

My Music Workshop



10 Simple Things Teachers Can Do To Help Students Learn Music





Let's Begin

Here at My Music Workshop, we've taught music to preschoolers for 12 years. In that time, we have been overwhelmed by how much young children can learn about music. These are some simple tips we have put together that can be done by classroom teachers to help students be more engaged with music. These things are meant to be simple but also be valuable for kids. Doing some of these regularly can set the groundwork for a music future for children. We hope they are helpful to you and your students!

1. Play Music in your Classroom

It seems simple, but as teachers we sometimes forget. Music sets moods and can influence emotions, and help get students on task. Kids also just love music, so playing it a lot can create a positive environment where kids feel joyous, happy, and safe..



2. Play a Variety of Different Music

Children's music is great, but kids also love other music. There is a kind of music for every kid, there's a child for every kind of music. Try to stretch your musical limits and play different kinds of music with your students. Consistency is helpful at times. For example, playing the same music during nap time or for clean up can help students relax or know what is expected of them. But for centers, or other, more open parts of the day finding new music can be great. Asking students what they like can also be fun. Your helper of the day can pick the music.



3. Use “Active Listening”

Active Listening is another way to get children to connect to music and it's simple. You do not have to do this all the time but occasionally when listening to music with your child **point out things you hear and ask them to do the same.**

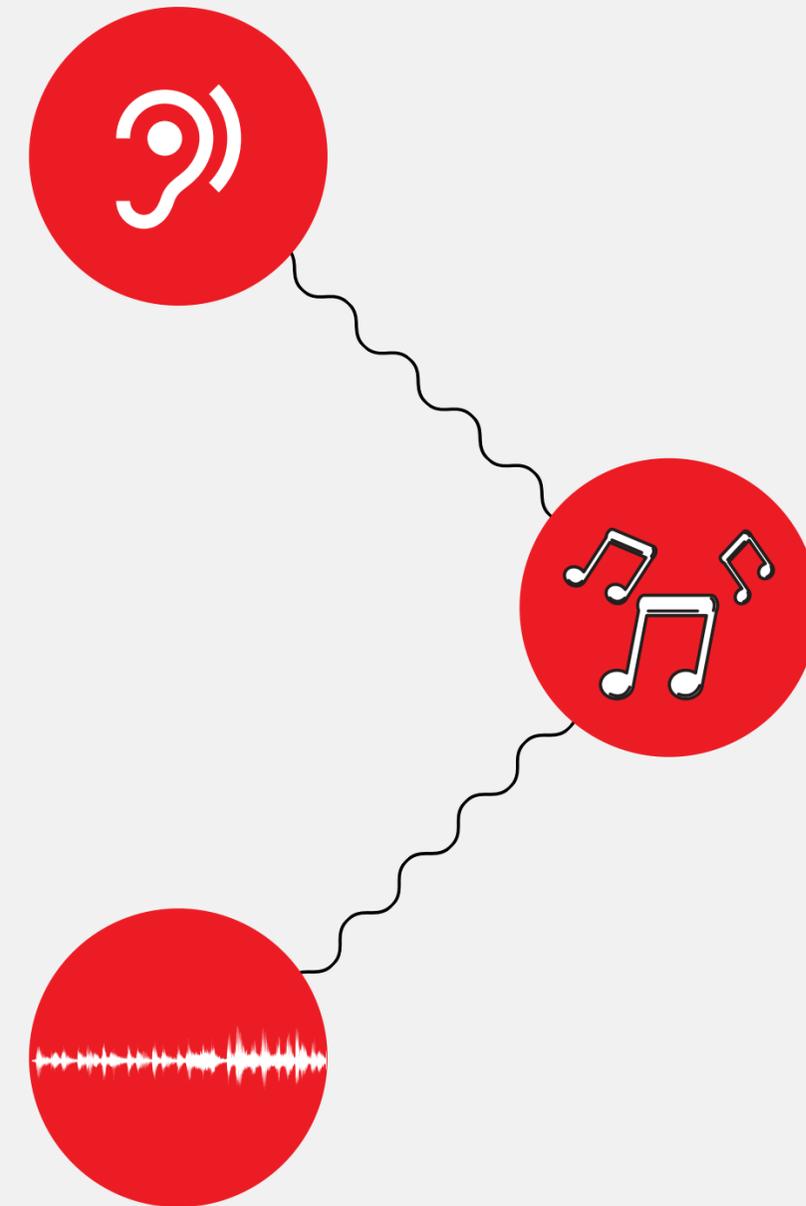
We genuinely believe this is a game changer. Kids will begin hearing music in a different way. They will start going a little bit below the surface of the music and will start understanding the language of music.

To do this you can look at music in three dimensions:

1. **Fast/Slow**
2. **Quiet/Loud**
3. **High/Low**

There are many more aspects to music but these three are easy to understand for kids and can be a gateway to understanding the language of music.

