



Music Ideas

Color to the Music

Get out crayons, colored markers, and paper and set them on the floor. Turn on some music, get down on the floor together, and listen with your child for a few moments. Talk with your child about how the music makes you feel and ask your child what she thinks of when she hears the music. Then, start coloring while listening. When you're done, ask your child to tell you about what she drew. Try a variety of different musical styles, and then compare the pictures. Talk about the different subjects, the different colors, and the lighter and darker parts of the pictures. This is a great way to introduce children to music, and it may help your child express unspoken feelings and thoughts.

Sing-Away Separation Anxiety

Try this activity to help ease separations such as your leaving for work or your child going off to preschool, to kindergarten, or even to Grandma's house. Try associating a happy song you can sing together before the separation each day. Pick a song together and make up a silly dance to go with it. If you get in the habit of singing and dancing to this song every time you and your child have to part, your child may come to associate this happy singing and dancing experience with the separation, and it will start to feel more comfortable and familiar.

Bang a Drum

Get down on the floor with your child and start banging on drums, pots and pans, or any containers you have. (Or use pillows for a quieter game!) Try making a rhythm and asking your child to imitate it. Make up lots of different rhythms and ask your child to make up her own. Try playing one rhythm while your child plays a different one. This activity introduces kids to rhythm and tempo and is a simple extension of a musical activity most kids love already.

Do the "Sticky Dance"

Here's a way to add an additional tactile experience to dancing. Set up squares of contact paper, sticky-side up, around the room. (The kitchen floor works best.). Tape down the edges of the paper with masking tape. In bare feet or socks, run, skip, and march together across the paper. Talk with your child about the way the sticky paper feels and the way it sounds. Now, turn on some music and start dancing or marching in place to the music. Stay on one piece of the contact paper or dance from one piece to the next. Try dancing on the bare floor and then on the contact paper or dance with one foot on and one foot off the paper.

Sing a "What We're Doing" Song

One of the easiest ways to add music to your child's life is to turn everything you and your child do into a song. At bath time, make up a "We're Taking a Bath" song. Just start singing whatever comes to mind. The lyrics can be as simple as "Oh, we're taking a bath in the water. We're getting all soapy and wet. Taking a bath in the water. Taking a bath, you bet!" You don't have to rhyme or stick to a single melody.

Let your child make up lyrics or try singing one line of the song and having your child repeat the line. For example, when getting dressed, you and your child could sing. "It's time to get dressed. It's time to get dressed. Now, what should we wear? Now, what should we wear?" Doing this helps introduce your child to music, melody, and language, and it makes even mundane tasks more enjoyable.

Children See. Children Do

You don't stop playing because you grow old, you grow old when you stop playing

Musical Instruments

Children love music as much as they enjoy making things. Why not join these two creative forces and make one or all of these fun and easy musical instruments to encourage play and creativity.

DECORATIVE ITEMS

For any of these activities, you can leave the items plain or decorate them. If you need ideas for decorating these projects, try any of the following items. We are sure this list will help you think of even more items you can use. Combine different things such as buttons and glitter or sequins and yarn. Let the children's creativity surprise you!

Keeping items such as these in a large plastic storage container makes for easy access and quick clean up.

- sequins
- buttons
- yarn
- ribbon
- masking tape
- beads
- glitter
- sand
- cellophane
- construction paper
- magazines
- photos
- crayons
- markers
- colored pencils
- paint
- nail polish

When you are finished constructing your instruments, have a camera ready to take a picture of the band. Record this activity in your child's scrapbook so you can look back in years to come.

TAMBOURINE

- 2 paper plates
- stapler or glue
- hole punch
- string
- jingle bells
- crayons

Staple or glue two paper plates together, facing each other. Using a hole punch, make holes around the plates and tie jingle bells to the holes with string. Decorate the tambourine with crayons.

Shake to play.

Note: Heavy duty paper plates may be more durable for this craft.

Safety note: If using a stapler, an adult should do this. When finished be sure to cover the staples with scotch tape.

DRUM

- empty oatmeal box with cover
- yarn
- pen
- 2 pencils
- 2 spools
- construction paper
- crayons

Before beginning, you can decorate the oatmeal box with construction paper and/or crayons for a colorful effect.

Place the cover on the box. Use a pen to make a hole in the center of the cover and in the center of the bottom of the box. Through these holes, pull a piece of yarn long enough to hang around child's neck and down to their waist.

For the drumsticks, place the spools at the ends of the pencils, secure with glue if necessary.

Beat to play.

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CHIMES

- ruler or stick
- washers
- nail polish
- string
- mixing spoon

Hang the washers from the ruler or stick with pieces of string by wrapping the string around the ruler or stick and securing. Strike the washers with the mixing spoon to play.

Note: You can make this craft colorful by painting the washers first with different color nail polishes, such as red, gold, glittery, etc. Parents should supervise this part of the activity closely.

HORN

- paper towel roll
- waxed paper
- rubber band
- pen

Cover one end of the paper towel roll with waxed paper, secure it with a rubber band. Punch a row of holes along one side of the roll with the tip of a pen.

To play, sing a tune into the open end of the horn.

CYMBALS

- two matching pot covers
- yarn or ribbon

Tie the ribbon or yarn around the handles of the pot covers. To play, strike together.

XYLOPHONE

- tall glasses or jars
- water
- mixing spoon

Fill the glasses or jars with different amounts of water. The more water in the glass, the lower the pitch will be. Having less water in the glass or jar will raise the pitch.

To play, gently strike the glasses with a mixing spoon.

Note: This instrument should probably be played by older children in "the band" because of the use of glass.

COMB BUZZER

- pocket comb
- tissue paper

Fold a piece of tissue paper over the tooth edge of a comb. To play, hum through the tissue paper.

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GUITAR

- empty shoe box
- rubber bands
- ruler or stick

Remove the cover from the box. Stretch the rubber bands around the box. Attach the ruler or stick to the back of the box on one end to act as the arm of the guitar.

To play, strum or pluck the rubber bands.

HAND BELLS

- 2 paper towel rolls
- hole punch
- 4 jingle bells
- string or yarn

Punch a hole in each end of the paper towel rolls. Tie two jingle bells to each side of the paper towel rolls by running string or yarn through the holes and carefully tying off.

Shake to play.

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