



What Age to Start Guitar

Parents of young children often ask me if their child is ready to begin taking guitar lessons. The answer to this question is largely dependent on the child - some kids will be ready to begin guitar lessons at age seven while others might not be ready until they are ten or even older. Here are a few considerations you'll want to keep in mind before signing up your child for guitar lessons:

Playing Guitar Requires Dexterity

The biggest physical hurdle youngsters generally need to overcome when learning guitar is their lack of fine motor skills and hand strength. Switching chords on guitar needs nimble fingers and many kids don't develop the required level of dexterity until they are eight or nine. Of less importance is overall hand size - there are many 1/2 size guitars available that should feel comfortable for even the smallest hands.

Improving on Guitar Requires Patience and Practice

If your child is enrolled in guitar lessons, they'll invariably be provided with "homework" - chords, scales and songs to memorize and practice. If not worked on routinely, kids will fall behind, and frustrate both their guitar teacher and themselves.

Some general guidelines

- Your child is at least seven years old. This may seem like an arbitrary number, but, from my personal teaching experience, I've found almost all kids under seven are too young to benefit from formal guitar lessons, as they require dexterity and levels of concentration children their age can't provide
- Your child displays sufficient hand dexterity. If your child hasn't yet really developed their fine motor skills, guitar lessons will be a struggle. Although playing guitar can help develop these motor skills, maintaining a child's interest during this development will be a major challenge.
- Your child can maintain focus for significant periods of time. If your child doesn't have the attention span to maintain a daily 15 minute practice schedule, consider waiting a while before enrolling them in formal guitar lessons.
- Your child shows significant interest in the guitar. If they're not showing interest in the guitar, pushing them into lessons may only serve to develop distaste for something they might have otherwise enjoyed.

