

Singing: Singing is one of the great starting points for children's musical activity. At first, **babies need to hear adults sing, and over time children start to join in.** The more children sing, the more tuneful they will become, as singing in tune is a skill. The great thing about singing is that it can be done anywhere and any place. **Singing is particularly useful for children who have asthma as it can help them to breathe more efficiently.**

Action songs and games: Many early years settings will do some action songs with children, such as Head, Shoulders, Knees and Toes, or games like Musical Statues. These are enjoyable for children and can help them to socialise as well as develop co-ordination and listening skills. Most children are ready to join in with these from about two years of age.

Un-tuned percussion instruments: From as young as nine months, children can enjoy simple percussion instruments such as shakers, rattles and drums. These can be home made and in some early years settings may be made into a sound wall.

Un-tuned instruments - that is, **instruments that don't play a particular note or notes - can help your child to develop their co-ordination skills** and also find the beat (see later). Once children

reach about three years old, they are likely to be ready to join in group activities with percussion instruments. This can help them with turn-taking as well as listening.



Tuned percussion instruments and keyboard: Instruments such as xylophones, glockenspiels and keyboards can help children to create tunes. **Look out for simple versions** and sit with your child to help them see the relation between the position of a note on the keyboard and its pitch (high or low sound).

Learning to play a musical instrument: If your child is showing an interest in music, you might consider helping them to learn one. To make progress, children need to be motivated, be able to concentrate and be sufficiently co-ordinated. You

should also consider whether your child is mature enough to practise and whether you will have the time to support them in this. As a broad rule of thumb, most children are not ready for this until they are about six years old, but do ask advice from a music teacher.

FINDING THE BEAT

One of the many benefits of musical activity for young children is the way that it can improve their listening and attention skills. Listening and paying attention is key for all sorts of other learning.

There are many listening activities linked to music that you can do with your child. One of the easiest is to help your child clap, tap or shake an instrument in time to the beat.

Most young children are good at finding the beat especially when adults take the lead by clapping along. There is some evidence that being able to find and keep a beat may be good for developing reading skills.

FIVE TIPS TO SHARE MUSIC

There are several easy things you may wish to try to help your child benefit from music.

1. Sing! Try to sing every day. You could make it part of a routine, such as getting dressed or

having a bath and shower. It doesn't matter what type of songs you sing and you can even make them up as you go along.



2. Make simple music together: Children enjoy rattling shakers or beating drums in time to music. **This helps them learn that they can be part of music making.** Put on a track that you both enjoy and shake and rattle away.

You can make simple shakers by partly filling a plastic bottle with items such as rice or pasta and then either tightly screwing on the lid or gluing it down.

3. Listen to different kinds of music: Children benefit from having listened to and enjoyed a wide range of music styles. As well as putting on your favourite tracks and radio stations, try out a few different sounds and styles and see how your child reacts.