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Office of Special Education Services
REMOVING BARRIERS. RAISING EXPECTATIONS.

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Dear Parents,

Greetings from Houston ISD Music Therapy!! My name is Terri Hart, and I am the music therapist for Houston ISD. I hope you and your family are doing well. Below are some resources you can use with your student to keep them learning and engaged during this time of at-home learning. Please reach out to me by email anytime. My email is Theresa.hart@houstonisd.org. I'm happy to meet with you by phone or an online learning format to conduct a session or answer questions.

Music Therapy Resources for Students With Special Needs

General Information and Resources

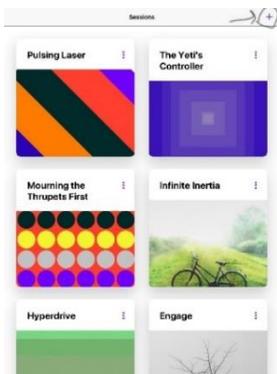
Why, when and where to use music with your child

1. Some parents may use music to simply occupy time, by using iPad/iPhone apps that utilize music and video. It's important to also see ways it can enhance your relationship with your child and teach skills. Some students with special needs may show signs of stress due to over-stimulation of senses. Consider giving a music / sound / technology break and encourage other outlets, such as art or physical activity.
2. It is not recommended to constantly use headphones. It is understandable that parents may prefer them due to the constant sound and repetition which typically accompany your child's use of apps, etc. However, headphones can affect the child's sensory processing skills. Also, please monitor the sound level in headphones, especially if the child has access to the volume.
3. One should not allow the child to have constant combination of sound and visual – always monitor which apps your child is using, use the motivation of music to teach concepts such as cause and effect / ask me, tell me.
4. Your child may not like what you like! Watch for signs of stress or preference. Try different styles and see what they like.

iPad Apps for Students

Please note: This list was created with the most current information available. An effort was made to choose apps which are free, however some may have in app purchases. Since apps are created, sold and updated by others, there is a chance that there could be a charge in the future. Parents are encouraged to use parental controls to restrict children from downloading apps or clicking items within an app which would result in unapproved charges.

1. Beatwave – This is a fun, easy to use app which creates a loop of musical tones. The term “loop” refers to a sequence of tones which repeats until the user stops it. By repeating, it also creates a beat which allows students and families to improvise with musical instruments, or homemade music makers.

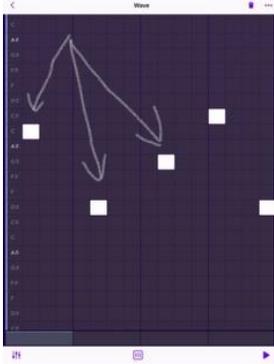
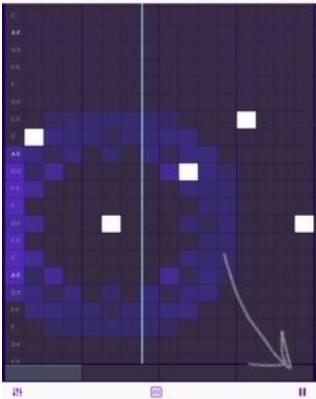


From the “sessions” page, tap the “+” button in the upper right-hand corner.



A blue screen will appear with a “+” in the upper left-hand corner. Touch the plus button to create a new loop.

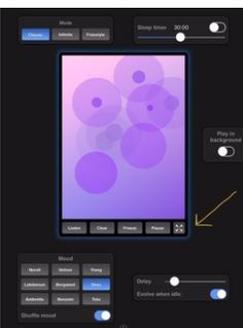
Beatwave (con't.)

	<p>Next you will see a new screen with a grid of squares. Tap several of the squares and they will turn white.</p>
	<p>Press the “play” button in the lower right-hand corner of the screen. The app will begin to play your loop. You can delete any of the sounds by tapping on a white square, which will turn it back to blue. You can add a new sound to the loop by tapping a blue square, which will turn it white. While your loop is playing, you can encourage your student to interact in several different ways. They can tap along with the beat created by the loop. If you have any music instruments, your student can tap or shake along to the beat. If you don't have instruments, you can use a wooden spoon or chop sticks to tap on metal pans, old tin can or glass jar. You can also create rhythm sticks by using two wooden spoons or chop sticks.</p>

