



## Simple Songs and Games for Instrument Play in Early Education

### Shakers - Shake It High and Shake It Low (London Bridge Is Falling Down)

Shake your shaker in the air,  
Shake it here, shake it there. (shake to  
one side then the other)  
Shake your shaker in the air,  
Shake your shaker.

Shake it fast and shake it slow,  
Shake it stop (freeze), shake it go.  
(shake)  
Shake it fast and shake it slow,  
Shake your shaker.

Shake it high and shake it low,  
Shake it yes, shake it no. (shake while  
nodding then while shaking head)  
Shake it high and shake it low,  
Shake your shaker.

Shake it near and shake it far,  
Drive your shaker like a car. (shake while  
pretending to drive car)  
Shake it near and shake it far,  
Shake your shaker.

*Notes: Simplify or slow down the song if it moves too quickly. Make up words for imaginary play or to practice academic concepts (body parts, prepositions, directions)*

Source: Connors, Abigail. (2004). *101 Rhythm Instrument Activities for Young Children*. Gryphon House: Beltsville, MD

### Sticks – Tap Tap Tap Your Sticks (Row Row Row Your Boat)

Tap tap tap your sticks  
Gently down the stream  
Merrily, merrily, merrily  
Life is but a dream

Tap tap tap the floor  
Pound, pound pound your sticks  
Hammer hammer hammer your sticks  
Roll roll roll your sticks  
Stir stir stir the soup  
Make make make and "X" (or a T or  
other letters or shapes)

Scrape scrape scrape your sticks  
Tap tap tap your feet (gently)

Source: Connors, Abigail. (2004). *101 Rhythm Instrument Activities for Young Children*. Gryphon House: Beltsville, MD

### Follow the leader

(instruments, pots and pans, plastic containers)

- Follow the child's lead in playing instruments – stop when the child stops, play loud/soft/fast/slow along with the child.
- Children may also lead by saying "stop" and "go" or "fast" and "slow"
- Sing a familiar song as you play.

### Instrument activities for older children

Drum circle based activities (similar to follow the leader)

- Child leads by creating a beat on an instrument and others join in.
- Child can lead playing with signs or signals for go/stop, loud/soft, rumble.
- Actions can dictate playing (stomping foot, running, bouncing ball).
- Play along freely to favourite recorded music.