

edges and secure the tops firmly.

- Small saucepans are fun to bang on the floor and to beat with a spoon.
- Plastic and tin pots (not cans), filled with a few pasta shells and sealed well, make lovely drums.
- Create interesting sound effects with newspaper balls.
- Strong babies will be able to produce interesting soft sounds with cushions and wooden spoons.
- Beat wooden floors with your hands.
- Make a musical washing line – thread string through the middle of crushed silver foil, then attach, with string, items such as tiny finger cymbals, bottle tops, plastic balls, wooden blocks, individual bells, spoons, old keys. Hang at an appropriate height (try between the tops of two kitchen chairs) where a toddler can touch and push the ‘instruments’. Avoid putting anything too heavy on the line or it will sag quickly.

## OTHER RESOURCES

Resources needn't be restricted to musical instruments. Others to consider are:

**Fabric** Any cotton off-cuts of curtain, cloth, shirts, sheets or pillowcases that can be made into a 15cm by 15cm square provide a delightful addition to your own music treasure basket. Put on a favourite piece of music, sing a song and move the fabric with the music. Give one to the toddlers and watch them wiggle, sway and swish their ‘scarf’ along with the music. This small, easy resource helps small children to move and is resourceful in numerous other ways – it can be a hat, a bed, a table, a boat, a pillow, a cloth, or fairy wand, snake, fan, rain, snow, ball, pond.

**Puppets** Simply stick or sew on two eyes and the imagination takes care of the rest. Socks make great worms, snakes, or chatty characters. Add sound-effects and they can be a cow, horse or pig. If you don't know any character or animal songs, play a suitable CD and encourage the puppet to ‘chat’ and to move with the music. Interaction between you and the child can be brief – the child will take over, or you can both enjoy moving together with two puppets.

**Boxes** Create a colourful music box. Encourage the children to help paint it or decorate it sticking on pictures or shapes. Place a couple of home-made musical instruments or a maraca inside and let the children explore. Change the instrument from time to

time for variety. Or put toy animals inside and encourage the children to make the animal sounds when they open the lid.

**Balls** Provide soft balls in varying sizes and roll them around as you listen to music or sing songs.

**Lycra sheet** This is a fantastic musical resource for groups of children. Encourage children and adults to grasp the edge, pop a teddy in the middle and rock to a lullaby, or ‘row, row your boat’ gently before lifting up on ‘stream’. Adapt well-known songs so that you can use a variety of characters with the lycra.

## CDS AND BOOKS

It's worth investing in some good CDs and song books. When choosing and using CDs:

- Choose music that you enjoy too, as this helps adult and child to engage.
- Consider CDs without words and with lots of strong beat as well as rhythm, since the focus in the nursery should be on playing along.
- Avoid playing background music too often, so as to encourage a focused musical time.
- There are a great many nursery CDs, available but choose ones that pronounce words correctly, are not pitched too high and are easy to hear.
- Avoid gimmick CDs that promote a particular toy or show.
- Make up your own songs and musical games using the fire siren sound, which uses just two notes. Suggestions are ‘dancing, dancing’, ‘up down, up down’, ‘where is the duck?’

## Recommended music books

*A Little Birdsong, A Little Birdsong – Tales* and *A Little Birdsong – More Tales* by Emma Hutchinson are three illustrated musical storybooks for children to enjoy reading, singing and dancing along to. They come with a quality CD of traditional and world music.

*Three Tapping Teddies* by Kaye Umansky (A&C Black) has lots of musical tales from traditional melodies and comes with a CD.

*Bobby Shaftoe, Clap Your Hands: Musical Fun with New Songs from Old Favorites* by Sue Nicholls (A&C Black) is a collection of songs created from traditional melodies which comes with a CD with lots of ideas on how to play, to join in and to accompany with new verses.

*Playsongs: Action Songs and Rhymes*

## GLOSSARY

**Claves** – two small sticks made of wood that can be tapped together

**Octochime** – an eight-sided wooden pot with a stick that can be moved round all the sides

**Shekere or calabash** – large round, wooden shaker with handle, and a net of beads on the outside

**Maraquitas** – a small wooden or plastic shaker

with beads inside

**Woosha** – small, ribbed wooden tube with beads inside

**Jinglies** – small wooden stick with three small silver bells

**Tik tok** – wooden-handled two-sided round block with wooden stick

**Shakerscraper** – round ribbed wooden instrument with beads inside and skin for tapping



Jingly jingly



Baby drum

for *Babies and Toddlers* compiled by Sheena Roberts (Playsongs) comes with a CD full of songs and rhymes for very young children.

## Story books

Any good children's books with a repetitive narrative and lots of sounds and movement are great to accompany with music-making.

*We're Going on a Bear Hunt* by Michael Rosen and Helen Oxenbury (Walker Books)

*The Very Hungry Caterpillar* Eric Carle (Puffin)

*We All Go Travelling By* by Sheena Roberts and Siobahn Bell (Barefoot Books)

*The Animal Boogie* by Debbie Harter (Barefoot Books)

*The Very Busy Spider* by Eric Carle (Puffin)

*Hairy Maclary* by Lynley Dodd (Puffin)

*Ten Seeds* by Ruth Brown (Andersen Press)

*Oi! Get Off Our Train* by John Burningham (Red Fox)

With these ideas, early years practitioners and parents can enjoy new ways to have fun with music, while taking out the mundane routine from singing and dancing. ■

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## PART 3

See *Nursery World*, 11 November