2. Toca Band – This fun app allows the user to create a band out of funny and creative characters.

	<p>When you open the app, you will see the screen here. The characters are along the bottom and you can scroll left and right to see them all. To hear a sample of the character's sound, move it with your finger from the row on the bottom to the circle below the yellow star. The app will move to a screen with just that character. You tap that character to hear a sample. Press the “X” in the upper right-hand corner to exit that screen and go back to the stage.</p>
	<p>Choose as many characters as you wish by using your finger to move the character from the bottom to a circle on the stage. This will add that character to the musical loop. Use this loop to play musical instruments (see Beatwave app for suggestions on homemade instruments).</p>

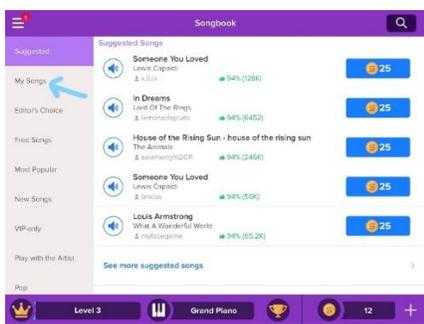
3. Bloom – This is a great app to create a relaxing looped sound. Your student can work on fine motor skills by practicing holding one finger out to use the pad of the finger to touch the screen.

	<p>When you open the app, you will see the screen pictured here. To hear a randomly selected group of sounds, touch “listen” (indicated by the light blue arrow). To make adjustments on the sounds you can create, touch the “create” button (indicated by the dark blue arrow).</p>
	<p>Touching either of the buttons on the opening screen will take you to a screen where you can create sounds simply by touching the screen. When you touch the screen and small circle will appear and a sound will play. The circle will get bigger and the sound will loop and fade away. Touching the screen in various places will continue to create circles and sounds. If you want to explore the settings, sounds, colors, etc. touch the small square in the lower right-hand corner of the screen.</p>
	<p>This will take you the screen pictured here. Explore the buttons to change the screen, sounds, mood, etc.</p>
	<p>When you are finished making changes in the settings, touch the “+” button. The app will go back to the screen where you and your student can touch and create musical sounds.</p>

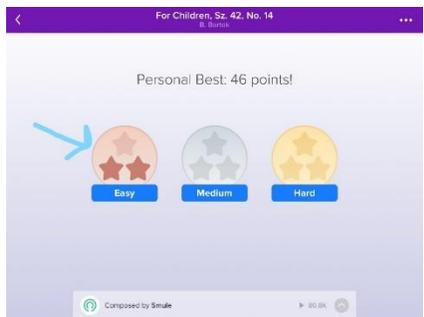
4. Magic Piano – Magic Piano is an app which allows the user sound like a piano prodigy - anytime, anywhere. Play your favorite songs with your own spin and sound great every time. Follow beams of light to guide your fingertips to the correct note. You control the notes, rhythm and tempo, allowing your creativity and expressivity to shine.



When you open the app, you will momentarily see the screen pictured here. It will automatically go to the song selection screen.



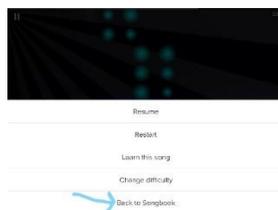
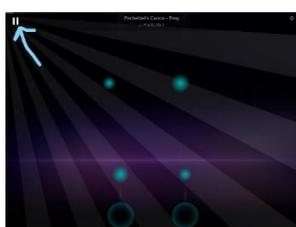
You can scroll down and choose a song from the My Songs or Free Songs section. Some of the songs have coins or ads attached to them. Monitor children to ensure they don't have unexpected or unapproved charges.



After making a selection, you will need to choose “Easy,” “Medium” or “Hard.” It is recommended to start with easy.



A black screen will appear with colored dots moving from the top to the bottom. Touch the dots as they approach the white fuzzy line. The app will play the song as if you are playing the piano. If you know the song, try to touch the line on the beat and in tempo (speed of the song). If you are going too fast or slow, you will see a brief message appear in the upper right-hand part of the screen.



If you wish to pause and return to the song selection screen, press the pause button in the upper left-hand corner.

Select “return to songbook” and make another selection.

