



Musical Baby Bonding Guide

Orly Zalel

The Musical Baby Bonding Kit

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 carefully selected 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>5 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>Egg shaker</i>
<i>14 weeks onwards</i>	<i>Djembe</i>
<i>16 weeks onwards</i>	<i>Squeezer</i>
<i>18 weeks onwards</i>	<i>Egg-on-stick</i>

The collection 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.



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

The music basket has an important role in building musicality and developing musical skills as babies grow and so the MBB kit's basket comes with enough extra space for adding other small musical instruments.

In the Musical Baby Bonding guide 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 Connection

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 Musical Baby Bonding (MBB) programme has defined a musical connection that is composed of 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. The Wind chime has a unique shape, gentle wavy movement and a calming soothing sound. Thanks to these qualities, the MBB programme has chosen it to be the first musical instrument to be played

with newborn babies. Its contribution to their primary listening experiences is significant and second to none. Babies from the age of 5 weeks explore the Wind chime by touching, grasping, pulling and swaying the rods.

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



Baby Eytan at 8 weeks

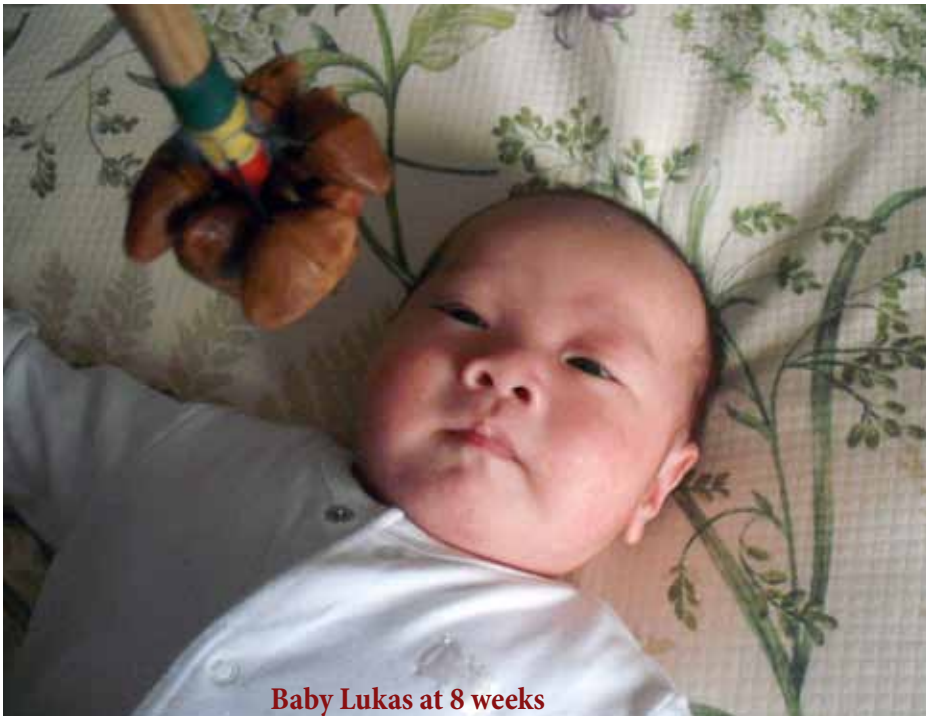
*Twinkle, twinkle, little star,
How I wonder what you are.
Up above the world so high,
Like a diamond in the sky. 🎵*

Sing softly and stroke it delicately. Stroke once on each line of the lyrics and stop playing at the end of the song. Sing the song and play 3 times in a row, so as to allow the young babies to observe, listen and enjoy. To extend the length of the listening span move the instrument slowly and attentively from side to side and up and down. It is important to remember that babies need to watch the source of the sound in order to build up their listening skills.

In addition to the 5 essential contacts, the Musical Baby Bonding programme has defined a developmental sequence, that nurtures babies' innate curiosity and supports their attention span growth.

The first musical instrument in this sequence is the *Wind chime*, which is followed by the *Kenari*, *Cascas*, *Horio shaker*, *Egg*, *Djembe*, *Squeezer* and *Egg-on-stick*. 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 new experiences 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. 🎵*

