

It's well known that listening to music and participating in musical activities is beneficial to children, and can help in their physical, intellectual and emotional development. For a busy family, however, it can be difficult to make time for music. It doesn't need to be that way! The most important thing to remember about music, particularly for children, is that it should be fun. You can use music, singing in particular, to help children to understand what is happening, signifying a cue for a particular event or task; to stimulate their learning and make it fun; to distract from undesirable behaviour and to create a relaxing environment.

Here are a few simple ideas to make music a part of your everyday life.



# SING

# your way through the day

## Make up songs for everyday activities



Make routine activities more fun, help your child to understand what's going on and keep their mind occupied with songs and rhymes you can make up around your routine. In our house we have a song for cleaning teeth (Brush, Brush, Brush your Teeth, to the tune of *Row, Row, Row your Boat*), and others for washing hands, nappy changing, getting in the car. It doesn't need to be anything complicated, pick a song you both know, and change the words to make it work for you!

## Sing in the car



Some of my fondest memories from my childhood are singing in the car on long journeys. Sometimes to CDs and tapes of children's songs, and other times nursery rhymes or other well-known tunes. We'd make up alternative words depending on we were going, and when we were a bit older my sister and I used to love creating harmonies and singing rounds together. This is such a simple way to pass the time on car journeys.

## Tidy up to music



To make tidying up toys and getting ready for bed at the end of the day less of a chore, put some music on and dance around as you do it! Choose your music carefully if your little one is likely to get a bit over-excited too close to bedtime, or finish with something slow and calming to get them in the mood for rest.

## Listen to music instead of a nap



If your toddler is growing out of needing sleep during the day, or is resistant to napping, encourage them to have some 'down time' lying on their bed or sitting quietly and listening to music instead. I like to use classical music at times like this, but you can play anything you find relaxing and calming. There are some fantastic musical stories available to buy on CD, such as [Peter and the Wolf](#), which older children and pre-schoolers will really enjoy.

## Make instruments out of recycling



Use old yoghurt pots, toilet rolls, plastic bottles in whatever way you like to make simple rattlers, shakers and drums. Decorate with paint or by sticking coloured paper on, and you can create your very own 'junk band'. Encourage children to play along to songs you sing together or listen to on the radio using their homemade instruments.

## Songs for learning



We all know the alphabet song, and there are plenty of other simple songs and rhymes you can use to help children remember and learn spellings, numbers, colours, body parts, animal sounds – just about anything you can think of. If you can't find a song to suit your situation, pick a tune you know and change the words!

At [babymusic.com](http://babymusic.com), we offer a variety of listening resources to help you make music a part of your child's life as much as possible. From relaxing discs like [Baby Cello](#) and [Baby Harp](#) to help younger children and babies relax (as well as their sleep-deprived parents!) to musical stories such as [Peter and the Wolf](#) and [Scheherazade](#), to captivate and engage older children. If you want to learn some simple songs to sing with your children, there are many free resources online, so try a web search for 'preschool songs' for ideas and tips.