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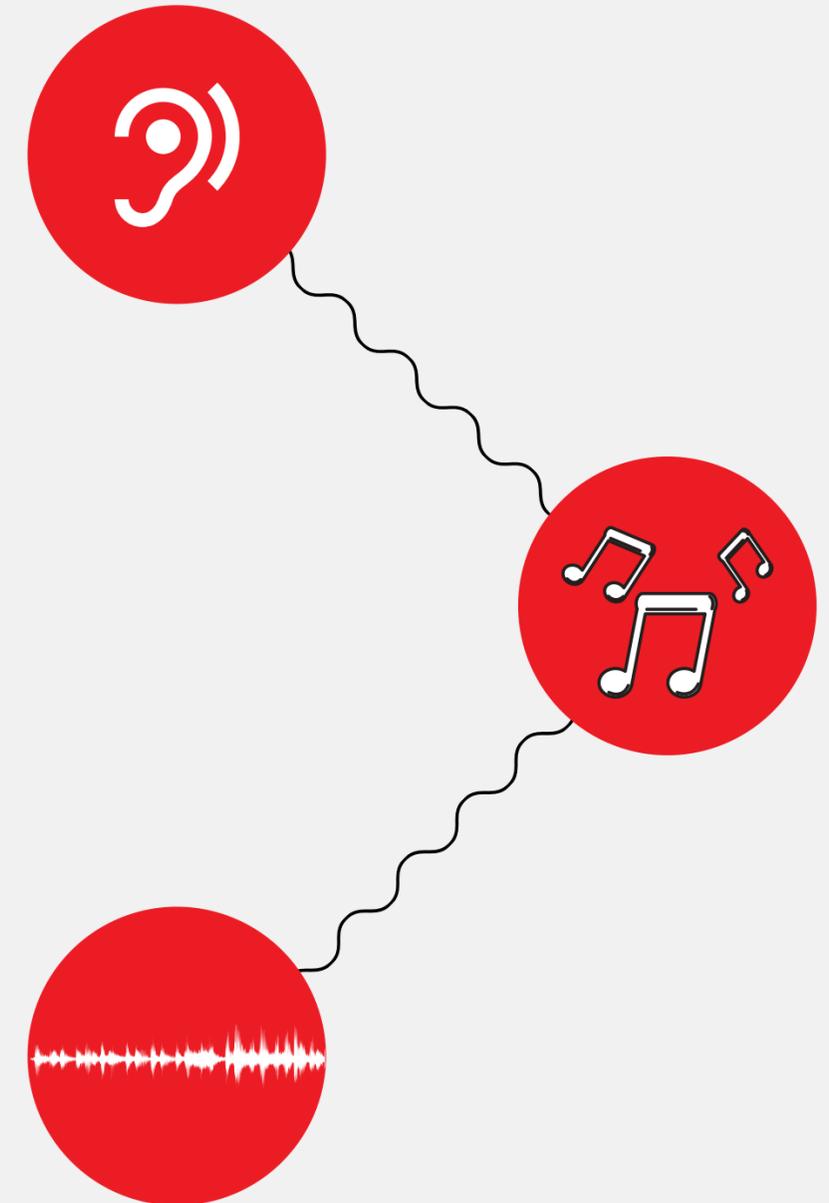
3. Continued...

The first dimension of music is fast and slow. Try to notice the speed (tempo is the musical term for speed) of the music. Ask your kids if they think the music is fast or slow. Occasionally, remember to ask your children if the music is fast or slow.

Next is quiet and loud. You should be able to pick out loud or soft music OR loud or soft parts in songs. Ask your kids what they hear. Quiet or loud is called dynamics in music.

Last is high and low. Little things usually make high sounds like birds, small instruments like ukuleles or flutes. Big things usually make low sounds like bears growling or larger instruments like cellos or bass drums. This dimension is a little tougher for younger kids to hear but with a few tries they can pick this up. When you hear something in music that is clearly high or low point it out to your kids. Next time ask them what they hear.

These are some simple and powerful tools to get kids to connect with music. Once you help your child listen for these aspects or dimensions of music, they will start doing it themselves. This is a deeper way of listening and it paves the way for children to be much more engaged when they listen to music.



4. Do Rhythm Activities to Music

Finding the beat is something children can do between ages 3-5. Stomping, clapping, bobbing your head, tapping your foot, touching your knees, or jumping all together, at the same time (on the beat), is a great way for children to develop rhythm. You can do this along with music to help children understand how rhythm in music connects to them.



5. Help Children Understand Their Emotions Through Music

The same song can make different children feel different emotions. That is ok! Music is a gateway to feeling deeper emotion. Children are just starting to understand their emotions and music is a great way to help them with emotions.

You can help children by telling them how certain songs or music makes you feel then asking how it makes them feel. This will help them process their emotions, understand them, and express them in much clearer ways.

