

Exploring Music & Sound

Chimes & Bells

Wind instruments

Bottles

Hollow Frog Croaks

Shakers

Stringed instruments

Keyboard/Xylophone

Kitchen Combo

Metronome—keeping on time

Home Made Bands

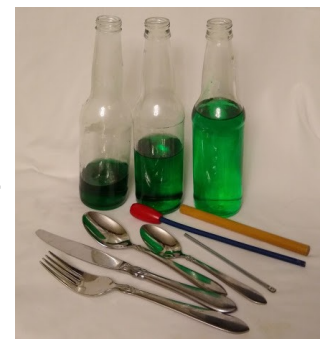


Chimes & Bells are a fun and beautiful way to make music. Notice how each works (basically a clapper hits a 3 dimensional metal shape). It's worth taking a little time to explore the alarm clock. Set the time so it will ring, and watch it work. If you have opportunity to be in a store with chimes, try different size chimes to compare the sounds they make. Connect with science—science and engineering are just as creative as the Arts, and they both offer great opportunities to experiment and explore.



People have been blowing on tubes for a long time. All sorts of instruments have been created to use air as a way of making sound. Bagpipes to church organs, trumpets to Alpine horns, flutes to trombones . . . and everything in between—like harmonicas, whistles, recorders, slide whistles (compare to a trombone). Find out how the reed instruments work . . . Take a field trip to a big music store with lots of instruments to try—respectfully. Experiment with making your own, such as blowing on a piece of wax paper held tightly to your lips.

If you are unable to get a sound from blowing on the bottles of water (comparing the sounds of different levels of colored water), don't despair . . . get out some tools/instruments to tap on the bottles in different spots. Try different tappers of different materials. Another thing to try with bottles, or glasses, is to rub your moistened finger around the rim.

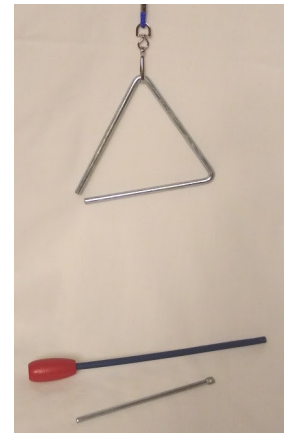




Be sure to watch how the food coloring disperses through the bottle as you drop it in. Note the difference in intensity of color between the bottles with more water, and the ones with less—using the same number of drops of coloring. This is science and art!



Related to chimes and bells are the musical triangle, and the hollow croaking frog . . . all are percussion instruments, similar to drums. (Draw the stick up the bumpy back of the frog to make him croak).



Try all kinds of containers—different sizes, shapes, and materials—for making shakers . . . you can use rice or beans. Make them colorful with different colors of legumes and grains, colored beads, sequins, or whatever.

This trapezoid instrument, known by more than one name—in this case “the Music Maker”—can be played by strumming, or plucking. You can get papers to fit that show how to play different songs. It’s fun to learn to play different simple songs, but it’s also fun just to pluck or strum your own explorations or creations.



You can stretch rubber bands and pluck or strum them... violins, guitars, ukuleles, too.



Pianos are a combination of strings and percussion: little soft hammers hit the strings to make sound when you play the keys.

This xylophone can be played with a tapper or the keys. The music written for it is color coded, so that you can learn to play some simple songs with it. Let kids explore without playing an actual pre-written tune.

Children seem to have a natural predilection to banging on kitchen pots and pans . . . let them explore with different “drums” and “drumsticks”.

Music Therapy includes being able to express feelings—even powerful ones. The piano can take a little “pounding”, if not actually destructive.





Metronomes are fun to watch and to manipulate. They help establish and keep a regular rhythm. They are delicate, so adults should be a part of any explorations.

Try clapping at different speeds/tempo with the metronome.

Try marching, or doing Calisthenics or Martial Arts moves, in time with the metronome beat/tick.



There are various musical kits you can invest in . . . but you can also make your own versions.



My grandson went through a long phase of putting together home made bands.

As he got old enough to use the computer (maybe 5-6), he would design elaborate drum set pictures. Lego bands on Lego stages figured prominently for some time.



One of the Living History farms we visited encouraged visitors to play along with their visiting barn band.

Street Festivals and Farmers Markets usually have performers to listen to and watch. Just watch for opportunities (usually informal, for Early Learners) for the kids to experience music.

A note about instruments, people have made music with all kinds . . . spoons, washboards, saws (I knew a guy who played a saw like a violin . . . it was great!)

Not as good as in person, but if nothing else, there's the internet.