

Musical Baby Bonding Guide



Congratulations!!!

The Musical Baby Bonding Kit was especially designed for playing music with very young babies. We hope it will bring joy and happiness to your new family.

The Kit's unique sounds, shapes, textures and colours will provide stimuli and interest and will significantly prolong your baby's playtime. It is recommended to present the instruments to newborns in a developmental order as follows:

<i>Birth to 4 months only</i>	<i>Wind chime</i>
<i>4 weeks to 5 months only</i>	<i>Kenari rattle</i>
<i>8 weeks onwards</i>	<i>Cascas</i>
<i>10 weeks onwards</i>	<i>Horio shaker</i>
<i>12 weeks onwards</i>	<i>Djmbé drum</i>
<i>14 weeks onwards</i>	<i>Egg shaker</i>
<i>16 weeks onwards</i>	<i>Squeezer shaker</i>
<i>18 weeks onwards</i>	<i>Egg on stick</i>

The collection has been thoroughly selected and has been successfully in use since 2005 in Musical Baby Bonding classes. Parents find that playing music with their babies is enjoyable as well as rewarding, and they report that the little ones love to join in, in their own cute ways. Research shows that very young babies listen intently to interesting sounds, and that listening skills are essential for developing learning and communication skills.

In the introduction of the MBB program you will find a collection of baby-tailored musical activities using the different musical instruments, supported by pictures. Each activity includes a matching nursery rhyme and a unique gesture or movement that distinguishes it from the others. The whole compilation provides a holistic musical interactive guide from birth.

The Musical Baby Bonding Kit is a fabulous birth present to all music lovers and their children.



Please note: Never leave this kit with unattended babies, toddlers and young children under the age of 4.

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Introduction

All over the world, and within different cultures, bonds with newborn babies develop through music, sound and movement.

Babies are born with two innate needs: to look into their mother's eyes and to listen to her voice. These two needs are present and require attention immediately after birth.

The MBB program has defined five essential contacts that, when nurtured, support the babies' communication skills and their journey of development from day one. These contacts are:



1. Eye contact
2. Voice contact
3. Sound contact
4. Movement contact
5. Touch contact

The sound contact involves the use of the musical instruments found in the kit. For example, placing the wind chime close to the baby's face and hands and gently stroking it will support the development of the baby's listening skills.

To extend the length of the listening span we move the instrument slowly and attentively from side to side and up and down, while constantly keeping it within the baby's sight. It is important to remember that babies need to watch the source of the sound in order to build up their listening skills. Babies from the age of 5 weeks and toddlers up to the age of 3 years, explore the wind chime by touching, grasping, pulling and swaying the rods. The best way to explore this instrument is when it is hung safely in a comfortable height or held by an adult.



Its inharmonic high pitched sound makes the wind chime the best musical accompaniment when singing the well-known nursery rhyme:

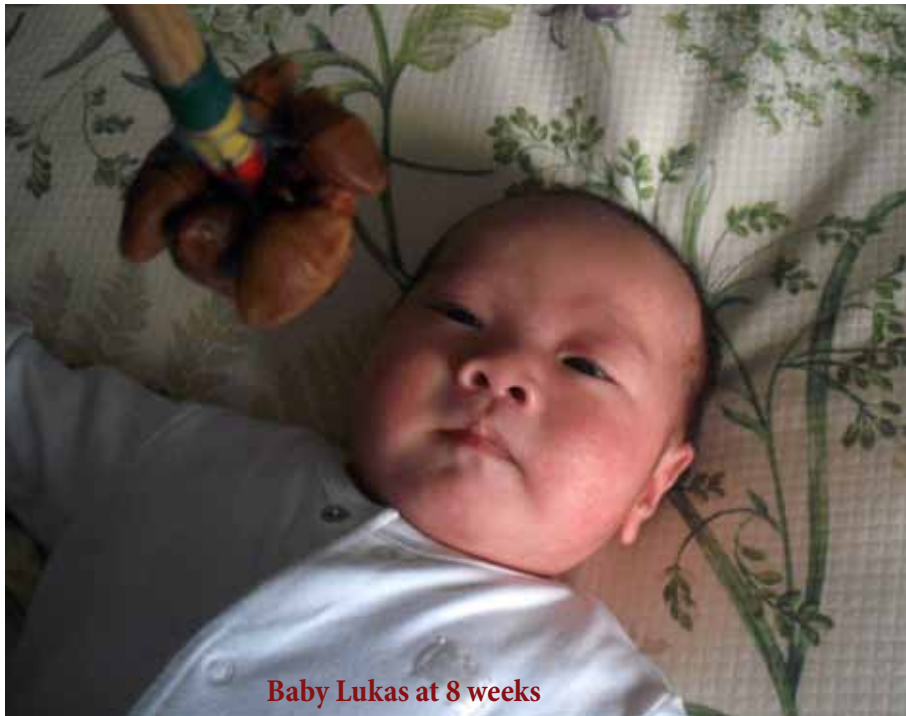
*Twinkle, twinkle, little star,
How I wonder what you are!
Up above the world so high,
Like a diamond in the sky!*

