

Cool Music Apps for Little Ones

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Over the past year, numerous apps have been developed that allow turning mobile devices such as iPhones, iPods, and iPads into musical instruments for young children. Many of the apps are accessible for children with and without disabilities alike. Meaning, the intentional use of the latest apps may motivate all children to learn while having fun.

Music therapists, early childhood educators, and parents may think about how to use music apps during children's daily life. For instance, a child with cerebral palsy may participate in music-making during circle time by touching a screen to produce tones and chords. Music apps may also be used to teach basic music skills such as rhythms, melodies, and age-appropriate songs, or simply to keep children entertained during a car ride back home.

Here is a short review of selected music apps, which are appropriate for young children.

- ☀ **Touch Xylophone:** This is a virtual xylophone with colored keys. Children may play single notes when touching one bar as well as chords when touching several bars at once.
- ☀ **iMaracas:** A pair of colorful maracas appears on the screen. Shaking the mobile device activates the sound.
- ☀ **Kazoo:** By tapping on letters next to a picture of a kazoo, children can make kazoo-like sounds and play melodies.
- ☀ **Baby Drums:** This app offers a variety of drums and percussive instruments, which are easy to activate for infants and toddlers.
- ☀ **Baby Scratch:** This virtual DJ Turntable allows children to scratch music from the "Baby Scratch Library" or the recording of children's voices and subsequent scratching by moving the finger over the LP displayed on the screen.
- ☀ **Beatwave:** Children can create beats and unique tunes by setting dots on a squared screen. Colorful stripes moving over the dots activate the sounds and create musical waves.

- ☀ **Moozart:** This app allows children to compose and save their own songs by dragging sound-making farm animal icons onto music stave. Children can also follow along with preloaded songs and manipulate the tune by interspersing animal sounds.
- ☀ **Talking Tom:** Tom is a comic cat that repeats and records what children sing or say with a very funny voice. Giggles are guaranteed! Video recordings can be uploaded on YouTube, Facebook, or sent by email.
- ☀ **Preschool Music:** This app allows children to explore four music activities based on rhythm (by tapping animated sea animals in an aquarium), melody (by tapping animated sheeps singing tones), harmony (by tapping animated birds singing melodies), and music notation (by creating notes on a virtual piano repeated by a animated parrot).
- ☀ **Tappy Tunes™:** By tapping the screen in time and rhythm, children can activate selected tunes (notes and chords are preloaded in sequence) accompanied by colorful animated graphics.
- ☀ **Free ABC Songs:** This is a sing-along of five traditional children songs with big letter lyric display.

Stay tuned and informed about the rapidly growing number of music apps for young children by using the google search engine or iTunes Store search feature. And, it is always a good idea to appraise new apps and try them out before letting little ones use them.

About the Author



Petra Kern, Ph.D., MT-DMtG, MT-BC, MTA, owner of *Music Therapy Consulting*, has a clinical and research focus on young children, especially those with Autism Spectrum Disorders in inclusive settings. She is the editor of *imagine*, author of numerous publications, a dynamic international speaker, and serves as the Past President of the World Federation of Music Therapy and other music therapy committees and boards.

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