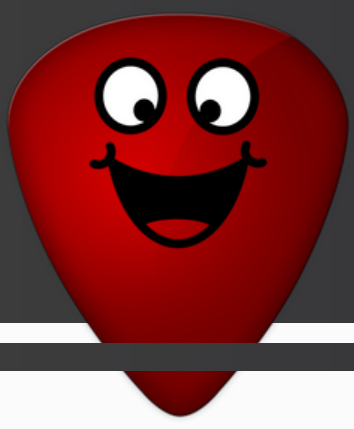


# GUITAR PARENT'S PLAYBOOK

[GUITARPLAYGROUND.COM](http://GUITARPLAYGROUND.COM)





Hi, I'm Tom Fontana, and I'm thrilled you're reading this! It shows that you are all-in on helping your child learn guitar.

**As a guitar teacher with over 25 years of experience**, I've helped countless students learn to play in person and online at [TheGuitarLesson.com](http://TheGuitarLesson.com).

And the great thing is that you don't need to be a musician or even know how to play guitar yourself to help your child succeed. All it takes is encouragement, a little structure, and some fun strategies to keep them motivated.

That's exactly what this guide is for - to give you actionable tips and ideas that will make learning guitar enjoyable for both of you.



But more importantly, as a parent who's teaching my own son Milan to play, I understand the unique challenges and joys of guiding them through this musical journey.

**Learning guitar is an incredible opportunity for your child to develop confidence, creativity, social skills, and discipline.**

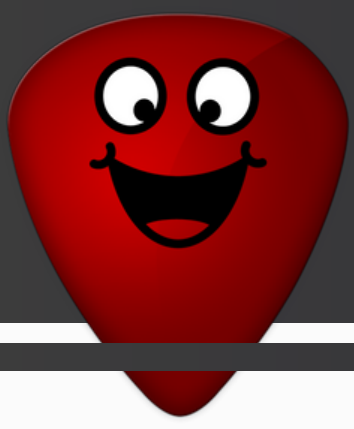
That's backed by research.

But here's the secret: your support as a parent can make all the difference in whether they stick with it or give up.

## WHAT YOU'LL FIND IN THIS GUIDE

- Quick tips you can use right now to make practicing more fun and engaging
- How to support your child's learning journey, even if you've never touched a guitar
- Solutions to common challenges, like "I don't want to practice" moments or frustration with tricky skills
- Resources and tools to help you stay organized and keep track of progress

Whether your child is just starting out or has already learned a few chords, this guide will help you create an environment where they can thrive - and maybe even inspire you to pick up the guitar alongside them.



## 8 THINGS YOU CAN DO RIGHT NOW

### 1. Get the right size guitar

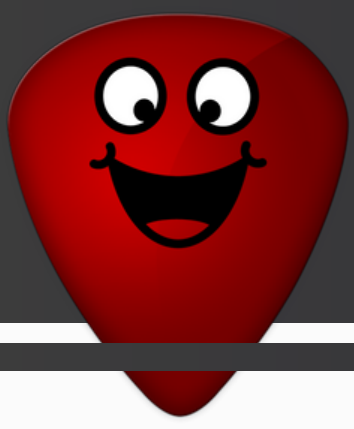
The small hands of a child cannot play on a large adult instrument. You need to be certain that their guitar is not too big, otherwise they'll just struggle.

Here are some [recommendations on great kids guitars >>](#)

As you can see below, there is a huge jump in between guitar scales.

Guitar scale	Age	Height
1/4	4-6 years old	3'9" (110 cm)
1/2	5-8 years old	4'3" (130 cm)
3/4	8-12 years old	4'8" to 5'5" (142-165 cm)





## 2. Keep The Guitar Visible

Out of sight, out of mind - that's how it works with kids (and adults, too!). If the guitar is tucked away in a closet or under the bed, it's easy to forget about it.

Instead:

- Put the guitar on display: Use a stand or wall hanger to keep it in their room or a common area where they'll see it every day.
- Make it part of their world: Seeing the guitar regularly makes it feel accessible and encourages spontaneous practice.

