



Charity Number 1169504

9th Meeting of the
Music Educators and Researchers of Young
Children England

Music!

Playing to learn and learning to play.

Saturday 31st October 2026

09.30 - 16.30

Berkshire Music Trust

Reading

Call for Contributions

Call published on Monday 23rd March 2026

Submission deadline for abstract:

Friday 1st May 2026

This ninth conference follows previous biennial meetings, beginning in 2012. Past meetings have been hosted by universities and/or music education organisations from across England. The 2026 in-person meeting will be hosted by Berkshire Music Trust.

MERYC England is a charity and is affiliated to EuNet MERYC that hosts a European conference biennially. MERYC England normally hosts its meetings in the alternate years.

This one-day conference will explore and celebrate the diverse ways in which early childhood music educators work alongside young children and families to encourage musical play and learning.

The event will spotlight different approaches to pedagogy and practice and generate discussion about how musicians can use playful approaches to encourage and support learning in and through music making.

You will have the opportunity to reflect on how research and practice influence four key questions:

- How do we facilitate child-led musical play and creativity?
- What musical environments help us to play and create with young children?
- How do we document and evaluate children's musical creativity?
- Do you use any particular approaches you would like to share?

We encourage interactive participation through discussion, practical activities, dissemination of research and innovative practice relating to the field of music in early childhood (0-5 years), in education (both inside and outside school), informal

learning contexts and everyday life. We welcome abstracts from participants from the UK and Europe. These will be reviewed anonymously.

Julia Partington
Chair of MERYC England

Panel of Reviewers

- Danielle Ballantine-Drake
- Margareta Burrell
- Carol Bowden
- Barbara Cavanagh
- Steve Grocott
- Ryan Humphrey
- Julia Partington
- Vanessa Stansall

Submissions Procedure

Abstracts (350 words) should be structured according to these outlines:

Spoken Papers

Spoken papers are twenty-minute presentations that can be used to share original research, provide practice-based insights, project updates or work in progress. These papers should respond to one or more of the conference key questions, and presenters should be prepared to engage in discussion with delegates, as there will be a short (up to 10 minutes) question-and-answer session at the end of each paper. Visual aids (presentation slides) are optional but recommended to help disseminate ideas. We recommend PowerPoint or Slides as useful formats.

Abstracts for Spoken papers should address the following headings:

For a spoken practice paper, the headings should include:

1. *Theoretical background and content*
2. *Age and characteristics of participants*
3. *Aims of the project*
4. *Method or pedagogical approach*
5. *The activities*
6. *The outcomes*
7. *Conclusions and implications for future practice*

Lightning Talks

5 mins presentation

Lightning talks are short 5-minute presentations that can be used to introduce a topic, pose provocations and share emerging ideas and project updates. They are a fun way to contribute to the conference and can be a useful way of 'dipping your toe' into presenting at a conference. They should be clear and concise, getting right to the heart of the topic.

As with any presentation, it can be useful to practice and time it, as it is important not to rush through and cram in too much information. Slides are not essential; however, if using slides, we can recommend the following tools offering timed presentations:

Ignite - 20 slides, 15 seconds per slide.

Pecha Kucha - 20 slides, 20 seconds per slide.

In general, the most effective lightning talks are brief and clarify the slides presented.

For lightning talks, the abstract headings should include:

1. *Background*
2. *Aims*
3. *Method*
4. *Results*
5. *Conclusions*

Workshop - Practice demonstration

Workshop presentations enable delegates to engage with the conference theme through active participation. Unlike traditional academic conference papers, workshops blur the line between speaker and audience by offering hands-on opportunities. When preparing a proposal, contributors must ensure it addresses one of the conference's main themes and specify an approximate length of the workshop (max 45 mins).

For workshop presentations, the abstract headings should include:

- *Background*
- *Aims*
- *Interactive participation (an idea of what delegates will experience through the workshop/demonstration)*
- *Implications*
- *Specific value and meaning (indicate in four keywords the workshop's purpose, intended focus and its value for participants)*

Submitting your abstract

Please indicate whether your abstract is for a) spoken paper b) lightning talk, or c) workshop presentation.

Your abstract submission includes the following information:

Title

Author

Affiliation (if relevant)

Author's contact email

Abstract (350 words)

Add three keywords in your submission

Submit to: info@merycengland.co.uk

Deadline for submissions: Friday 1st May 2026

Submissions will be double reviewed by members of the MERYCEngland2026 Panel of Reviewers.

Book of Abstracts

There will be no proceedings produced of the day and a full paper will not be required. Abstracts will be compiled and be made available on the day.

Deadline information

May 1st 2026	Abstract Submission
July 7th 2026	Notification of abstract acceptance
September 2026	Early-bird registration opens

Conference Registration

The registration fee includes access to all sessions, coffee breaks and meals. For each presentation at least one author should be registered at the Conference before 15th September 2026 in order for the abstract to be included in the Abstract book, and the presentation to be scheduled in the Conference timetable.

Registration Fees

Before 15th September 2026	£55
After 15th September 2026	£70