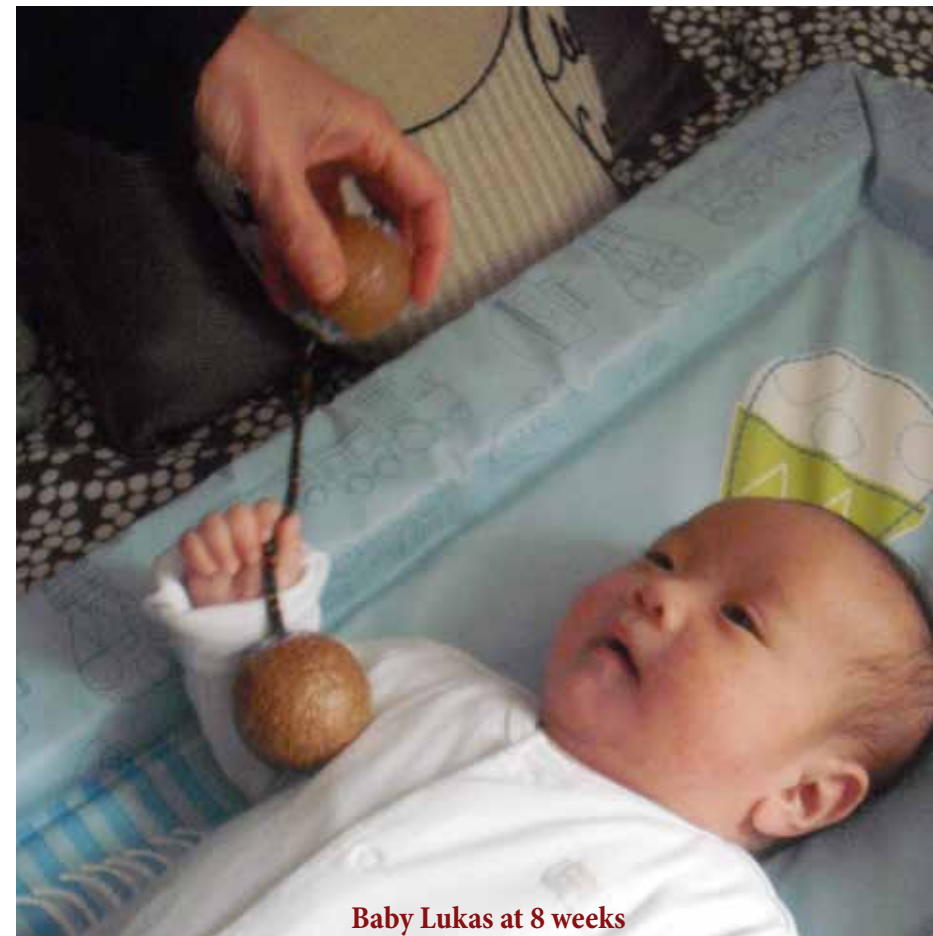
Say the rhyme slowly and clearly while rattling the Kenari very gently. On lines 1 & 3 play once with each word using an up-and-down movement. On lines 2 & 4 play with each syllable using a side-to-side movement.

Say and play 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 sometimes looks like the babies ignore our singing they are listening and truly love it.

One of the important discoveries from years of observing babies responding and interacting with music, is the need to have a pattern that brings consistency, repetition and novelty to each of the Musical Baby Bonding activities. By matching songs with instruments in fixed pairs we create a mini-programme. In each pair the sounds that are produced by the instrument highlight the musical elements in the matching song. Reciprocally, the song functions as an excellent framework for exploring and playing the paired 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 which 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? 🎵4*

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 movement. Shake it delicately to support the baby's listening and bring the cord close to the baby's little fingers or lay it down onto her 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 so as to initiate the baby's visual contact with it.



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



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



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



The only two ways that support babies' listening during these four steps are SINGING and SILENCE.

Singing is the first and therefore the most important way in which parents communicate with their baby. As previously mentioned, the MBB programme has defined five essential contacts that, when nurtured, support the baby's 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 a few minutes after every feeding, as this is when the baby is most ready 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.



Baby Eytan at 3 weeks

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 they respond for a few seconds at a time, and therefore we may miss it. But by singing a small collection of songs a few times a day, we'll support these tiny moments and they will gradually grow as singing becomes the new family language.

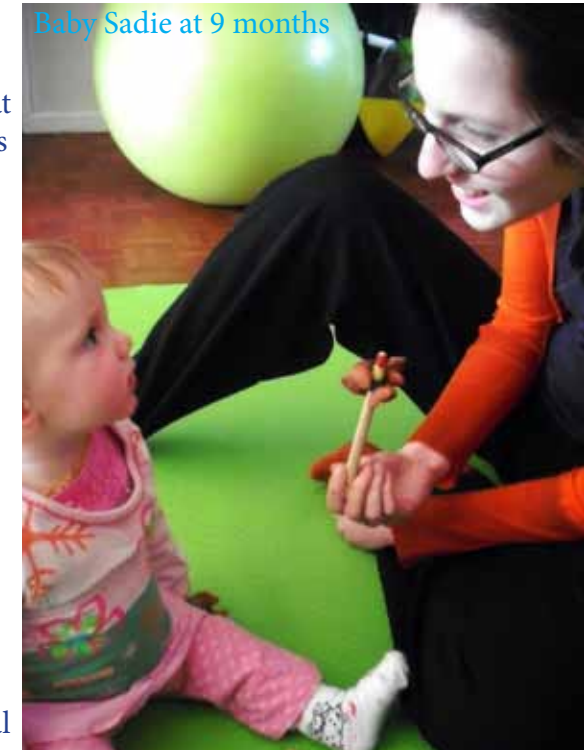
Researchers claim that singing to your baby can assist the acquisition of language and the development of her speech. They report that singing to infants before they learn to speak is an essential precursor to later emotional well being and that as a song is a special type of speech it also contributes to future educational success.