**CAUTION:** The wood of a guitar is susceptible to heat and sunlight, so don't place it next to a heat source or where sun can directly shine onto it.

**I deliberately placed Milan's guitar on a stand in his small room. And behold, he'd pick it up without me even asking.**

It became part of his daily life. He'll grab it and play for just a few minutes at a time whenever he feels like it, even before school as he gets dressed.



## 3. Listen to Music Together

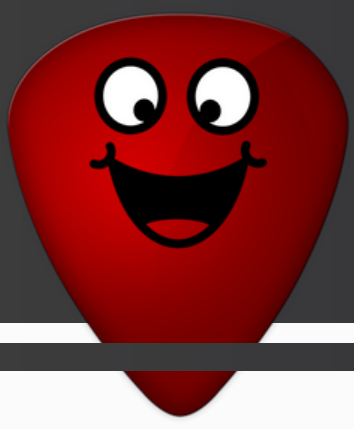
Music isn't just about playing - it's also about inspiration.

Music nowadays doesn't feature as much guitar as it used to back in the day, when rock bands were cool.

However, you can still hear the acoustic guitar in most pop songs, and even in some rap songs. Notice the guitar bits in popular music if you can, and create excitement around it.

Share songs you love with your child or explore new music together:

- Play music around the house regularly to create an inspiring environment.
- Ask your child what kind of music they enjoy and find songs they might want to learn someday.
- Create playlists with your child featuring beginner-friendly songs they might want to learn.
- Discuss what they hear in songs (e.g., identifying guitar parts) to build musical awareness.
- For older kids, consider going to a live concert together - it can be incredibly motivating for them to see what's possible with practice and dedication, and it's a great bonding experience.



#### 4. Use Plushies as Motivation

For younger kids, turning practice into a game can make all the difference.

A child psychologist recommended a fun idea to me, to involve their favorite stuffed animals:

- Place the guitar in a plushie's lap and let your child "find" it in their room or around the house.
- Pretend the plushie wants to learn guitar too - your child can "teach" them what they've learned if they want to.

**This playful approach makes practicing feel less like a task and more like an adventure.**



#### 5. Empower Their Independence

Kids are more likely to stick with something when they feel in control of it.

Instead of dictating when they should practice:

- Let them decide when they want to watch lessons or play along with backing tracks in Guitar Playground.
- Encourage them to play along with the backing tracks of Guitar Playground on their own, whenever they feel like it. This is the good type of screen time.

This freedom helps them take ownership of their learning and makes it feel less like "homework."

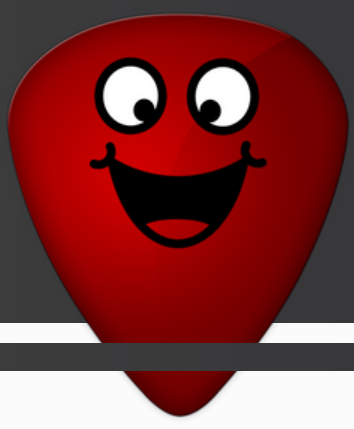
#### 6. Keep Practice Sessions Short and Sweet

Practicing guitar doesn't need to take hours at their young age - short, consistent sessions are much more effective (and less overwhelming).

Aim for:

- **15 minutes per session** for beginners.
- **20-30 minutes per session** once they catch on
- Daily practice if possible, but even 3-4 times per week will show results over time.

**Consistency is key here - it's better to have shorter sessions regularly than long ones sporadically.**



## 7. Create a Guitar Lesson Trail

Kids love seeing their progress visually, and a “Guitar Lesson Trail” is a great way to do that:

- Draw a winding trail on paper with 50 boxes (or more), decorated with fun phrases like “Emma’s Road to Stardom!”
- After each practice session of 20-30 minutes (specify a time in advance), let your child color in one box.
- Older kids can handle 30 minutes, younger are OK with 15-20.
- Add small rewards after every 10 sessions, like baking cookies together or watching their favorite movie as a family.

