

# Musical Milestone Tracker

Track your child's development in rhythm, pitch, and musical understanding

---

Musical development follows a predictable sequence, much like language development. Children don't need formal training to hit early milestones — they just need exposure. Use this tracker to observe where your child is and what to encourage next. Check off milestones as you observe them. Don't force it — musical development is strongly influenced by exposure and should feel like play, not therapy.

## Birth to 12 Months

---

- Turns toward sound sources — 0-3 months
- Responds differently to different types of music (calms to lullabies, activates to upbeat) — 2-4 months
- Coos and babbles with musical qualities (pitch variation) — 3-6 months
- Bounces or sways when hearing music — 6-9 months
- Bangs objects rhythmically (intentional, not random) — 8-12 months
- Attempts to 'sing' along with familiar melodies — 10-12 months

## 12-24 Months

---

- Moves body in response to music (bouncing, clapping, swaying) — 12-15 months
- Recognizes and responds to familiar songs — 12-18 months
- Attempts to sing short fragments of familiar songs — 15-20 months
- Uses instruments with intent (shakes maraca on beat, hits drum) — 18-24 months
- Can identify a few musical instruments by name — 18-24 months
- Completes familiar song phrases (you sing 'Twinkle twinkle little \_\_\_') — 20-24 months

## Ages 2-3

---

- Sings recognizable portions of simple songs — Pitch may be approximate
- Can maintain a steady beat for a few seconds while clapping — Brief but intentional
- Distinguishes between fast and slow music — Matches movement speed to tempo

- Distinguishes between loud and soft music – Adjusts own volume
- Enjoys movement activities with music (ring-around-the-rosie, head shoulders knees toes)
- Shows preference for certain songs and requests them repeatedly

## Ages 4-5

---

- Sing entire simple songs mostly in tune – May drift from key
- Can clap or tap a steady beat to a song for 15+ seconds
- Distinguishes between high and low pitch
- Can echo back a short rhythmic pattern (3-4 beats)
- Can echo back a short melodic pattern (3-4 notes)
- Creates own songs or modifies familiar ones
- Moves expressively to music (not just bouncing – matching mood)
- Can name common instruments by sound (drum, piano, guitar)

## Ages 6-8

---

- Sing songs in tune with reasonable accuracy
- Maintains steady beat independently while playing simple instrument
- Can distinguish between major (happy) and minor (sad) sounds
- Can read simple rhythmic notation (quarter notes, half notes, whole notes)
- Can play a simple melody on an instrument (recorder, keyboard, xylophone)
- Sing in rounds without losing their part (Row, Row, Row Your Boat)
- Identifies tempo changes within a piece (getting faster, getting slower)
- Can improvise a short rhythm or melody when prompted

## Ages 9-12

---

- Sing with good pitch control and expression
- Can play a musical instrument at a beginner-to-intermediate level
- Reads standard musical notation (treble clef)
- Understands time signatures (3/4, 4/4)
- Can harmonize or play chords

- Identifies musical form (verse, chorus, bridge)
- Can play in an ensemble and maintain their part independently
- Shows awareness of dynamics (piano, forte, crescendo)
- Can learn a new song by listening and reproducing it
- Expresses musical preferences with reasoning ('I like this because...')

---

My child's current musical strengths:

---

---

---

Next milestones to encourage:

---

---

---

These milestones assume regular exposure to music, not formal training. Children with limited musical exposure may hit milestones later — this is an exposure gap, not a developmental problem. Increase exposure before assuming delay. Also note: some children are rhythmically strong but pitch-weak (or vice versa). This is normal variation, not a deficit.