

## **The Use of Music Therapy to Improve Non-Verbal Communication Skills for Children with Autism**

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**Abstract :** The number of school-aged children with autism in Indonesia has been increasing each year. Autism is a developmental disorder which can be diagnosed in childhood. One of the symptoms is the lack of communication skills. Music therapy is known as an effective treatment for children with autism. Music elements and structures create a good space for children with autism to express their feelings and communicate their thoughts. School-aged children are expected to be able to communicate non-verbally very well, but children with autism experience the difficulties of communicating non-verbally. The aim of this research is to analyze the significance of music therapy treatment to improve non-verbal communication tools for children with autism. This research informs teachers and parents on how music can be used as a media to communicate with children with autism. The qualitative method is used to analyze this research, while the result is described with the microanalysis technique. The result is measured specifically from the whole experiment, hours of every week, minutes of every session, and second of every moment. The samples taken are four school-aged children with autism in the age range of six to 11 years old. This research is conducted within four months started with observation, interview, literature research, and direct experiment. The result demonstrates that music therapy could be effectively used as a non-verbal communication tool for children with autism, such as changes of body gesture, eye contact, and facial expression.

**Keywords :** autism, improvisation, microanalysis, music therapy, nonverbal communication, school-aged

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