- At the end of the trail, plan a bigger reward, like a family vacation (that you would go on anyway). It gives them something exciting to work toward.

**When Milan had his 1st Guitar Trail, he couldn’t wait to color in another box after each session. It kept him motivated week after week.**



## 8. Celebrate Small Wins

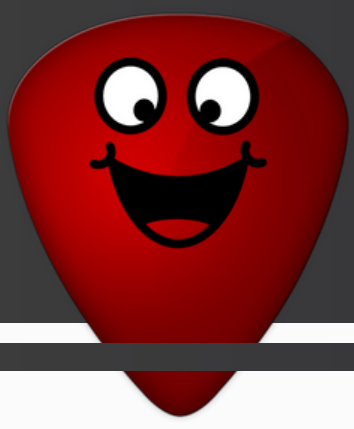
Kids thrive on positive reinforcement, so make sure you celebrate every bit of progress, even if it didn’t sound all that great ;-)

- Clap and cheer when they master a new chord or play part of a song correctly.
- Record short videos of them playing and show them. If they allow it, share the video with family members - most kids love showing off!

- Let them know how proud you are of their effort, even if things aren’t perfect yet.

Whenever Milan learned something new, we’d celebrate by clapping or sharing his progress with family over video calls (this was during Covid lockdowns).

It made him (and me) feel so proud.



# HOW YOU CAN SUPPORT YOUR CHILD'S LEARNING JOURNEY

As a parent, your encouragement and involvement can make a huge difference in your child's success with guitar. You don't need to know how to play or have any musical experience, just being there for them is enough to keep them motivated and excited.

Here's how you can be their biggest supporter:

## 1. Learn Guitar Together If You Like

Learning alongside your child is a great way to bond and show them that learning something new is fun at any age.

You can literally start learning guitar with the lessons on Guitar Playground, it shows them you're in this together.

- If you're not ready to play, sit with them during practice or lessons and cheer them on.
- Ask questions like, "What song are you working on?" or "Can you show me what you learned today?"

## 2. Be Their Cheerleader

Your child doesn't need a critic. They need someone who believes in them!

Celebrate their effort, not just the results:

- Praise their hard work even when things aren't perfect. For example:
  - "I love how much effort you're putting into this chord!"
  - "I love how focused you were during practice today."
  - "You're really improving your strumming technique!"
- Notice that that above are sincere encouragement phrases, not generic praise like "Good job!". I mean everything is good, but I've found that kids relate better with specific praise.

- Encourage them to keep going when they make mistakes by saying things like, "Everyone struggles at first - you're doing great. Stick with it, and it'll be perfect soon."

Mistakes are part of the process, and your support will help them push through challenges.

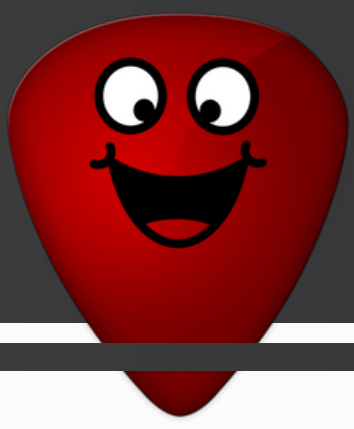
**It's easy to annoyed when they play the note wrong over and over again, but don't let it get to you. The point is that they are trying, and it'll work out if they stick with it.**

## 3. Set Realistic Expectations

Every child learns at their own pace, and it's important to adjust your expectations based on their age and personality:

- **Very young children (age under 8)** have a short attention span and still haven't developed the coordination to be able to play guitar well yet. With private lessons, I don't accept students less than 8 for this reason.
- **Younger kids (ages 8-10)** may need more hands-on support during practice sessions. Sit with them, help them stay focused, and make it fun by turning practice into a game.
- **Older kids (ages 11-14)** are often more independent but still need encouragement to stay motivated. Check in regularly to ask how they're doing and celebrate their progress.

Learning guitar isn't a race, it's a journey.



