

# Music for Kids (Children 18 months - 3 years)

**Children from 18 months through 3 years like short songs. Their memories are not fully developed, so they can remember only a few words at a time.**

Motion is also interesting to them, and actions put to words help them remember their order. Repeating songs encourages the use of words and memorisation.

**Toddlers will enjoy different instruments and joining in songs. Try to choose particular instruments that suit different songs and enjoy the musical experience.**

Anything can become a musical instrument - pot lids, wooden spoons and pots, spoons rattled against each other, plastic bottles full of noisy stones (lids taped up). Cheap shops have plenty of fun toy instruments to add to your collection - add ribbons and bells for a fiesta touch!

## **Playing with instruments**

Be creative when thinking of different instruments and songs you can perform with your child. For example, choose bells for Twinkle Twinkle, tapping sticks for horsey songs like Giddey up Horsey, or pot drums for Grand Old Duke of York.

If different children with different instruments are playing together, you could try things such as:

*"Oh we can play in the music band and this is the way we do it, with a play, play, play and a play, play, play and that's the way we do it"*

Repeat song again with a verse for each different instrument. For example, *"shakers with a shake, shake, shake or drums with a boom, boom, boom"*. This may help toddlers get used to taking turns when playing together.

With other songs encourage children to think about the different ways they can play their instruments - loud/soft or fast/slow. And for some songs, instruments can be used for a particular part of the song, such as for each 'animal' in the chorus of Old McDonald Had a Farm.

## **Finger Plays & Action Songs**

At this age, toddlers are developing finger and hand control to manage eating, dressing and drawing. Finger plays will help develop flexibility and control too. It will also:

- assist in learning sequences in a song, as they follow the actions
- offer new words and ideas to a toddler
- help develop imagination
- fill in and ease waiting times.

**Play wide a variety of music that you like and encourage children to "play along".**

## Suggestions

Here are a few ideas for songs when doing finger plays:

- Two little dicky birds sitting on a wall, one named Peter, one named Paul.
- Where is thumpkin, then pointer, tall one, ring finger, and finally pinkie?
- Incy Wincy Spider climbed up the water spout, down came the rain and washed poor Incy out!
- Little willy wagtail sat upon a rail, niddle-noddle went his head and wiggle-waggle went his tail.
- Twinkle, twinkle little star, how I wonder what you are?

## Jumping songs

Jumping and getting two feet off the ground is an exciting new skill for a toddler. So play a game or add a song to celebrate this new achievement. Such as:

*"Jump, jump, jump if you feel you want to-ooo, jump, jump jump if you feel you caaan"* and repeat

*"Jump Jim-a-long, Jump a-long, Jump Jim-a-long, Jump a-long"* (sing child's name instead of Jim-a-long). Make up your own tune.

You could also make a pond using a blanket or if outdoors create a shape with a rope or the garden hose. Begin with frogs in the middle of the pond. Then sing *"Mr Frog jumped out his pond one day and found himself in the rain, said he I'll get wet and I might catch a cold so he jumped in his pond again"*

Or you could always sing Galoomph went the little Green Frogs, but change the words to "Jump jump went the little green frogs." The chorus goes:

*"We all know frogs go ladedadeda ladedadeda ladedadeda"*

*Change this to: Jump la dedadda ladedadeda ladedadeda*

*...They don't go mmm mmm ahh.*

If you go to the library you will find Playschool CDs and a wide range of other CDs and DVDs for toddlers.

And let's not forget the Rolling Stones Jumping Jack Flash! it's brilliant to use music that you used to dance to in your youth with your children, sing along and groove with them as they enjoy your joy in music from happy times in your life!

## Showtime!

At this age, toddlers are beginning to develop their imagination so acting out a simple song can be a lot of fun, and will also develop imagination, offer opportunity to explore movement with music, and encourage joy in singing.

