

# Parenting Together

## *Early Childhood Musicianship*

Sometimes we think that only famous musicians have musical talent. However, all people are born musical, and music is for everyone. These tips will help you understand how musicianship is developed and how families can easily support musical development in early childhood.

### Everyone can learn music

It was once believed that a child was either born with musical talent or they were not. We now understand that every person is born with the capacity to develop musicianship, which is the term used to refer to all kinds of musical skills such as: understanding the music you hear, singing, playing an instrument, creating new music, and more.

We also now understand that in the brain, musicianship is developed very similarly to language. First, language and music learning require both physical skills, such as how to make certain sounds, and content skills, such as vocabulary. Second, language and music learning are best supported through active learning processes, like group practice and experimenting with new things.



### Tips for supporting musical development

There are so many ways to be involved in music that make a big impact on musical development - you don't need to be a professional musician or spend lots of money on private lessons. You might even find that by trying some of these activities with your child, your own comfort and skill in music improves.

#### **1. Listen to a wide variety of music**

It is good for the brain to hear as much variety in music as possible. This means different styles, traditions, speeds, instruments, and more. There isn't just one type of music that children should listen to - variety is actually more important.

- Pick different radio stations or playlists in the car
- Visit the music section at the library (they may even offer streaming services!)
- Listen to the musicians at community events
- Research and share the music of your own heritage

## 2. Label what you hear

Families are often very good at teaching things like colors and animals. We can do the same thing with sounds.

- Label different instruments or musical styles you hear
- Point out opposites you hear, such as fast and slow, loud and soft, and high and low
- Build songs into your routines, such as while changing a diaper or cleaning up toys

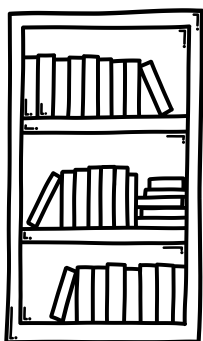
## 3. Get playful!

Children naturally want to play with music, and we can encourage this by building in time to explore, create, play, and move with music.

- Try interrupting your child's favorite song and see what they do. Many children will notice the song has stopped and turn it into a game, like peek-a-boo.
- Repeat the sounds or rhythms your child makes. This may also turn into a game, and you can extend this activity by asking the child to do something same or different from you.
- Move how the music sounds. For example, if this song reminds you of a dinosaur, how might a dinosaur move? If it sounds soft, what is a move that can match?



Supporting your child's musical development will strengthen your connection and inspire deep learning that will impact their physical, emotional, and cognitive development. Music is for everyone!



### The Book Nook

*En pos de la música /  
Finding the Music*

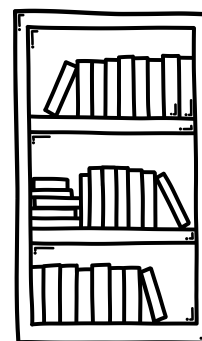
by Jennifer Torres

*We Are Music*

by Brandon Stosuv

*Edward's Rhythm  
Sticks*

by Franklin Willis



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### References

*Music Play: The Early Childhood Music Curriculum Guide for Parents, Teachers & Caregivers*

*Learning Sequences in Music* by Dr. Edwin Gordon

*The Importance of Music in Early Childhood* by Lili M. Levinowitz



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