#### 4. Make It Fun, Not Stressful

The quickest way to kill enthusiasm is by turning practice into a chore or pressuring your child to be perfect. Kids don't like homework.

Instead:

- Focus on making practice enjoyable by letting them play songs they love or experiment with backing tracks in Guitar Playground™.
- Avoid comparing their progress to others.

When Milan struggled with certain chords, I reminded him that even famous guitarists had tough moments when they were starting out

There are a lot of techniques and chords that may seem impossible at first, but will get super easy with time and practice.

Just keep at it even if it isn't perfect just yet. It will be soon.

#### 5. Lead by Example

Kids learn a lot by watching you, so show them that commitment and routine are important:

- Help them set up a consistent practice schedule that fits into your family's routine (e.g., right after school or before dinner).
- Stick to the schedule as much as possible but stay flexible if they're tired or busy with other activities.

Even if you're not playing guitar yourself, modeling discipline and consistency will inspire them.

#### 6. Be Patient and Keep a Growth Mindset

Progress can be slow at times, especially when learning something new like guitar. Remind your child (and yourself) that it takes time to get better:

- Celebrate small wins along the way instead of focusing on big milestones.
- Reassure them that mistakes are normal and part of the learning process.
- Let them know that as long as they practice, they will get better and better. You can hear them playing better day by day.

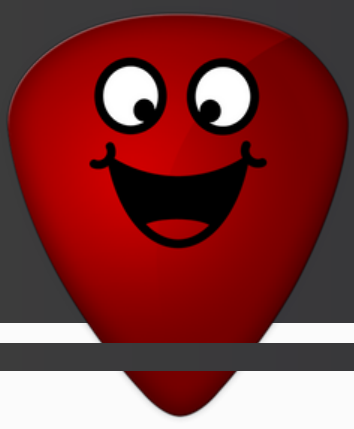
When Milan hit a plateau, I told him about my own struggles when I first started playing guitar.

**And told him that Slash, Eddie Van Halen, BB King, and everyone else had difficulties at times.**

It helped him see that everyone goes through these things, but they get better through consistent practice.







# OVERCOMING COMMON CHALLENGES

Learning guitar comes with its ups and downs. The good news? Most challenges are completely normal and can be overcome with the right approach. Here are some common hurdles your child might face, and how you can help them through it.

## 1. “I Don’t Want to Practice” Moments

It’s normal for kids to have days when they don’t feel like practicing. The key is to gently encourage them without turning it into a battle.

Here’s what you can do:

- **Start Small:** Suggest they play just one song or practice for five minutes. Often, once they start, they’ll keep going.
- **Make It Fun:** Use backing tracks from Guitar Playground™ to turn practice into a jam session. Or let them play their favorite song, even if it’s not part of the lesson for the day.
- **Offer Choices:** Give them some control by asking, “Would you rather watch Milan and Tom’s new lesson or play along with a song you already know today?”

When Milan didn’t feel like practicing, I’d say, ‘Let’s just play one song together.’ Most of the time, he’d end up playing for much longer.

## 2. Frustration with New Skills

Learning new chords or techniques can be tricky, and kids may feel frustrated when things don’t click right away. How to help:

- **Rewatch the video:** The beauty of online lessons is that you can rewind the videos if something is unclear.
- **Break It Down:** If a chord or technique feels overwhelming, break it into smaller steps. For example, focus on just one finger placement at a time. I go at a slow pace in the videos, but you may still need to help your child if something is unclear.

- **Celebrate Effort:** Praise them for trying, even if they haven’t mastered it yet. For example: “You’re doing great just by sticking with it!”
- **Normalize Mistakes:** Remind them that everyone struggles at first, even professional guitarists. Share stories of famous musicians who overcame challenges early on. Just search “Kirk Hammett blunders” on YouTube. Kirk is the guitarist of Metallica, one of the best, but even he messes up sometimes.