These researchers strongly believe that singing traditional nursery rhymes and lullabies can prepare children's brains for language and prevent language problems developing in later life.

The important message that the MBB programme sends - a message confirmed by 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. Electronic devices are no substitute for the unique human ability to develop reciprocal communication.

As shown in the picture above, singing to your baby and toddler while intentionally using the musical connection (the five essential contacts), naturally encourages her to join in by listening. In addition, she enthusiastically moves, vocalizes and plays. These are the early signs of communication, co-ordination and musical skills that are needed for developing good learning skills throughout childhood.



Baby Sadie at 9 months

Repeating hand gestures and movements while singing or saying a nursery rhyme, adds another dimension to the mutual experience, and another essential contact between the participants in the musical activity.

Movement, in its various forms, is an important factor in perceiving and expressing music and noticeably catches babies' and toddlers' attention when it reflects a musical content. Accurately matching gestures to elements of the tune rather than to the lyrics of the song, supports the babies' listening to singing, concentration and awareness to tunes and melodies.



Baby Oren at 4 months

The movement of the small Horio beautifully grabs the baby's interest and is useful from the early age of 10 weeks. To produce sound it has to be rolled on the floor so it brings a new sensomotoric experience to the baby's playtime. It supports hand-eye coordination, head movements and gradually prolongs the baby's tummy time.

Exploring one instrument at a time is the key for babies' healthy learning development. By presenting only one musical instrument at a time to the baby, (and not giving her a pile of toys that is so often done) we help and support the baby's future ability to select, choose, explore and enjoy learning.



There is a direct correlation between the quality and the quantity of the communication time that mother spends with her baby from birth, to the quality and quantity of the baby's sleep. Babies who get up to 15 minutes musical stimuli a few times a day from birth, grow to be content and happy babies. They cry significantly less and they go to sleep easier and sleep deeper for longer periods of time. Nevertheless, the baby's cry is her primary way of communicating and so "shushing" may not be a suitable response. In fact listening, smiling, singing, rocking, massaging and playing musical instruments would be a good start in building a healthy and positive baby-parent relationship.

Specialists find that babies who spend longer periods of time on their tummies are able to roll over, sit up, crawl and pull themselves up to standing significantly earlier. In other words, they develop their independence earlier and this development contributes to their confidence and trust in the world around them.



Roll the Horio from side to side or forwards and backwards in front and close to the baby's face and observe her response. Try to keep it within the baby's sight. Be aware that when the Horio gets out of her sight she might lose her interest in the instrument. As mentioned before watching the source of the sound is essential for building up babies' listening skills.

Sing the following beautiful nursery rhyme slowly and gently. At the same time delicately roll the musical instrument back and forth in each musical phrase, or in other words twice in each line:

*Row, row, row your boat
Gently down the stream,
Merrily, merrily, merrily
Life is but a dream. 🎵5*

The Egg brings a new sound, and interesting shape, colours and movements to the babies' musical experience. To highlight these qualities we have matched this instrument with the well known nursery rhyme Humpty Dumpty:

*Humpty Dumpty sat on a wall,
Humpty Dumpty had a great fall!
All the king's horses and all the king's men
Couldn't put Humpty together again. 🎵6*

The asymmetrical structure of this nursery rhyme and its contradicting rhythms are reflected in the two contrasting ways in which we play the instrument.

Twin babies Oren and Dana at 4 months



On lines 1 & 2 of the rhymes hold the Egg vertically and touch the floor to the beat. On lines 3 & 4 put the Egg horizontally on the floor and spin it freely. Sing 3 times in a row and then move on to a different activity. Always finish singing the song you have started, even though your baby's attention has been exhausted by the middle of it. The reason being the end of a song plays a significant role in developing a good verbal communication skills within the family and beyond.

The musical beat is a unique phenomenon that is equivalent to the heart beat in the human body. It exists from start to finish within all tunes and pieces of music.

A recent study suggests that sensing the beat could be an innate ability, and we at the MBB programme have learnt that this ability can be observed from the age of 3 months, when babies move their hands, legs or head to the beat of the music they are exposed to.

