SUPERVISOR/S: Bronya Dean and Rebecca Evans

PROJECT TITLE: The musical lives of children in the Growing Up in New Zealand study

FIELD: Music education / music psychology

DIVISION/SCHOOL: DEDU - School of Education

PROJECT LOCATION: Tauranga

PROJECT ABSTRACT:
Musical engagement can positively affect wellbeing, educational outcomes, and social and emotional competencies across the lifespan. Infants’ earliest interactions are musical and parents and caregivers around the world sing and use music to encourage prosocial behaviour, to teach cultural conventions, to entertain, to facilitate routines and regulate emotions. Although there is a growing body of research examining young children’s home music environments and everyday musical engagement, these have been small-scale qualitative studies with a limited demographic. Our study will use data from the Growing Up in New Zealand (GUiNZ) longitudinal study to explore aspects of the musical lives of young children in Aotearoa New Zealand and the factors that influence young children’s musical experiences. A Summer Scholar will be supported to contribute to the initial descriptive analysis of the data. GUiNZ has collected data from over 6,000 children at 9 months, 2 years, 45 months and 4.5 years, 6 years, and 8 years. Using this data, three measures of musical environments and engagement will be explored: musical responsiveness, musical interactions, and musical activities. Each of these areas will be examined in relation to a number of different factors including socio-economic status, the main caregiver’s age, ethnicity, parental mental health, and parental education. The overall aim of the research is to gain a broad understanding of the musical lives of young children in Aotearoa New Zealand and to map trajectories that confer resilience and optimise development. A summer scholar will analyse the data and explore associated literature in relation to at least one factor that may influence the musical lives of children. For example, socio-economic status, the age of the main caregiver, or ethnicity. The scholar will be given the opportunity to choose to focus on an area they have a particular interest in.

STUDENT SKILLS:
- An interest in at least one of the following: early childhood education, early childhood development, music education, music psychology
- Able to search, read, analyse and summarise key themes in research literature
- Basic statistical analysis skills
- Experience using SPSS (or willing to learn)
- Attention to detail
- Strong academic writing skills
- Ability to work both independently and as part of a team.

PROJECT TASKS:
- Conduct a literature scan of academic literature relating to the chosen area of interest
- Write an annotated bibliography
- Use SPSS to explore and analyse the data in relation to the chosen area(s) of interest and the three measures of musical environment and engagement.
- Produce a final research poster (as per summer scholar requirements)
- Contribute to a peer-reviewed journal article and/or conference paper

EXPECTED OUTCOMES:
- Student’s Research Poster (as per clause 6 of the Scholarship regulations)
- An annotated bibliography
- Analysis of at least one aspect of the data
- At least one conference paper or article (relating to the work of the summer scholar)