

# Musical Interventions in the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit: A Review of Literature

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The neonatal intensive care unit (NICU) provides specialized care for ill or premature newborn infants. However, due to the nature of the hospital environment and the presence of intrusive stimuli, the NICU inherently creates the possibility of harmful over-stimulation for patients which can be detrimental to development. Therefore, music has been used in the NICU with the intention of alleviating these stressors and providing a sense of normalization.

In the last 20 years, there has been an expansion in research concerning musical interventions in the NICU regarding its behavioral and physiological effects and how it may influence environmental conditions and neurological development (Standley, 2018). However, the type of musical interventions studied are diverse, taking various forms such as live and recorded music performed or selected by board-certified music therapists and parents. Therefore, the purpose of this paper is to review literature on three forms of musical interventions in the neonatal unit (i.e., prerecorded, live, parental) in order to gain insight into the effectiveness of different musical delivery methods.