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Music therapy for children with Autism Spectrum Disorder

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About the author

Mathieu Pater was born on March 29, 1981 in Noorder-Koggenland, The Netherlands.

After his pre-vocational secondary education exams at Tabor school, where he studied ‘fashion and clothing’, he decided to continue his education in the direction of health care. At Horizon College he followed the secondary vocational education activity counsellor. During this education he got acquainted with different groups of people and he learned to use creativity in the guidance. In 2004 he received his diploma Music Therapy (BA) at the University of Applied Sciences Utrecht, Amersfoort, The Netherlands.

At the end of 2005, Mathieu was introduced to the Papageno Foundation, a foundation established by Jaap and Aaltje van Zweden. The purpose of the foundation is to support children with a form of autism and their families. The foundation has several activities, including offering music therapy. Music therapists connected to the foundation bring music therapy to children and young people with autism, often in the home situation but also at school or day care.

Mathieu then studied from 2008 to 2010 at Hogeschool Zuyd in Heerlen with Henk Smeijsters, where he obtained his Master of Music Therapy degree. In 2013 he completed a training for coach at ICM training.

Mathieu has an independently established practice for music therapy and works together with the Papageno Foundation. There he gives music therapy and is also coordinator of the Papageno music therapy. He is responsible for the team of music therapists and the professionalization of this group of care providers. Together with Papageno, Mathieu’s mission is to make music therapy possible throughout the Netherlands for children and young people with autism. In addition, he gives guest lectures, workshops and readings, and organizes study days about autism and music therapy.

At the end of 2021 Mathieu wrote the book ‘De kracht van muziek, voor kinderen en jongeren met autisme’ together with Aaltje van Zweden. In ‘De kracht van muziek’ they share their own experiences, inspiring case descriptions, recent scientific research and they look at the unique properties of music. In addition, various techniques and methods are discussed. This book provides insight into how music can be used.