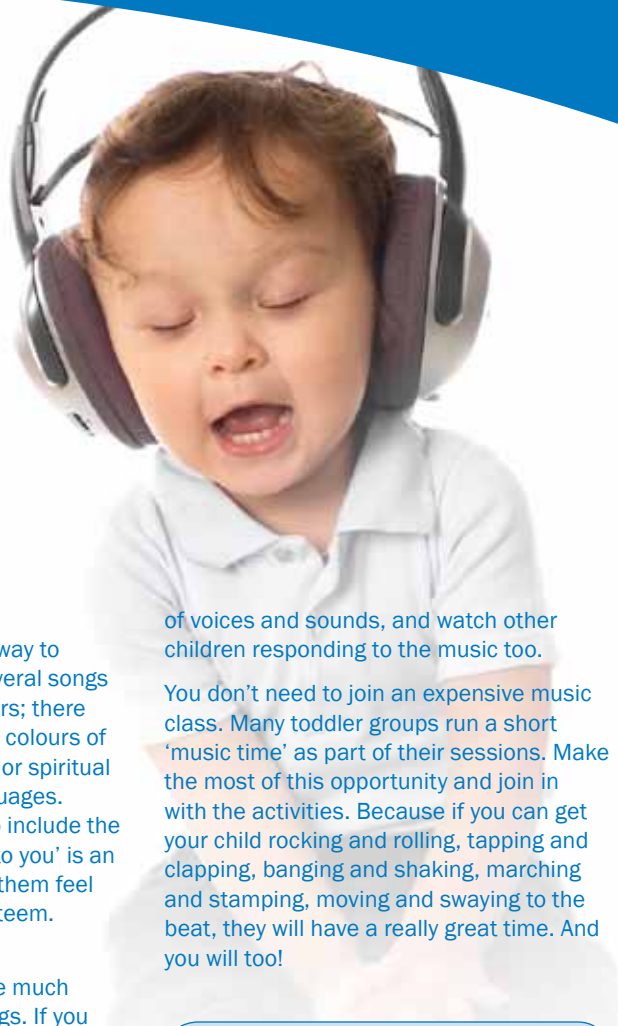


## Make time for music!



**Do you sing to your children? Are you someone who fills the house with music whether that is by playing an instrument or switching on the radio or CD player? There is growing evidence of the important role that music and singing has to play in our children's development...and it's fun too!**

For many people singing to babies is a natural, almost intuitive, part of caring for them. Throughout history and across cultures parents have sung to calm and soothe, or entertain and excite, their offspring.

Even if they're not actually singing, adults will often use musical sounding 'baby talk' and rhythmical movements to engage with small children. And there's evidence now that babies recognise and respond to the sounds they have heard in the womb. So, we know that music has a deep and long-lasting impact.

Of course, not everyone likes singing. Some people naturally prefer silence. Others might feel embarrassed when they hear themselves sing. But the great news is that to your child, your voice is the most beautiful sound in the world - however tone-deaf you may be!

### Music

Music is educational! Through music our children can learn about rhythm, tempo and pitch.

There are even suggestions that the sensory stimulation from music causes more pathways to form between the cells in the developing brain. This means that children who listen to music early on perform better when they start school, particularly if they are actively involved, say by clapping or singing.<sup>(1)</sup>

[1] [www.kidshealth.org/parent/growth/learning/preschool\\_music.html](http://www.kidshealth.org/parent/growth/learning/preschool_music.html)

This information is supplied in good faith but Care for the Family cannot accept responsibility for any advice or recommendations made by other organisations.

### Your *Family* Charity

Care for the Family has been supporting and encouraging families in the UK since 1988. Its family-building events have been attended by over 320,000 people and many more have been helped through special initiatives - including stepfamilies, bereaved parents and those parenting alone. Founded by best-selling author and speaker Rob Parsons, the charity is committed to strengthening family life and helping those who face family difficulties.

### Songs

Songs can provide an easy way to remember facts. There are several songs about the alphabet and numbers; there are also songs which teach the colours of the rainbow, body parts, moral or spiritual lessons, and even foreign languages. Some songs can be adapted to include the child's name ('Happy Birthday to you' is an example of this), which makes them feel special and builds their self-esteem.

### Actions

But your 'music time' can be much more than simply singing songs. If you are able to include some clapping rhythms, instruments, and a few action songs or dances, then you can develop your child's co-ordination and dexterity.

### Making music together

Singing, dancing and making music together is a great way to spend some quality time with your child. Try adding it in to an everyday routine. You could have a special song for when you are driving, another for bath-time, or even one that you sing when changing their nappy!

### Making music with others

Children learn important social skills when they take part in musical activities together. These include being part of a group, following a routine, working together, and taking turns. They get to spend time with other children, get to hear a range

of voices and sounds, and watch other children responding to the music too.

You don't need to join an expensive music class. Many toddler groups run a short 'music time' as part of their sessions. Make the most of this opportunity and join in with the activities. Because if you can get your child rocking and rolling, tapping and clapping, banging and shaking, marching and stamping, moving and swaying to the beat, they will have a really great time. And you will too!

### Did you know?

Care for the Family produce Family, a free magazine with articles and stories to encourage and support you and your family.



To get your own copy of Family, visit [www.careforthefamily.org.uk/freemag](http://www.careforthefamily.org.uk/freemag) or call (029) 2081 0800

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