Sing softly and stroke it delicately. Stroke once on each line of the lyrics and stop playing at the end of the song. Sing and play simultaneously 3 times in a sequence, so as to allow the young audiences to observe, listen and enjoy.

In addition to the 5 contacts, the Musical Baby Bonding program has defined a developmental sequence, that has a significant importance in supporting babies' innate curiosity and attention span.

The first musical instrument in this sequence is the *Wind Chime*, which is followed by the *Kenari*, *Cascas*, *Djmbe*, *Horio*, *Egg on Stick*, *Squeezer* and *Egg*. Presenting the instruments in that order gradually provides the essential visual and musical stimuli necessary for the baby's early development.

Playing the *Kenari* brings a whole new world to the parent-infant connection. Both are exposed to a new sound - which is produced by seeds; a new colour - that is much darker than the silvery wind chime; a new round shape - that allows the baby's tiny fist to fully grasp, new playing movements and a new lovable nursery rhyme.



Baby Lukas at 8 weeks



Baby Lukas at 8 weeks

*One, two, three, four -
Mary's at the cottage door.
Five, six, seven, eight -
Eating cherries off the plate.*

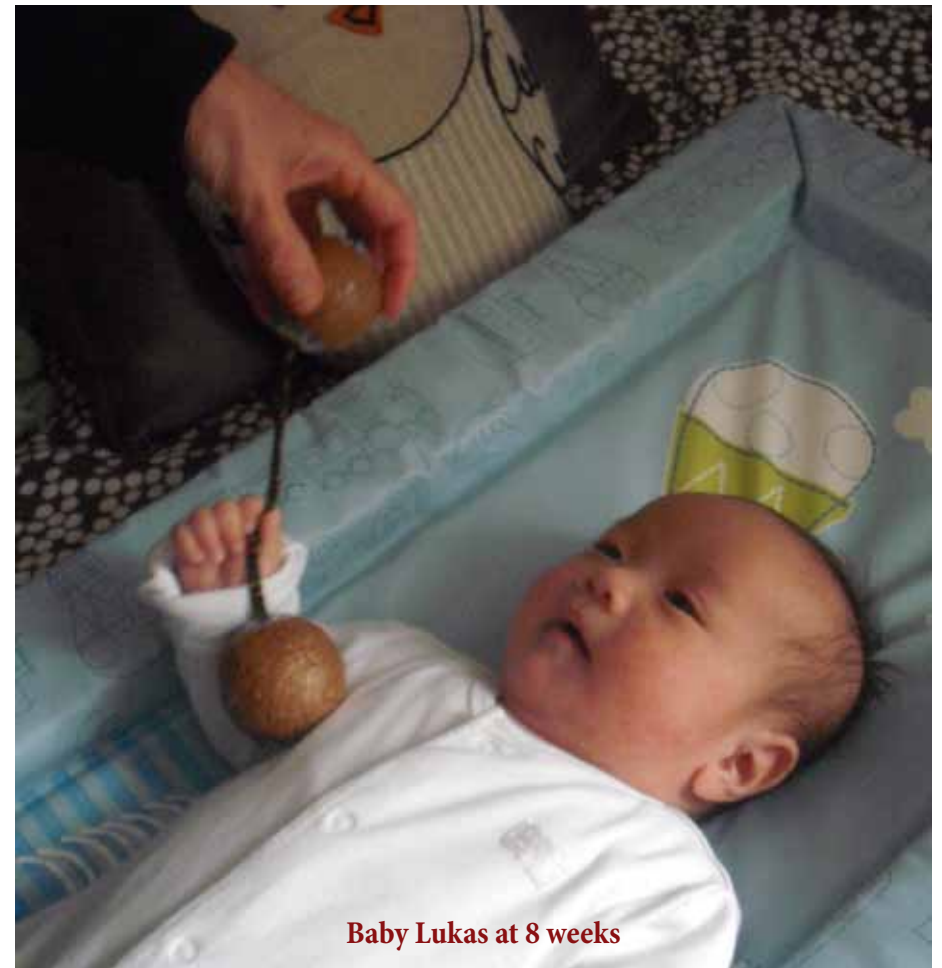
Say slowly and clearly while rattling the *Kenari* very gently. On lines 1 & 3 of the rhymes, play once with each word using the up-and-down movement. On lines 2 & 4 play with each syllable, using the side-to-side movement.