## 3. Plateaus in Progress

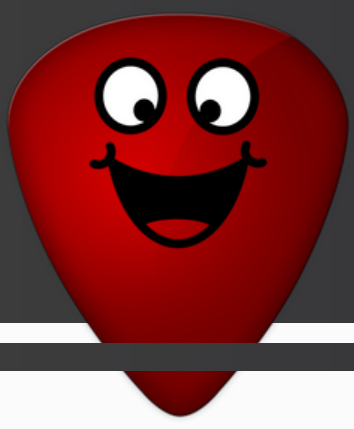
Sometimes progress feels slow, especially after the initial excitement wears off. This is completely normal and happens to every learner at some point.

Here’s how to keep them motivated:

- **Focus on Fun:** Let them revisit songs they’ve already learned and enjoy playing instead of pushing new material too quickly.
- **Set Small Goals:** Break big goals into smaller ones, like mastering a single chord transition or playing one verse of a song perfectly.
- **Remind Them of Their Progress:** Show them how far they’ve come by comparing what they can do now to when they first started.

At some point when they can play a few songs, they might even lose interest in learning new techniques, even saying that “I already know how to play guitar”.

**Sometimes all you can do is agree with these statements, but remind them that to play the songs by their favorite bands, they still need to learn a few things.**



#### 4. Balancing Guitar with Other Activities

Between school, sports, and other hobbies, finding time for guitar can be tough, but it's doable with a little planning.

- **Keep Practice Short and Consistent:** Even 10–15 minutes a day adds up over time.
- **Tie Practice to Existing Routines:** For example, practice right after homework or before dinner so it becomes part of their day. Even playing 1-2 songs is better than no practice at all.
- **Stay Flexible:** If they have a busy day or are feeling tired, skip practice without guilt. Just don't let this become the norm.

#### 5. When They Compare Themselves to Others

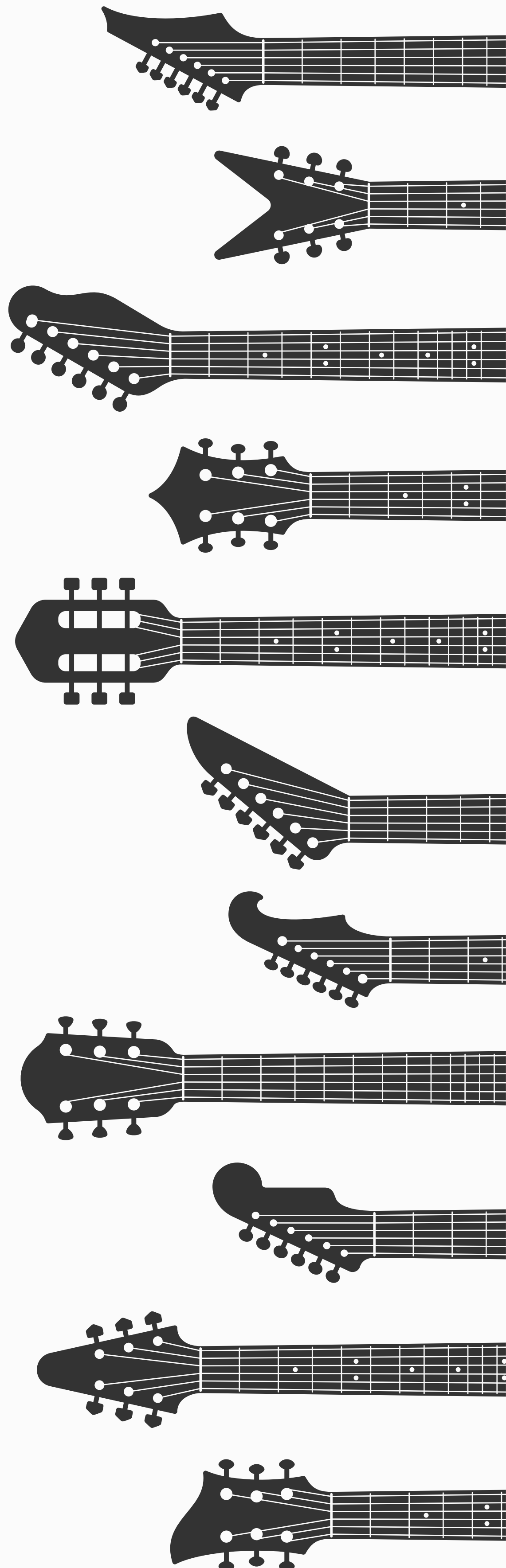
Older kids especially might compare their progress to friends or online musicians and feel discouraged if they're not as "good."