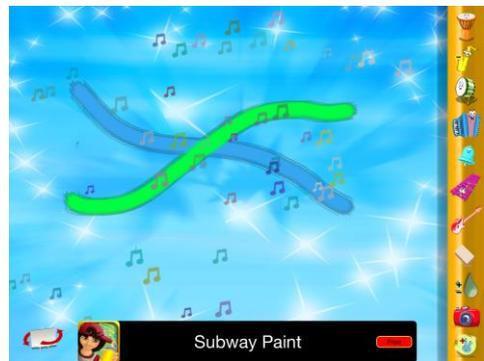
5. Paint Melody – A fun app which allows students to select an instrument on the right of the screen, then draw a shape on the blue part of the screen.



Open the app and you will see the screen shown here.



Select an instrument on the right side of the screen. Each one sounds different, so try each one to choose your favorite.

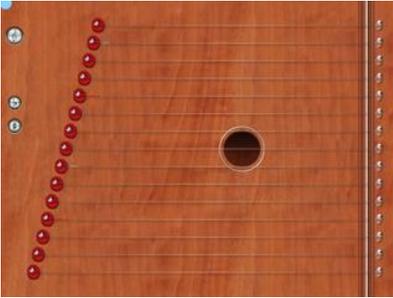
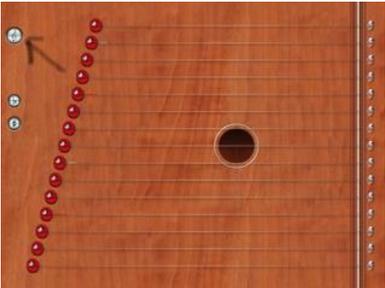
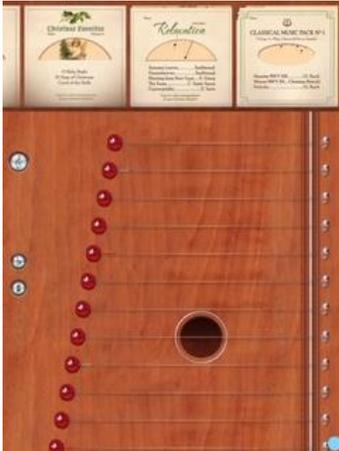
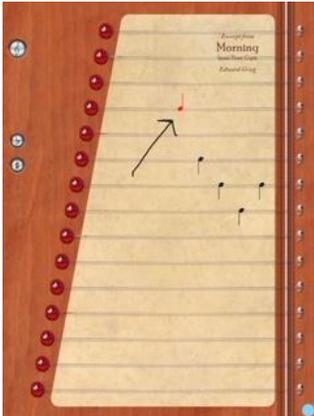


Draw on the blue screen. The instrument will play as the line is drawn. Use this app to have your student practice shapes or letters.

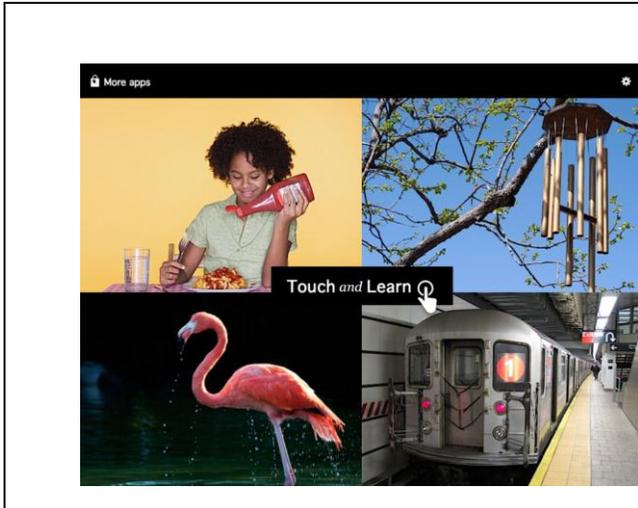


If you wish to erase all or part of the drawing, touch the eraser on the right-hand part of the screen. You can use the eraser to erase part of the drawing, or touch the trash can to erase the whole drawing.

6. Air Harp – In this app a tabletop harp is displayed. Students can touch the strings for them to play pitches. Select a song and the app will load a music to guide the user how to play.

