



Choosing an Instrument

Which instrument is right for my child?

Choosing the right instrument for your child needn't be a nightmare. Most children will begin on one of a handful of instruments: piano, recorder, violin or cello. You will want to make sure they are comfortable with the instrument. Some instruments are better for younger players. The recorder, for instance, is easy to handle. Some stringed instruments are available in smaller versions for beginners. Instruments involving breathing, like brass and woodwind, should be learned later, when the child has the strength to blow and the second set of teeth has appeared.

TIPS:

- Take your children to hear live music to find out about different instruments. Encourage them to think about the genres that interest them.
- Consider the physical capabilities of the child. For example, asthmatics might not do well with a wind instrument, children with braces often find brass instruments painful to play, and older children with longer arms might do better with big instruments like the trombone. Finding a comfortable fit is important.
- Try before you buy – if possible.
- Think about where your child will fit in. For example, there are often more clarinet and flute pupils than there are groups for them to play in, while bassoonists and oboists are scarcer, and so might enjoy more opportunities. Bass players are also rarely short of a gig, unlike their guitar-playing counterparts.
- Think about practical considerations: do you have cost limitations, will the noise disturb the neighbors, have you got room for your child to practice, how do you get the instrument from the lesson to your house?