

A child's interests are

Windows of Opportunity

to fun and enjoyable learning

Making and listening to **music** are powerful learning activities for many young children



Places to learn and activities to enjoy **AT HOME**

In the living room or family room

- Show babies and young children how to touch family musical instruments (piano, guitar, and others) with care. Let them sit close by to watch and listen as you perform or practice.
- Play music on a radio or stereo and move to the beat or dance together.
- Keep simple rhythm instruments—sealed bean-filled jar shakers, wooden rhythm sticks, a small washboard, etc., in a handy basket. Let your child “play along” with music recordings.

Out in the yard

- Make a musical wind chime to hang from your porch or a tree branch to make pretty tinkling sounds when moved by the wind or a little hand. Use lengths of bamboo or old spoons and string, for example.
- Point out and listen together to nature's music: birds, tree frogs, buzzing bees, crickets, etc.

Bedroom

- Lullabies can soothe your little one to sleep.
- Play gentle music with a slow, steady rhythm as your child prepares for bed and falls asleep.

Kitchen and dining room

- Your kitchen cupboards are filled with “music-makers” your child will love to explore: A row of glasses filled with different amounts of water and tapped with a spoon; a pair of pot-lid cymbals; cookpot drums to beat with a wooden spoon; a jingly set of measuring spoons to shake; plastic storage tubs to thump with open palms; and more!
- Make up songs about what you're doing in the kitchen: ***Now it's time to wash the dishes, wash the dishes, wash the dishes. Now it's time to wash the dishes, 'til they're nice and clean!***
- Bring music to the table by singing together before family meals. In some homes, a sung blessing of the food is traditional. You could also sing as a way to recognize the joy of being together at table. Make up your own family song, or look through a children's songbook for ideas.

Bath tub at bath time

- Soapy, sudsy bath times seem just right for silly songs. Make up funny words to familiar tunes, or try some chants and raps.
- Find ways to make music with water. Can you splash in time to a song?

Places to learn and activities to enjoy **AWAY FROM HOME**

Taking a walk in the neighborhood

- Sing as you go. Sing about what you see along the way.
- Discover where you can stop during your stroll and hear music: Outside the door of a record shop; near the open window of a piano teacher giving lessons at home; next to a stoop where neighbors are having a weekly “jam session;” near the “water music” of a rushing brook or waterfall; etc.
- Tuck a few musical toys (rattles, chimes...) in your child’s stroller or tie them within easy reach.



Visits to friends and family

- When visiting friends and family who are musicians, ask them to perform for your little music lover.



Community center or library

- Ask for a schedule of free events involving music.
- Many libraries have music recordings you can check out to take home or listen to on earphones in the library.
- Library story times often involve singing. Many libraries offer special concerts from time to time by artists who enjoy entertaining children.
- Enjoy family-friendly square, folk, or contra dances that welcome the presence of children.
- Consult your local newspaper or radio stations to learn about community festivals and fairs that include live music performances.

Playground or park

- Find out if your park hosts outdoor concerts your family can attend.
- Look for music-making possibilities in the park. Some playgrounds have creative climbing structures that include elements like pipe chimes.
- Make up songs or chants to sing while you push your little one in the swing, ride the seesaw, etc.

Other community resources

- Check with local community events calendars (news media) to see if parent-child music classes are offered in your area. One such program, Kindermusik, introduces babies, toddlers, and preschoolers to all sorts of fun musical activities.
- If you don’t remember many children’s songs from your childhood, ask friends who are moms and dads or ask your own parents to teach you some to share with your child.



Making music is a joy for many young children!