Choose simple songs about things toddlers are familiar with. Sometimes when they are involved in pretend play surprise them with a song connected to their play.

## Suggestions

- *I'm a little teapot, short and stout, here is my handle here is my spout, when I get all steamed up then I shout just tip me over and pour me out*

- *The wheels on the bus go round and round, round and round, round and round, the wheels on the bus go round and round all the way to town* (then add horn, wipers, lights etc) (play this game sitting on a row of chairs)

- *Take you riding in my car, car, take you riding in my car, car, take you riding in my car, car, I'll take you riding in my car.* Then add horn, wipers etc as above. With this game you could cut out the bottom of a box that fits around a child, add a couple of straps to go over shoulders, then decorate with painted wheels so they can drive around while you sing. Be sure to make appropriate sound effects for horn and so on.

## Singing

Learning to sing takes quite a while. Toddlers will only learn to sing if they hear other people singing so we must sing to them. It doesn't matter what you sing - just sing!

At first they will just listen. As they become more familiar with a song they may tag along singing a word or two.

Later they may sing a particular phrase especially if that phrase is repeated throughout the song.

## Suggestions

- Choose short simple songs about things they are familiar with and which have repetition (e.g. Old McDonald)
- Sing the songs often - when they are playing, with instruments, in the car.
- Don't worry about whether you are in tune or not (they won't know) just enjoy and that will encourage them to explore the wonderful world of music.

### Want more information?

**Merrily, Merrily, A Book of Songs and Rhymes**, and CD, 2005, compiled and published by Australian Breastfeeding Association is an excellent source of songs and poems for babies and young children. Order by mail P.O. Box 4000, Glen Iris, Vic 3146 or buy from the sales division [www.mothersdirect.com.au](http://www.mothersdirect.com.au)

**Check your local library for a music time with babies.** Both Lismore and Goonellabah libraries have a Baby Bounce and Rhyme session each week for babies 0-2 years. A good way to meet others and enjoy music with your baby too.

**Join a playgroup near you** or start your own playgroup to enjoy some music sessions. Contact the Playgroup Association on 1800 171 882 or visit their website [www.playgroupaustralia.com.au](http://www.playgroupaustralia.com.au)

#### GreatStart

Department for Education and Child Development website with lots of ideas and activities to do with children to make the most of everyday learning opportunities [www.greatstart.edu.au](http://www.greatstart.edu.au)

#### The Little Big Book Club

Provides free packs of books for babies and toddlers – available from libraries and the Child and Family Health Service. The website has free Activity Time and Learning Time sheets to complement books and e-books to read online [www.thelittlebigbookclub.com.au](http://www.thelittlebigbookclub.com.au)

#### Let's Read

Supports families to share words, rhymes, songs, books and stories with children [www.letsread.com.au](http://www.letsread.com.au)

#### Parent Helpline

Phone 1300 364 100  
For advice on child health and parenting

#### Beyond Blue

Phone: 1300 224 636 or 03 9810 6100 Website: [www.beyondblue.org.au](http://www.beyondblue.org.au)  
The Beyond Blue website has fact sheets and information on mental health, and a Web Chat service 7 days a week from 4pm to 10pm or you can call them 24/7 on 1300 22 4636 to speak to a Beyond Blue counsellor.

[www.raisingchildren.net.au](http://www.raisingchildren.net.au)  
For information on raising children, including information for grandparents raising grandchildren.

[www.families.nsw.gov.au](http://www.families.nsw.gov.au)  
Various resources to help parents at any stage in life.

[www.fsn.org.au](http://www.fsn.org.au)  
Family Workers can offer you practical and emotional support to enhance & strengthen your parenting & family relationships.

Healthdirect: Phone 1300 022 222, 24 hours To speak to a nurse [www.healthdirect.gov.au](http://www.healthdirect.gov.au)

Child and Family Health Centre: Tel 02 6625 0111 9am–4:30pm, Monday to Friday to make an appointment.