



Exploring Sounds

Children love music, in part, because it gives them a chance to make sounds, listen to sound, and learn about sound. Exploring different sounds helps children develop their art skills, as well as builds good listening skills and other important pre-literacy skills. You can help your child learn about sounds with these activities:

INFANT:

- Babies like quiet, high-pitched, rhythmic voices. Imitate the sounds they make to the tune of a favorite song. For example, to the tune of “Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star,” sing “Ba, Ba, Ba, Ba, Ba, Ba” instead of the words.
- Offer your infant toys that make noise. Show him how it works and let him try to make the different sounds.
- Point out interesting sounds. For example, during a walk, ask your child questions that will encourage her to listen: “What do you hear? Is that a bird? It makes a beautiful chirping noise, like this: (imitate the noise).”

TODDLER:

- Read aloud stories to your toddler everyday. Have fun! Use different voices for the characters and ask your child to make different sounds (a horn honking, a cow mooing, or a baby crying) to go along with the words. Adding sounds to stories will help your child focus on the story and bring him into the action.
- Talk about beat. Point out the noise a kitchen clock makes and ask your child if it is a steady beat; ask her if a car horn or a dog barking has a steady beat.
- Sing to your child. Sing songs that you remember from your childhood. Use your voice in different musical ways – loud and quiet, high and low, fast and slow.
- Encourage your child to explore and discover how music sounds are made. Help him experiment with everyday objects. Try: hitting a spoon against a metal bowl, banging pot lids together, tapping two pencils, tapping a piece of aluminum foil or pie plates, plucking rubber bands, or stomping on bubble wrap.

PRESCHOOLERS:

- Let your child “play” different musical instruments. Have her explore how each instrument works: bang on a drum, shake a maraca, push the piano keys, blow into a kazoo, strum a guitar, or tap a xylophone. Ask her to play an instrument while you sing a familiar song.
- Listen to the radio. Ask your child to name some of the instruments he hears. Provide him with a set of bells, shakers, or rattles to hold in each hand. Encourage him to shake the instrument to the beat of the music.
- Practice patterns. Clap or stomp your feet to short rhythmic patterns. Invite your child to copy what you just did. As your child gets older and more used to the game, make the patterns longer and more complicated. Allow him to lead.

Book Suggestion

Max Found Two Sticks by Brian Pinkney • *Shake Shake Shake* by Andrea and Brian Pinkney