

Design Your Own Drums!

All around the world, drums are used to create music, send messages, and accompany rituals. It is relatively simple to learn basic drumming techniques, and it produces a great sense of rhythm in the musician. Get your child in on the action! With a little bit of assistance, your little one can make drums of all different shapes and sizes that produce a variety of sounds. The best part is: All you need are just a few household objects and art supplies!

What You Need:

- Round containers such as oatmeal boxes, plastic planters, or raisin canisters
- Packing tape
- Electrical tape or a segment of thick plastic from a beach ball, a rubber tire, or an inner tube
- Dried beans or peas
- Fabric
- Yarn
- Paper
- Paint
- Glue
- Paintbrush



What You Do:

1. Take a tour of the recycling bin and ask your child to choose bases for her drums. She should remove any slick labels from the containers, and give them a rinse if necessary. Your child might opt to place some dried beans or peas inside the container to add a maraca effect.
2. Help your child select and size covers for the tops of the drums. If you do not have anything made of thicker plastic, help her weave pieces of electrical tape across the opening of the container. Add a second layer to make it more resilient. If you are using thick plastic, stretch it taut over the opening and attach it with packing tape. You can add thick rubber bands to make the top more secure.
3. Have your child decorate her drums. Paper or fabric can cover the canister, with some yarn around any areas where packing tape shows through. Your child may want to paint geometric or animal motifs on her drums to emulate designs on traditional drums. Encourage her to add interesting decorations and trim with cut-out shapes, feathers, beads, stamps, or stencils.

You can extend this activity by helping your child compose drum chants. Encourage her to recite rhymes, songs, and poetry while beating drums, or use the drums to accompany a storytelling session or dance performance.