Say and play simultaneously 3 times in a row, and repeat the above whether your baby is watching you or the instrument or whether joyfully grasping the rattle. Believe it or not, although it looks sometimes that the babies ignore our singing, they are listening and wondrously truly love it.

One of the didactic ideas that has developed, through years of observing babies responding within music interaction, is the necessity to have a pattern that will bring consistency, repetition and innovation to each of the Musical Baby Bonding activities. By matching songs with instruments in permanent pairs we created a mini-program. In each pair we find that the sounds that are produced by the instrument highlight the musical elements in its matching song. Reciprocally, the song functions as the best framework for exploring and playing the matching instrument.



The Cascas is a simple musical instrument, played by children and adults in many different parts of the world. It is made of two small balls that are filled with seeds and are attached to both ends of a flexible cord. Its symmetrical structure, soft sound and pendulum-like movements are all reflected in its matching song.



Baby Lukas at 8 weeks

*My little ball is round and small,
Round and small is my little ball.
If it weren't so round and small,
Would it still be my little ball?*

Sing softly while holding the instrument at a comfortable distance from the baby's eyes, in order to help her focus on the Cascas' characteristics, such as its shape and movements. Shake delicately to support the baby's listening and bring the cord close to the little fingers or lay it down onto the palm to stimulate grasping.

Playing musical instruments with babies and toddlers requires repeating a regular sequence. This sequence is composed of 4 essential developmental steps.

To PRESENT the instrument as to initiate the baby's visual contact with it.



To PLAY the instrument as to initiate the baby's audial contact with it.



To MOVE the instrument around as to bring interest that is created by motion.



To TOUCH the baby's palms with the instrument as to initiate the baby's tactile contact and grasping.



The only 2 backgrounds which can be added to support babies' and toddlers' musical development are SINGING and SILENCE.

Singing is the first and therefore most significant way of communicating with your baby from birth. As previously mentioned, the MBB program has defined five essential contacts that, when nurtured, support the babies' communication skills and their journey of development from day one. The eye and voice contacts are involved when singing to the baby. The best time to do so is 10 minutes after every feeding, as this is the best time for the baby to listen.

Sit comfortably, with your face close to the baby's face and look brightly and intentionally into her eyes. Choose a lovable lullaby and sing it three times in a row. Sing softly and slowly with exaggerated pronunciation. While doing so, watch for the tiny messages that start coming from the baby. After a very short time you will see that the baby responds to your "invitation" to make eye and voice contacts, by looking back into your eyes and into your mouth.



As shown in the picture, newborns look at our face and listen to us very carefully, without smiling. It doesn't mean that they are worried or unhappy. It means that they are curious and interested in our singing, hence we should repeat it again and again. At the beginning this only happens for a few seconds at a time, and therefore we may miss it. By singing a small collection of songs a few times a day, you will support these little tiny moments that will gradually grow as singing will become your new family language.

Researchers claim that singing to your baby can assist the acquisition of language and the development of their speech. Singing to babies and infants before they learn to speak is an essential precursor to later emotional well being. As a song is a special type of speech it also contributes to future educational success. These researchers strongly believe that singing traditional nursery rhymes and lullabies can prepare children's brains for language and may help avert language problems developing in later life.

The significant message that the MBB program sends - alongside other educators, developmental psychologists and researchers - is that babies need to experience the 5 essential contacts with their mothers, fathers and siblings. During their first year, babies cannot benefit from music without human contact. Unfortunately, electronic devices cannot replace the unique human ability to develop reciprocal communication.



As shown in the picture, singing to your baby and toddler, while intentionally using the 5 contacts, naturally encourages her to join in by listening. In addition to listening she is moving, vocalizing and dancing. These are the early signs of communication, co-ordination and musical skills that are needed to develop good learning skills throughout the childhood.