Baby Dana at 4 months



It seems that following the beat is a vital part of cultural activities like a conversation, dancing or playing music with another person. It starts from a very early age in playing traditional nursery rhymes such as:

*One potato,
Two potato,
Three potato,
Four..
Five potato,
Six potato,
Seven potato ,
More... 🎵*

Hold the Djembe in one hand and beat the drum once on each underlined word. When saying the words “Four” and “More” prolong the enunciation using vocalization and at the same time raise your hand slowly above the baby’s head.

As shown in the pictures the baby’s first responses will be watching and listening to the drum and following the gestures with her eyes. From as early as the age of 5 months she will join in imitating us: vocalizing, touching the drum and raising her hands.



What is really astonishing is how quickly babies and toddlers learn the pattern of the movements and sounds of each song. After listening to this nursery rhyme only 3 times in a row, they will expect to hear and watch it again and again, and most importantly, they will expect us to repeat the acting and singing in exactly the same way.

The musical characteristics of tempo, pitch, and dynamics are naturally noticed by babies as early as from birth. Choosing a nursery rhyme with only one main characteristic, is how we can help babies and toddlers to comprehend music.

The musical characteristic tempo is simply and clearly presented in the rhythm and lyrics of the following nursery rhyme:

*Slowly, slowly, very slowly - creeps the little snail,
Slowly, slowly, very slowly - up the garden trail.
Quickly, quickly, very quickly - runs the little mouse,
Quickly, quickly, very quickly - all around the house. 🎵8*

Twin babies Oren and Dana at 4 months



The Squeezer is the smallest instrument in the MBB kit and because of its thin round shape it can be played in various graceful ways. As shown in the picture above two of these contrasting ways have been chosen to match the song's musical content and its lyrics. When playing slowly and imitating the snail's movement roll it on its side (left in the photo) while playing quickly and imitating the running mouse shake it horizontally (right in the photo).

The Egg-on-stick has a classical rattle shape, a wonderful sound and it fits the baby's little palms.

Touching things with their lips and tongue is how babies and toddlers learn about structures, materials and shapes of the things in their own



environment. Preventing them from doing so will dangerously delay their learning skills development and may cause other problems. Six out of eight musical instruments in the MBB kit are completely safe for babies and toddlers to “taste” (not to bite and chew). The Wind chime and the Kenari shaker are the exceptions to this and should be used only for playing and listening to ensure the baby's safety.

When the baby grasps the rattle do not hold her hand or shake it – she will do it by herself!!! At first it is most likely that the rattle will drop a few times, the reason being the natural release of the baby's fist. To renew the grasping: show, shake, move, touch the palms with the instrument and sing:

*Rain, rain go away!
Come again another day!
Rain, rain go away!
Little Tommy wants to play. 🎵9*

*Where is Noonie? Where is Noonie?
Are you here? Are you here?
Hello, hello to Noonie! Hello, hello to Noonie!
Hello dear, hello dear! 🎵1*

Songs that include the baby's name have a special place in the repertoire of children songs. The reason being the magical power that our own name has on our attention and response.

Addressing the baby by her name from birth, supports her ability to focus and listen earlier than we ever thought. As shown in the picture, when singing the song above, offer two fingers to your baby to grasp as singing while holding hands is an enriching parent-baby experience.



About the CD 🎵:

The MBB CD includes 10 nursery rhymes and baby songs. Nine out of ten are in the guide and one is bonus Teddy Bear - the lovable baby hugging song. The CD demonstrates the natural tone of voice, the pace and dynamic suitable for singing with babies. We sing slowly, quietly and attentively. We recommend you listen and learn each song before singing to your baby, but it is also possible to sing along with the CD. Make sure that the CD is played at a very low volume so as to support the baby's listening to your voice. Your baby will naturally look into your eyes, listen to your voice and follow your mouth movements. Keep singing and enjoy the musical connection with your baby.



Orly Zalel is the Musical Baby Bonding programme creator. Orly is an experienced music and early years educator, child development specialist, birth and postnatal doula and a developmental massage teacher.

Drums for Schools Ltd and its Early Years division "Sound Children", designs, makes and supplies high quality educational musical instruments. Its mission is to help spread music-making as widely as possible by making innovative, affordable and completely accessible musical instruments, music-making programmes and packages.



The Musical Baby Bonding Guide is aiming to support parents in finding their own unique bond with their baby.

The guide proposes a step-by-step programme that is based on a universal knowledge that music evokes bonding.

"Bonding is as simple (and mysterious) and as easy (or difficult) as love itself" says David Chamberlain the developmental psychologist and a pioneer in birth psychology.

Musical Baby Bonding programme shares with Dr. Chamberlain the belief that "the newborn baby is a person, mind and soul, with understanding, wisdom and purpose and that parents naturally achieve bonding by singing lullabies and sending intentional and explicit messages of welcome and love, heart to heart."

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