

How To Get Your Child Started With The Violin

Everything you need to know before they start to play



ViolinSchool

in partnership with

RIAM
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Get Set Up

Learning a musical instrument can be one of the most rewarding skills your child will ever develop. It's really important to help them get started in the best possible way, so they can make the most of the opportunity.

Having a good quality violin and bow that's well set up, makes everything SO much easier. When equipment is working well, your child is free to focus on the music, and on their learning.

This setup guide will help you to prepare your child for their violin tuition, by making good decisions about the instrument and accessories that they will use.

Before we dive into the detail of finding a violin, let's take a moment to imagine your son or daughter's first experience with the violin...



Child Meets Violin!

First impressions count, and the very first interaction that your child will have with the violin can be crucial for their relationship with the instrument!

As they unpack the instrument for the first time, they will experience the same **joy** and **excitement** that comes from unwrapping a new toy at Christmas time!



Handle this moment well, and that joy and excitement will motivate them for years to come... but get it wrong, and they will start to lose interest in the violin very quickly!

Your child will be thinking: *"I want to pick it up and make noises with it!"*

But you'll be thinking: *"Don't break it... and please make the screechy sounds stop!"*

Thankfully, there are a few simple ways to make the entire first experience of the violin far more pleasurable and positive for everyone! Here's how:

1. Hide the Bow!

If you possibly can, *try to keep your child away from the bow* until it is introduced in their lessons by their teacher! The bow is really **complicated** to use, and your child simply won't be able to make a nice sound with it until their teacher has showed them how it works through a series of exercises.

If you have ordered the violin online and are 'unboxing' it at home, then the bow may not be rosined (see 'rosin', below), in which case it won't work anyway.

So keep things simple... hide the bow!

2. New Violin = New Friend!

Your child needs to understand that the violin is more than a toy... it's more like a new friend who they will want to get to know!

Start by plucking the strings of the violin whilst it is still in the case, so they immediately understand how the sound will be created. Then, help your child to take the violin out of the case for the first time.

Place their left hand under the neck of the instrument, and take hold of the bottom end of the violin (chin rest end) with the right hand. Carefully lift the violin up and out of the case. Take a moment to look at it and admire its beautiful shape!



Sometimes, children will want to hug the violin like a soft toy. But it's important not to

squeeze the bridge or strings, as they are very delicate! Encourage your child to treasure the violin, and to approach it with love and respect... explain that is like looking after a little baby... you can't squeeze it too tightly!

This is usually a more effective approach than likening the violin to a pet (which might wriggle!) or a teddy bear (which might get dropped on the floor!).

3. Raid the Kitchen!

Your child will want to pick up the violin and pluck it straight away. But without some form of shoulder support (see 'shoulder rests', below) then they will struggle to hold the violin in place.

A quick, easy way around this is to make sure you have a **sponge** (a standard kitchen scourer will do!) and an **elastic band**. This is a quick and easy way to create a temporary shoulder rest.

Loop the elastic band around the violin...



... then insert the sponge behind the elastic band:

