

Play in Your Own Kitchen Band



Everyday objects in the kitchen or around the home can be played with to expose your child who's blind or visually impaired to a variety of new sounds, textures and sources of vibration - all musical concepts that you can use in parent-child play. Kitchen band play is endless fun and different every time! Here's how to create your own "kitchen band," from music therapist **Amanda Bryant, MM, MT-BC, NMT Fellow.**

Kitchen "Instruments"

First, look through your kitchen cupboards and drawers to find a variety of objects that can be played with to create a kitchen rhythm band. Here are some suggestions:

- Pot or pan, wooden and metal spoons or utensils (try tools that are short enough for your child to hold safely and use appropriately)
- Measuring spoons are a great choice for little people!
- Whisk or cheese grater (be careful with sharp edges)
- Cookie sheet

- Variety of different size cups, to tap up and down or tap with a utensil
- Plastic food containers to turn upside down or place things in
- Colander for placing small items in to shake and rattle

Make “Music”

To get started, sit on the floor with your child in your lap if they need support or in front of you or to your side so your child can look at the “instruments” and reach them with their hands. If your child is in a feeding chair, use the tray as a musical instrument.

Explore your kitchen band items using hands or feet to hear sounds and feel textures of the play items. This way your child can hear and feel the different sounds and textures before being asked to use yet another object in the play routine. For example, tap on the bottoms of pots and pans with hands or feet to create different rhythms. Experiment playing with the measuring spoons as “clackers” making sound on their own before using items as a tool on another object.

Choose items that are the right size for your child and incorporate a variety of textures and materials. For example, explore how a wooden spoon sounds different on a metal pot than a metal spoon on a metal pot. Use a utensil to scrape on a cheese grater. Twirl different small tools inside a pot or cup, or plastic food container to make different types of sounds.

Experiment with how your kitchen band instruments sound on a hard floor, on a table, on carpet, against your legs or body.

Don't feel the need to add singing or language at first. This allows the young child to hear their kitchen band sounds exclusively without too much “extra sound” to have to listen to.

When ready, add language that is fun and meaningful to your kitchen band play. Here's how to add your own “song” to your kitchen band.

- Start by chanting the names of the objects you are playing with so that the language is meaningful to the active play you are doing with your child.
- For example, say “pot, pot I hear a pot” (pause and then play it... repeat)
- For example, say “clickity-clack, the forks sound like that” (pause and play it... repeat)
- Add your child's name in the rhythm chant. “Jack, Jack, clickity clack!”

Now that you've got your kitchen band, think about how you can incorporate rhythms or sounds into all kinds of everyday routines that you do with your child, from bath time to mealtime, getting dressed or going on an errand.