

BAND_LOGY

Homeschooling and Music Education

My name is Shana Bates, and I am a homeschooling mom. I have a 13 and 15 year old and we have been homeschooling for 3 years. I have a musical background; I play trombone and piano and have a BA in Music Education from Western University. I have owned a recording studio and have done work in musical theatre over the years. Presently, our family owns and operates [Kaos Music](#) and Kaos Lesson Studios in [Etobicoke](#) and [Oakville](#). We sell musical instruments and offer music lessons in our community. Everyone in our household loves listening to, singing and playing along to, and making music. Music is a very important part of our lives!



When it relates to music and homeschooling, my main advice to parents and caregivers is to bring and keep music in your lives and the lives of your kids. As my daughter says " makes life better." You don't have to be a musician to make and enjoy music—there are tons of tools and resources out there for you to get started! Talk to people you know who are involved in the arts, walk into your local music store, check out your local library and explore online. Be creative in whatever way fits you and your style and ability. Whatever you do, be sure to bring and keep music in your life!

Here are a few ideas to get you started!

Ages 0-5

The goal at this stage might be for them to enjoy listening to music and to get connected to the music (beat/rhythm/feel) through movement and singing.

1. Focus on rhythm; pick songs with different tempos (ie. Fast/slow/medium)

- a. Fast: "[Happy](#)," by Pharell Williams, "[Can't Stop the Feeling](#)," by Justin Timberlake
- b. Medium: "[On Top of the World](#)," by Imagine Dragons
- c. Slow: "[Girl](#)," by Jukebox the Ghost
- d. In 3 (Slow): "[Breakaway](#)," by Kelly Clarkson

2. Clap along with favorite songs

Try clapping along to the beat, every other beat - change it up to challenge or play games with it! The goal is to embody the beat through claps; you can also start counting along to beats (i.e. 1-2-3-4, 1-2-3-4, etc.)

3. Stomp feet and/or march along to the beat of your favorite songs

Same as above - try to stomp on the beat, and then two times in the beat, then once every other beat. See how many beats you can count between stomps without losing track!

4. Dance along to different songs

See Timeout's list of [songs to dance to](#)! You can use the same songs as above to dance along to, and introduce new kinds of music to your kids as part of the dancing!

5. Simple percussion: play along with favorite songs using wooden spoon(s)/Tupperware, tapping hands on thighs

Get creative, but don't damage your appliances! Try out different rhythms, playing together, and have fun!

6. Sing along to favorite songs (even if you don't know the words, you can la la la or make them up!)

7. Call and response; parent sings a melody or line from a song and child repeats. Then switch roles (child sing, parent repeat)

Start with melodies your children might already know! Simple and short will help make it easy for your child to retain enough to sing back.

Ages 6-11

The goal at this stage might be for them to start making music themselves and start exposing them to different styles of music.

1. Watch live or recorded concerts, musicals and performances.

In addition to your favorites, try to explore musical styles that you are not as familiar with. You may find a new favorite singer/group/style. You can just enjoy listening/watching or you can discuss what you enjoyed, didn't enjoy and learned from these performances.

2. Pick up an instrument (rent/buy/borrow) and explore making music using the instrument.

You can also use your own voice or homemade percussion. Try playing along with favorite songs or making up your own. You can also [build your own!](#)

3. Find a music school/teacher/online resource and take a weekly lesson.

Make sure to practice between lessons to learn faster. Set a daily goal, make a plan and stick to a practice routine. Each session should be at the same time each day and for the same length of time (20-30 mins).

4. Dance. Just do it!

5. Read books about music.

Read musical biographies. Read out loud together. Make it a daily routine!

Bandology's Music Teacher-in-Residence, Sandy Wright, says:

"There are lots of ways to start learning an instrument! You can learn online using videos or take regular lessons. If you don't want to start alone, schools might offer group classes for beginners. It's a great way to get out here and meet new friends!"

For parents:

"If you're worried about the financial aspect of music lessons, look for schools that offer discounted packages. Your community may have a school which offers lessons at a more accessible rate for those in need. Online lessons are also a good option (though I know we're all getting tired of it), especially if transportation is a concern!"

Ages 12 and up

The goal at this stage might be to continue to make, learn about and appreciate all kinds of music.

1. Keep working on improving your skill on your instrument.

Maybe even try a new one!

2. Start learning more about music theory.

There are many schools, teachers, workbooks, apps and programs that teach music theory in fun, interesting ways.

3. Make music with others.

Find friends or family members and jam (that means to make music together!)

4. Join a neighbourhood band, choir or musical theatre program

There are probably more musical opportunities in your area than you know—music is everywhere!

Bandology's Music Teacher-in-Residence, Sandy Wright, says:

“As kids get older, they develop a strong sense of what kind of music they like and don't like. Encouraging those interests is important, as music can be a big part of identity-building. If they need to do a more academic-oriented activity, use that opportunity for them to get to know the history of their favourite band or genre! Lyrics are poetry, and performing is a public speaking skill. There are all sorts of ways to tie music back into other curriculum and learning goals, and for children to co-create those activities with you!”

For parents:

“If you have a lot of worry about your own musical ability, don't. That's easier said than done, but especially when they're younger playing in music together is a big thing. As they get older, there are lots of way of joining them in music without having to cause yourself anxiety: you can listen to the music they listen to, even learn an instrument yourself! Music is a lifelong practice, and it's not about how good you are, but rather how much you enjoy it!”

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