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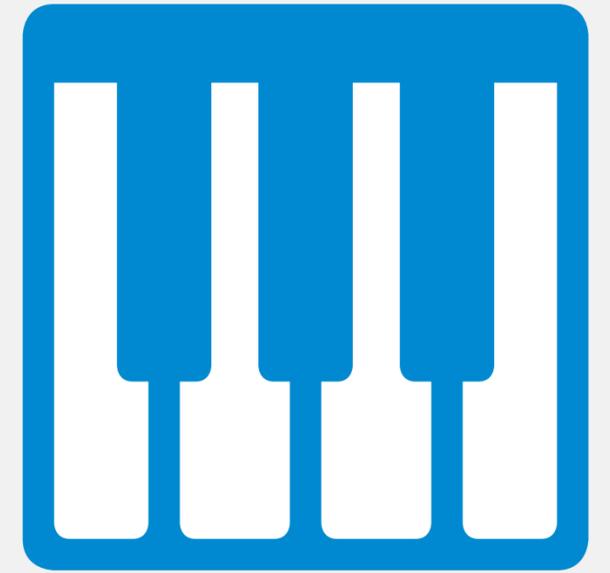


6. Help Students Hear Certain Instruments in Music

Whether or not you have much experience with music, you can probably hear certain instruments when they are playing. Drums, ukuleles, pianos, acoustic or electric guitar are a few examples of instruments that we can usually pick out if we listen closely.

When music is playing in your classroom, it is great to occasionally point out certain instruments in the music. “Do you guys hear that violin, drums, guitar, or piano in the music?” is a great way to help kids tune into the music and develop a musical ear. Doing this regularly will get kids to listen to music in different ways.

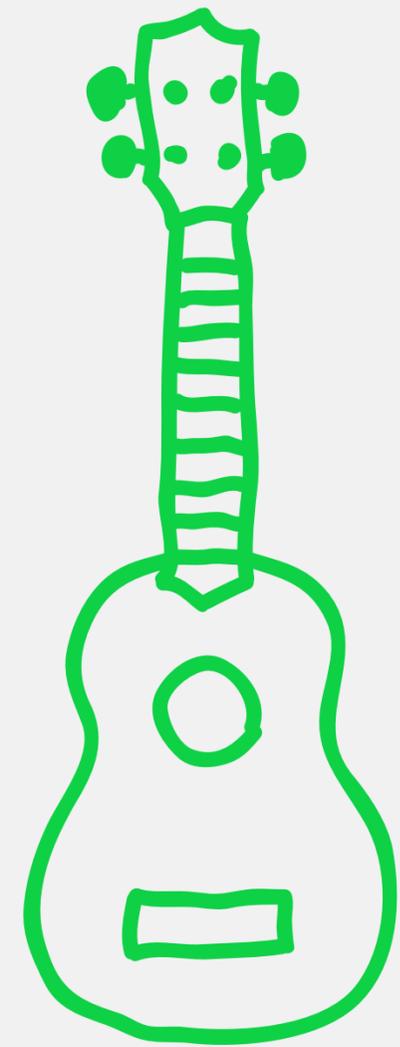
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7. Have Instruments Available in Your Classroom

You probably do already. That is great! Instruments are a great way for children to express the innate side of themselves that is musical. Most classrooms we have been in have a few shakers, some other percussion instruments, bongos, tambourines, triangles, bells, or other instruments. These are fantastic to have but, if budget allows, there are some other great instruments for kids. Some schools we've worked with have decided to share a bundle of instruments between classrooms. We know this is up the administration but just a few new instruments can be great for kids. We think ukuleles, keyboards, drums (yes, we know they can be loud but there are great ways to quiet them down 😊) and guitars (small sized for kids), are great to have around. You will not use them all the time, but a weekly music jam can be great for kids!

P.S. You can make a drum quieter by placing a circle shaped mouse pad on it!



8. Read Books About Music

There are some great kids' music books out there, you probably know quite a few of them. These are great to get children interested in music. Kids, as we are sure you know, love music. They are built for it, they love playing it, singing, hearing it, trying new instruments and more. Teaching them with great musical story books is a great way to help them learn music.



9. Make Instruments

Again, this is probably something you already do. But as a reminder kids love using something they have made. There are great project ideas for shakers, string instruments, drums and more.



10. Do Music Lessons Once a Week with My Music Workshop!

If you are reading this, your school has a My Music Workshop membership. This allows you to print musical books and worksheets, download children's music AND use our online, pre-recorded music lessons for kids. These cover a wide range of musical topics like identifying notes, finding the beat, discovering different instruments and more. The "Pre-Planned" lessons area has enough lessons for a whole school year. They are between 8-12 minutes each, they cover a few topics in simple ways for kids to understand. We hope you and your students love them!



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