

# Ten tips for finding the right music tutor for your child

As a parent or carer\*, you'll know that finding the right tutor could make all the difference to your daughter/son's enjoyment and achievement in music.

**But where do you start? Here are a few tips:**

## 1. Talk to your child about their passions and interests

Find out what they mean by 'I want to play the x, y or z'. What styles and genres spark their interest? A curiosity about violin could be ignited through a classical, jazz or folk tutor; a general interest in music could blossom through a range of instruments, vocal lessons or music technology.

It's also worth considering how they might prefer to learn. Some tutors teach one-to-one (more expensive) or in small groups (cheaper but reliant on others participating), and sometimes through larger music groups. They might even want to make use of online video tutorials before deciding.



## 2. Find out who's out there

Ask which music tutors give lessons at your child's school. If what's on offer isn't suitable, it's always worth asking if they'd consider an additional tutor.

You could also ask for recommendations from other parents, ask at local music shops, or look on community noticeboards, websites and social networks.



\* Carers matter

We recognise that other people care for children too, including foster carers, grandparents and other family members. We have used the terms parents, daughter, son, child as shorthand for all these different types of relationships.

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### 3. Consider location and teaching environment

For some children, having lessons during the school day from a visiting tutor might be the best option. But for others, a different environment could make a big difference to how comfortable they feel and their ability to concentrate.

Outside school, lessons can take place at your tutor's home; your home; or other venues such as teaching rooms in a music shop. Don't forget that if a tutor lives 45 minutes away you'll have to make that journey weekly, perhaps for years.



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### 4. Ask about qualifications and CPD

Music tutors don't have to have formal qualifications. Some will have music degrees, PGCE teaching qualifications and experience in classroom teaching. But there are many good teachers who don't have qualifications or classroom experience.

What's probably more important is that they take part in regular Continuing Professional Development (CPD): training courses, conferences, networking events and online courses, or reading professional journals and research. This should mean they're up to date on developments in music education and are keeping their work fresh.

Membership of professional bodies also shows a commitment to high standards, eg Music Mark, Incorporated Society of Musicians, Sound Sense, Musicians' Union Teachers Section or other teaching trade unions.



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### 5. Find out about experience of specific ages/abilities/standards

Some tutors may prefer to teach, or only have experience of, certain age groups. Also, make sure to check what level they teach to on each instrument: someone who teaches flute to an advanced level might only teach clarinet to an intermediate level.

If your child has SEN/D, ask about any experience they have in this area, or their willingness to develop their skills and improve their practice.



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## 6. Ask about styles of music and connections to other things

Although some tutors say they teach 'all styles', in reality some genres require very different knowledge and skills to others – so make sure to explore this a little. A good tutor will be able to introduce your child to other possibilities – groups, ensembles, projects that will help further develop their skills and interests.

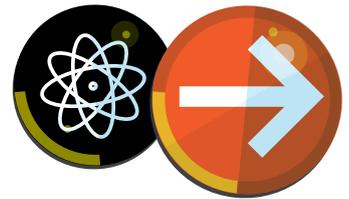


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## 7. Make sure the progression routes are right for your child

It's common for students to work towards grades and exams such as ABRSM, Trinity and Rock School, but this isn't right for every young person.

Ask tutors how they encourage progression beyond exams eg joining bands, attending ensembles, working towards performances at community events or school concerts. These are all great ways for children to develop confidence and celebrate their achievements.



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## 8. Find out about costs and subsidies

Although costs vary, the Musicians Union suggests that tutors should charge the equivalent of £33 per hour for their work (Jan 2018). So expect to pay anything from to £6 to £17 for a half hour lesson, depending on whether the lesson is one-to-one or in a small group.



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## 9. Check for DBS, safeguarding and insurance

The Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) lets you check if someone has a criminal record which bars them from working with children or vulnerable adults. People who work unsupervised with children should have an Enhanced Level DBS certificate issued in the last 3 years or be subscribed to the 'update service' – in which case you can check their DBS records online using their code number. There are different levels and types of DBS check – which are all explained on the DBS website

[www.gov.uk/dbs](http://www.gov.uk/dbs)

It's good practice for anyone working with children or vulnerable adults to do regular (three-yearly) safeguarding training, so ask when they last attended a safeguarding course, what it covered and how they apply that to their work.

Tutors should also have Public Liability Insurance so make sure to check the details. If lessons take place in their home, for example, this should be covered.



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## 10. Ask about references and a trial lesson

Ask for references from other parents, and if they've worked in schools, from school staff.

Finally, if you want to be extra confident, ask if your tutor offers a trial lesson – you could even ask to observe it. It's your chance to see how well they develop a rapport and communicate with your child.



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