



## General Age Guidelines

I want to emphasize that these are only takeaways from one person's experience: everybody's different, and there are always exceptions to any trend. These are mainly intended to help parents/guardians who want their child to learn an instrument, but are unsure which would be best. If your child expresses a strong preference for a particular instrument, please do not let anything written here dissuade them from trying.

My general observation has been that kids benefit the most from individual lessons at ~6 and up. There is still value for younger kids, but even for those with great focus for their age, I've usually found a group setting to be more rewarding (Peak Valley Music does not currently offer group lessons, but will be starting in Summer of 2023).

**How old should my child be to learn \_\_\_\_\_?**

- **Ukulele:** ~6 and up. Uke is a great instrument for young kids: light, inexpensive, and friendly to small fingers.
- **Piano:** ~7 and up. Solid reading skills and finger independence will make starting piano much more fun right away.
- **Guitar:** ~8 and up. I implore you: if you have a child under age ~10 who wants to learn guitar, get them an electric or a nylon-string (my

grandfather played nylon strings his whole life because he found steel too uncomfortable). Add to that the fact that the instrument's playing surface faces away from you, and it can be a daunting physical challenge for younger kids (that said, the fastest-progressing guitar student I've ever had was 6 years old).

- **Bass:** ~10 and up. The factors here are reach and finger strength (basses have longer necks & thicker strings than standard guitars in order to produce lower frequencies). That said, there are affordable [short-scale basses](#) and plenty of Lilliputian bass virtuosos.
- **Voice:** it depends on the style & focus. I take a [3-point approach](#) to teaching voice. The performative aspects can be adapted for any age, but the theoretical aspects may be too heady for kids ~8 and under, and there are aspects of vocal technique (particularly for solo singing) that most voice teachers don't tackle until after puberty to avoid potentially overloading the vocal mechanism. For pre-teens, I generally recommend learning voice in tandem with another instrument.