

Having fun with music at home

Ideas for musical games and activities – part 2

- . Listen to “Peter and the wolf” (Prokofiev), “Carnival of the animals” (Saint Saens) and/or “Young person’s guide to the orchestra” (Britten). These all use specific instruments to represent a character or with the Britten piece, it focuses on the qualities of the different instruments. Why not make up your own music for each member of the family or family pet? You could record your music to keep or share with your wider family. What instrument or sound best represents you?
- Musical obstacle course. Can you get round the course without making a sound? You could hang up pans, spoons etc. as well as instruments. Can be played indoors or outside.
- One person sits in the middle of the room with their eyes covered. Everyone else tries to move a tambourine, shaker or some bells round the room as quietly as possible. If the person in the middle hears a sound, they point to or turn in the direction they think it came from. If they are right, the person caught out swaps place and sits in the middle.
- Another version is to play “Grandmother’s footsteps”. One person turns their back on everyone else (this is “Grandmother”). The others stand in a line at the opposite end of the room/garden. They try to move silently across the room and touch the shoulder of the “Grandmother”. However, “Grandmother” can turn round and try to catch out anyone who is moving. If they turn, everyone else has to stand as still as possible. If they do get caught out moving, they have to go back to the start and try again. Whoever touches “Grandmothers” shoulder then takes their turn as the “Grandmother”.
- Have a film singalong. Choose a favourite family musical, dress up as a character from the film. Make an instrument to play along with e.g. yoghurt pot shaker etc. You could decorate the room to represent the film e.g. have toys, props around to put yourself in the film setting. Grab some popcorn and enjoy!!
- Using a sheet or tablecloth waft it up and down (just like playing parachute games). Choose someone to go under and out the other side before it lands on them. Bounce a soft ball or balloon on the cloth, but don’t let them fall.
- Hide some soundmakers under the cloth on the floor or over a table. Play/name a sound and ask someone to crawl or feel under the cloth, find and play the correct sound – no looking!
- Explore different dance styles. Have a ‘dance off’ or have your own “Strictly come dancing” competition. Dress up according to your chosen dance style and video your performances to enjoy again later.

- “Musical chance”. Have a selection of cards or pieces of paper. On each piece have a forfeit. Be inventive and have fun writing these. Children could set ones for their parents and vice versa. These could include making an animal sound, perform a ballet dance, pretend you’re a chicken laying an egg etc. Just have fun!! Play a game such as “Musical statues” or “Musical chairs”. The person who would usually be ‘out’ can stay in the game, but they have to take a forfeit card instead and carry out the instruction on the card. The lovely thing is nobody is ever ‘out’ and the game can continue until all the forfeits have been taken.
- Choose a simple, repetitive tune e.g. “London’s burning”, “Frere Jacques” etc. Change the words to write a verse for each family member. It could be about anything relevant to that person e.g. favourite toy, best friends’ name, hobbies etc. For example:
- (Tune: “London’s burning”)

I like music. I like music.

I like to swim. I like to swim.

Read books. Colouring.

I like yellow. I like yellow.

Why not write a verse for each other and choose a sound/instrument you think they would like to accompany it? Then share these with each other and celebrate each other.

- Sing a song or familiar rhyme but change the occasional word. Who can spot the mistake first? If they are correct, they could take a turn. To help, prepare some cards or pieces of paper with the songs ready to use before you start the game.
- Make up a short story. Everyone has their own sound to use whenever they hear a specific word e.g. every time they say “rabbit” the person with the bells plays. A variation would be to have a story naming the instruments/soundmakers. They are on the table in front of you. Who can touch/play the correct sound first? An alternative would be for your child to have two or three instruments, but they have to play/reach for/look at the correct one on cue.
- How about creating a video to go with a favourite song? You can go to town with costumes, dance moves etc. Be as creative as you want.
- Body percussion. How many different sounds can you make with your body? Finger clicks, stamping feet etc. Great for body awareness and can be used as a warm up before physio or prior to trying some of the dance activities mentioned above.