



# BENEFITS OF THE ARTS IN CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

**For our founder, Adam Tulloch, the importance of offering arts opportunities to children and young people comes from his lived experience.**

Growing up in a deprived area with little to no local arts clubs or initiatives for him to participate in, Adam built Total Insight Theatre in his twenties fuelled by his vision that every child, no matter their background, experience or postcode, should be able to access the arts and the benefits they bring to young people.

The Guardian's veteran theatre critic, [Lyn Gardner](#) supports this wish, as referenced in one of her speeches: *"Theatre, particularly theatre for children, fires the imagination, it gives our children the skills and the creativity necessary to face the world, to understand it and perhaps to change it, too."*

Benefitting from the arts stretches further than simple enjoyment. [A research paper by Procedia](#) examining the effects of art education on children lists the advantages as helping young people develop effective communication and social skills, the ability to problem-solve, as well as building up self-respect and self-esteem.

In this piece, we'll cover those benefits in greater detail and uncover why they're so important to us and the work we do at Total Insight.

## **Collaborative working**

The saying, *the show must go on* exemplifies this benefit.

Working together in teams necessitates the need for a collaborative approach - shown on stage when another cast member fills in for someone else's forgotten line, or off stage when a group of participants work together to create the show's poster.

The Procedia paper says that: *"With artistic activities, the child learns to finish the work they start, giving the taste of working together and feeling respectful of the ideas and works of others."*

In theatre, everyone is working towards one common goal: to produce a great show. The only way this is possible is if the cast and crew work together as a team, building each other up to raise the bar for the entire production.

This benefit is also seen in participatory working, such as our [creative hubs](#), which provide creative opportunities for young people to explore the ongoing impact COVID-19 is having on them through different art forms. Delivered through a multi-disciplinary offering, different art forms including spoken word, photography, screenwriting and movement are utilised to give participants the opportunity to connect with other young people and get creative.

Looking ahead to later in life, there aren't many professional settings that won't require at least a small element of teamwork, so it's an important benefit to learn at a young age and then carry for years to come.

## **Problem-solving**

In improvisation tasks, participants - both young and old - have to lean on their problem-solving skills to continue a scene.

Procedia's paper says that: *"Through a drama game, [children] try new roles and learn to compromise to carry on the game."*

Hearing an unexpected line or scenario at the top of an improvisation may momentarily throw the participant, but by learning how to tolerate the ideas of others and to become adaptive to changing situations, young participants can gather vital skills early in life which will set them up for success outside of the rehearsal room.

In professional settings, this could be being asked to fill in someone's place in a meeting at short notice, or to give a quick presentation of your team's performance. Learning problem-solving and improvisational skills early in life will make these scenarios easier to deal with as they crop up again later in life.

## **Confidence and self-esteem**

Participating in drama games breaks down the barriers to entry that some might have when faced with social situations, such as embarrassment or low confidence.

In a drama game, being told it's OK to have fun, make noises, shout and pull funny faces helps children and young people grow their willingness to take part and find the enjoyment in collaborative play, which in turn increases their self-esteem.

This early development can then translate into better and increased participation in school with things like answering questions in lessons or volunteering.

Finishing any task creates a sense of achievement - but none more so than the arts. Knowing you've created something that serves a purpose, be that to entertain, educate or inspire; then being able to share that with the world gives a space for those involved to reflect back on the work achieved, together.

This in turn builds essential touchpoints to revisit when approaching new tasks, using the memory and feeling of achievement to propel their engagement in future activities.

## **Effective communication and social skills**

The arts show that there are more ways than one to communicate - be that through singing, dancing, acting, painting or playing music - the list is practically endless.

For different learners, this is an important benefit, and is something they can take back into the classroom to help their academic learning, be that as a visual, auditory, kinesthetic or reading and writing learner.

Having experience of communicating in front of audiences will have a positive impact on an individual's willingness to speak in public settings outside of the studio. The arts are a safe place to learn and experiment, to go wrong and figure things out. This formative experience sets individuals up for a successful future, where effective communication comes easily.

This can be seen in situations entirely separate from the arts; in general presentation and sharing situations, job interviews and meetings with team members where effective and clear communication is key.

Within any of our creative hubs, after-school sessions, productions or workshops, we aim to inspire change and instil these benefits in the young participants, so they can use the skills they learn with us in real-life situations, and do so for the rest of their life.

To help us ensure that children and young people continue to have access to creative programmes which help them develop lifelong skills, visit [www.totalinsighttheatre.com/support-us](http://www.totalinsighttheatre.com/support-us)

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