

Musical Shakers

Making musical shakers with children is an inexpensive and fun way to help your child be creative and make their own musical sounds.

How to Do It

Encourage your child to part fill each container with small stones or beads. Support them to try screwing lids on themselves, and then double check to ensure they are secured tightly. Secure the filling inside the containers by taping over the edges of the lids. Please note: It is important that small pieces cannot escape as they can be hazardous to young children.

Encourage your child to investigate and discover the sounds he or she can make as they move the shaker in new ways. Your child might enjoy shaking the container to recorded music or make their own music. You might like to make your own shaker so you can play along with your child.

Try playing around with different volumes and speeds. Ask your child to shake fast and loud, then slow and quiet and use these words to describe what is happening. A fun song that you can use for shaking fast and slow is 'Twinkle, Twinkle Traffic Lights' (in the tune of 'Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star'):

Twinkle, twinkle traffic light

On the corner; shining bright (shaking normally for these two lines)

Red means stop (stop shaking), *Green means GO* (shake fast!)

Yellow means go, but very slow (slow shaking)

Twinkle, twinkle traffic light

On the corner shining bright (shaking normal or fast for these last two lines).

What Learning is Occurring?

- **Small muscle skills**
- **Hand eye coordination** – as your child places beads in the container – the smaller the opening, the greater the challenge
- **Early music appreciation**, learning rhythm and tempo
- **Creativity**

Age Considerations

- **Toddlers:** create shakers for your toddler and then have a musical sing along. Sing slow, fast high and low and ask your toddler to shake along in time with your signing.
- **Kinder:** Encourage your child to search for items they can find in your house that can be used as shakers. Cardboard tubes, boxes, containers. Think about what they can fill them with to make different sounds – lentils, rice, Lego, twigs, bigger rocks. Seal with baking paper and a rubber band to make this trial and error play easier to do.
- **Transition to school:** Be a conductor for a day – assign certain instruments to different coloured pieces of paper and create patterns out of the paper. Play the pattern with the designated instruments. What amazing music can you and your child make?

Things you will need

- A variety of small plastic containers with lids. Try shampoo bottles, plastic food jars, milk bottles. Give everything a good wash first and then drain to dry well.
- Contents for your shaker. Try small beads, pebbles, buttons, seed pods. Rice or pulses from the kitchen cupboard are another alternative.
- Sticky or masking tape

Tips

- Make a variety of shakers with different contents
 - Bigger stones will give a different sound to smaller stones or beads
- Find a variety of containers – the smaller the opening the greater the challenge in placing the beads inside. The larger the container, the greater the strength needed to play.
- Try making other musical instruments, e.g. a drum out of a box or a rubber band "guitar."

