



When is the Right Time to Start Formal Music Lessons?

No child is too young to enjoy music. Singing to your baby, banging on the piano, shaking maracas, and pulling the strings of a guitar all help a child become excited about music. Rhyming games and playing a drumbeat are fun activities that help a child develop an interest in music. But when is the right time to start formal lessons? Children have been known to start piano and violin at very young ages such as 3 or 4. Most music experts recommend starting music lessons when motor dexterity, attention span, and finger strength have started developing in a child. For most children, this is about age 6. Pushing a child to start formal lessons at a very young age can backfire. Children can hear if they are playing something correctly and may get frustrated that they are not able to play well. Waiting until a child is between 6 and 10 can be of great benefit because of better attention span and a greater ability to practice new motor skills.

How do you know if your child is ready?

- Does your child have an interest in learning and playing an instrument?
- Can your child read symbols on a page?
- Can they recognize numbers and letters?
- Is your child's hand large enough to reach each key on a piano or hold the neck of a guitar or ukulele?
- Does your child take turns at games?

These are good developmental markers to help determine if they are ready for formal lessons.

If you think your child is ready for lessons, piano, guitar, and ukulele, are all great starting instruments.

Piano is one of the few instruments that will sound in tune when you play it. The keys on the piano are linear and align well with the notes on the musical staff.



This is a great way to start sight reading music. Ukulele and guitar are great first instruments. Learning chord shapes can allow a student to play songs quickly which is very reinforcing for a new learner.

When starting music lessons, take time to find a teacher that works well with your child and is a good fit for your family. Make a commitment to regularly attend lessons and support your child in their practice time. Ask the instructor what the at home practice time should be and how they would like parents to support musical learning. Learning an instrument should be fun. Be willing to take a break from formal lessons if it doesn't seem like good fit. You can always come back to it.