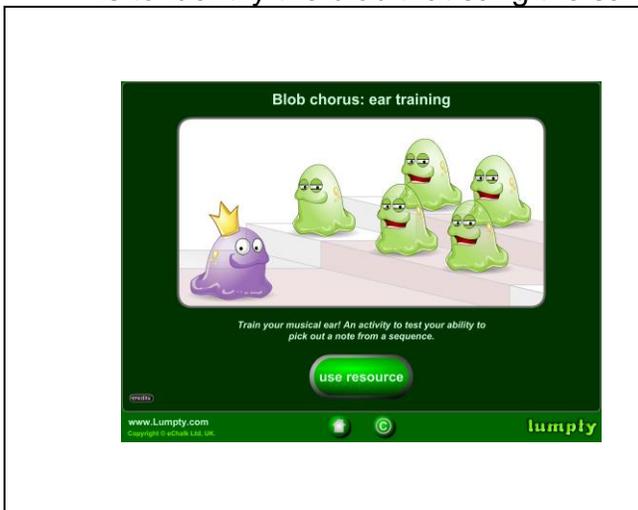
	<p>Open the app and see the screen pictured here.</p>
	<p>Touch the button in the upper left hand corner that has a treble clef on it.</p>
	<p>You will see boxes appear at the top of the screen. You can scroll left and right to reveal more choices. Start with "Relaxation." Then choose "Morning."</p>
	<p>You will see music notes appear under the strings. The first note will be red. Begin to play by touching the red note. As you play the notes, each note will fade and the next note will turn red. When you want to change to a different song, touch the treble clef button and choose again.</p>

7. Touch The Sound - is a fun app that allows your kid to explore the world of **sounds** one **touch** at a time. This **app** focused on helping kids learn to recognize familiar **sounds** and match the **sounds** to the picture.



Open the app and you will see a screen with four pictures. Touch the center of the screen with the words “Touch and Learn” in the center. Next you will see a new screen with four new pictures and the iPad will play a sound. Listen to the sound and touch the picture that matches the sound. If you are correct and green check mark will appear. If you are not correct, a bing-bong sound will play. If you want to hear the sound again, touch the “back” button in the upper right-hand corner.

8. Blob Chorus (This app costs \$.99 on Apple App Store). This educational game is already used in thousands of schools to introduce children to pitch and improve their musical ear for notes. Each of the blobs in the chorus sing a note then king blob sings his note. The aim of the game is to identify the blob that sang the same note as king blob.



Open the app and touch the “Use Resource” button on the bottom of the screen in the center.



You will see a screen with three green blobs across the top and one purple King blob in the center at the bottom. The green blobs will each sing their pitch and then the purple King blob will sing his pitch. The goal of the game is to choose the green blob which is singing the pitch that matches the pitch the purple blob is singing. If you need to hear the pitches again, touch the “Hear Blobs Again” button on the bottom of the screen.

Do It Yourself Instruments – Instruments you can make at home

1. <https://www.howweelearn.com/spectacular-hOMEMADE-musical-instruments/>
2. <http://redtri.com/hOMEMADE-instruments/>
3. <https://www.redtedart.com/musical-instrument-crafts-for-kids/>
4. <http://www.momsandcrafters.com/diy-musical-instruments-2/>
5. <https://planningplaytime.com/10-diy-musical-instruments-for-kids>

Websites with useful resources for students with special needs

1. Terri Hart, MT-BC, the music therapist for Houston ISD will be posting YouTube Videos on her channel daily. These videos can be used to guide students in at-home learning opportunities. The songs featured are all original songs by Terri and she uses them in her work with her students in Houston ISD. The link to the channel is: [Houston ISD Music Therapy](#)
2. Jim Gill is an American Singer – Songwriter who writes great songs for kids. All his songs have the directions for movements in the lyrics of the songs. [Jim Gill Videos](#)
3. The Learning Station uses simple and catchy videos featuring kids. They are great for brain breaks and learning academic concepts. [The Learning Station](#)
4. The Rise School Of Houston is a private school for students with special needs. During the Covid-19 Pandemic, their therapists are posting ideas and resources daily for their students. The resources are available on their website. [The Rise School of Houston](#)
5. Hap Palmer is a singer-songwriter who has written 100's of children's movement songs. Many resources and information are given on his website. [Hap Palmer](#)