

## **Music**

“Everyone has a song inside. It’s a matter of whether it can be brought out.”—June Kuramoto, musician and master of the koto, a Japanese instrument

No matter the age, everyone has some type of favorite music. Babies respond to certain sounds and music. Toddlers and preschoolers love to dance. As children get older, their musical preferences deepen, and many spend their days with their ears wired to mp3 players. Whether your child plays a musical instrument or not, tap into the power of music with these ideas.

### **Try it...**

#### ***For all parents***

- You don’t have to be musical to enjoy music. Put on music in the background when you eat together as a family. Let each family member take turns choosing the music played.
- Occasionally put on your favorite piece of music in front of your kids. Sing along with it. Dance to it. Talk about why that music touches your soul. Then ask your kids to put on their favorite piece of music.
- If you play an instrument (or played one in the past), take it out and play it. Choose to make music instead of watching TV so that your kids see that music has a priority in your life. If you no longer own the instrument, show pictures to your kids of you playing the instrument. Talk about why you enjoyed that instrument and how long you played.

#### ***For parents with children ages birth to 5***

- Play different types of musical styles and see how your child responds to each one. Try folk, classical, country, rock, jazz, and other musical styles. If your child becomes upset, turn it off right away. Play what your child enjoys.
- Check out music for young children from the library, such as music by Raffi, Baby Genius, Music for Little People, Susie Tallman, and Greg & Steve. Ask the librarian for other recommendations.
- Sing to your child (even if you can’t sing). Dance with your child. Fill your home life with music.

#### ***For parents with children ages 6 - 9***

- If possible, let children have their own music player and choose the music they want

to listen to. Or let them have a radio and find a station that has children's music.

- Expose your children to live music. Take them to free outdoor concerts in the park. (Many communities offer these.) Attend school concerts, which also are usually free. (They're often listed in your school district's calendar.)
- Have fun with music. With your children's favorites, make up new lyrics, sing the songs at different tempos, or create dance steps.

### ***For parents with children ages 10 - 15***

- If your child is interested in playing a band or orchestra instrument, check out a library book on different instruments. Look at different possibilities on the Internet. If possible, see if your child can listen to different instruments being played. (High school students often visit schools on a specific day to show kids their instruments.)
- Don't feel pressured to buy an instrument. Ask if your school or a local music store rents instruments. Sometimes you can borrow instruments from other families that have an instrument stored in the attic.
- During puberty, kids often change their musical tastes. If you want your child to continue playing a musical instrument, allow him or her to switch once. Many teenagers start out with standard band and orchestra instruments and then want to play percussion, electric keyboard, or electric guitar as they get older. Continue encouraging their musical expression, even if you don't agree with their taste in music.

### ***For parents with children ages 16 - 18***

- Encourage teenagers to go deeper with their music. If they play an instrument, continue to provide lessons and have them practice on a regular basis. Talk about why scales, etudes, and other techniques help build their musical skills.
- Continue to attend concerts, recitals, and other musical performances. If your teenager doesn't want you making a big deal, say that you want to be supportive and will sit in the back.
- Ask your teenagers about their favorite music. Listen to their music. If they like going to concerts, find out more about the bands and performers they like.