | 2025

Harmony in Mind: Nurturing Teen Development

Harmony in Mind:

Nurturing Teen Development

Shaping the Adolescent Journey

Picture a group of teenagers gathered outside after school. Some scroll through phones, others linger in quiet conversation, while a few simply drift away in search of something more engaging. This season of life is full of possibility, yet it is also fragile, shaped by pressures, distractions, and the search for belonging. Music offers a pathway forward. When paired with the freedom of outdoor spaces, it becomes a powerful outlet for creativity, expression, and connection. With the right tools, these moments can grow into opportunities that strengthen minds, foster well-being, and help teens discover who they are becoming.

What Are Freenotes Instruments?

Freenotes Harmony Park instruments are pentatonic-scale musical instruments designed for outdoor settings, encouraging spontaneous, improvisational play. Engineered to withstand any climate, these durable instruments invite individuals of all ages and abilities to create music without barriers.

Through intuitive interaction, Freenotes instruments spark curiosity, inspire creativity, and can ignite a lasting interest in music

"Music is the electrical soil in which the spirit lives, thinks, and invents."

Ludwig van Beethoven

Why Choose a Music?

In today's digital world, it is increasingly critical to nurture the minds of adolescents and support the key milestones that shape their development. Outdoor music offers a welcoming space where teens can reconnect with themselves, engage with others, and explore their creativity. It also encourages confidence, well-being, and a lasting sense of belonging.

There's no denying the role music plays in shaping how we think and feel. When paired with the restorative benefits of outdoor environments, it becomes a uniquely powerful tool for growth and well-being. Programs such as The Harmony Project in Los Angeles reflects this impact, with 90% of participating students pursuing higher education for at least three years and showing notable improvements in academic performance, especially in reading.¹

The multifaceted benefits of outdoor music for teens can be effectively harnessed by communities.



COGNITIVE



SOCIAL



PHYSICAL

¹ The Harmony Project is a Los Angeles-based non-profit that provides free music education and instruments to underserved children and teens. The claim directly from the organization's published reports on its program's impact.

Cognitive Benefits: Building Stronger Minds

Music activates the regions of the brain responsible for emotion, memory, and reward. As illustrated in “Your Kid’s Brain on Music” from the NAMM Foundation, music is a proven tool for supporting growth during a teen’s most formative years:

- **Enhanced Brain Function:** Music stimulates neural pathways, demonstrably improving focus, memory, and cognitive processing.
- **Refined Auditory Skills:** Teens who engage with music develop a keener ear for nuanced sounds, which aids in language development and overall comprehension.
- **Academic Achievement:** Students involved in music programs often achieve higher grades and perform better on standardized tests, showcasing the strong link between musical and academic aptitude.²

Physical Benefits: Active Minds, Active Bodies

Outdoor musical instruments naturally encourage physical movement, further enhancing developmental benefits. Positive relationship between physical activity and brain function:

- **Improved Academic Performance:** Teens engaging in regular physical activity are 20% more likely to achieve higher grades in core subjects such as Math and English.
- **Brain Power Boost:** A mere 20 minutes of physical activity significantly increases brain activity, boosting focus and cognitive clarity.
- **Sharper Memory:** Consistent physical activity improves memory by up to 16% and reduces behavioral challenges.³

Social Benefits: Connected Community

Teens are instinctively drawn to music as a form of self-expression and connection. Outdoor musical instruments provide a welcoming environment where they can explore their creativity in an open, low-pressure atmosphere. These spaces naturally foster:

- **Social Interaction:** Encouraging collaboration and teamwork as teens create music together.
- **Stress Regulation:** Combining the calming effects of nature with the therapeutic power of music.
- **Physical Engagement:** Promoting movement and physical activity, particularly through larger instruments that invite full-body interaction.

² The NAMM Foundation is a non-profit organization that promotes the benefits of music education. Its publication, “Your Kid’s Brain on Music,” synthesizes research from various sources to explain the cognitive benefits of music engagement in a clear, accessible way for parents and educators.

³ This finding comes from a 2010 report by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) titled “The association between school-based physical activity, including physical education, and academic performance.”

Harmony in Motion

The Harmony Project

The Harmony Project in Los Angeles is a powerful case study for the transformative impact of music. By providing free music classes to students from low-income families, the program has produced remarkable results:

- 90% of students enrolled for at least three years pursue higher education.
- Participants show significant gains in reading scores, a direct link between music training and cognitive function.
- The program instills discipline, perseverance, and a love for learning, equipping students with valuable skills for life.

The project's success underscores the importance of making music accessible to all teens, particularly in underserved communities.

Conclusion: Freenotes For Teens

Outdoor community spaces equipped with Freenotes Harmony Park instruments offer extraordinary opportunity to support teen development across all areas: cognitively, physically, and socially. By investing in these innovative experiences, communities can create environments that can help shape healthier, more connected futures for today's youth.

Together, we can create vibrant, inclusive spaces where teens thrive through the powerful combination of music, nature, and community connection.



Join the movement to bring music outdoors.

Freenotes Harmony Park
544 Chestnut Street
Chattanooga, TN 37402
info@freenotesharmonypark.com
833-262-1569

References

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2010). The association between school-based physical activity, including physical education, and academic performance. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

American Music Therapy Association. (n.d.). Music therapy and sensory disorders. Retrieved from <https://www.musictherapy.org>

Freenotes Harmony Park. (2025). Outdoor music: Enhancing brain development and wellbeing for teens. American Music Therapy Association. (n.d.). Music therapy and sensory disorders. Retrieved from <https://www.musictherapy.org>

NAMM Foundation. (n.d.). Your kid's brain on music.

American Music Therapy Association. (n.d.). Music therapy and sensory disorders. Retrieved from <https://www.musictherapy.org>

The Harmony Project. (n.d.). What we do. American Music Therapy Association. (n.d.) Music therapy and sensory disorders. Retrieved from <https://www.musictherapy.org>