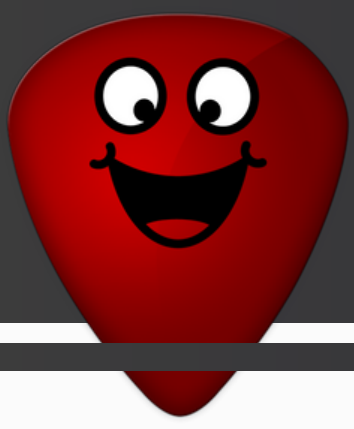
It's important for you to be able to reframe this mindset, here are a few techniques:

- **Focus on Their Journey:** Remind them that everyone learns at their own pace and that comparing themselves to others isn't helpful. They are better in a lot of things as well, and anyhow, it just takes practice.
- **Highlight Their Wins:** Point out specific things they've improved on, like mastering a tricky chord or playing through a song without mistakes.
- **Share Stories of Growth:** Talk about your own experiences (or those of famous musicians) where progress took time but paid off in the end.

Every challenge is an opportunity for growth, and your encouragement will help your child push through tough moments and come out stronger.

With patience, encouragement, and a few creative strategies, you can help your child overcome these common hurdles and keep moving forward on their guitar journey.





## PARENT RESOURCES

Supporting your child's guitar journey is easier when you have the right tools and resources.

Whether it's keeping practice organized, finding the best accessories, or adding a little extra inspiration, these resources will help you every step of the way.

### 1. Printable Templates to Keep Things Fun and Organized

Kids love visuals, and having a way to track their progress can make learning even more exciting. Here are a few templates you can print and use:

- **Guitar Lesson Trail:** Create a winding trail with 50 boxes that your child can color in after each practice session. Add fun phrases like *"Ella's Road to Rockstar City"* and include small rewards at milestones (e.g., after every 10 sessions).
- **Practice Tracker:** A simple weekly chart where your child can check off each day they practice. This helps build consistency and gives them a sense of accomplishment.
- **Goal Sheet:** Let your child set small goals (e.g., "Learn this chord" or "Play through this song without mistakes") and check them off as they achieve them.

**Pro Tip: Hang these templates somewhere visible, like on the fridge or in their practice space, to keep them motivated.**

### 2. Beginner-Friendly Accessories

Having the right tools makes learning guitar easier and more enjoyable.

Here are some must-haves for beginners:

- **Guitar Stand or Wall Hanger:** Keeps the guitar visible and accessible (and prevents it from being forgotten in a closet!).
- **Clip-On Tuner:** Makes tuning quick and easy, even for kids who are just starting out.
- **Comfortable Picks:** Light picks are great for beginners.
- **Capo:** A simple tool that makes playing certain songs easier by changing the key of the guitar.

If you're shopping for a guitar, consider a 3/4 size acoustic or electric guitar for younger children. It's easier for small hands to manage.

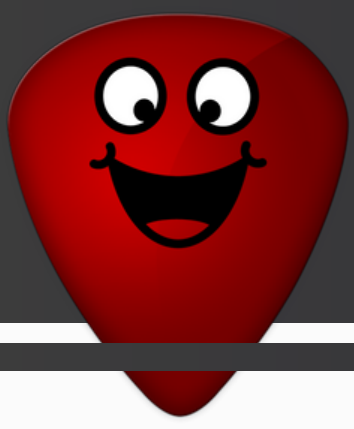
### 3. Explore Backing Tracks Together

One of the most exciting features of Guitar Playground™ is the library of backing tracks that let your child play along with real music.

These tracks make practice feel like a jam session instead of homework.

- Encourage your child to replay the different backing tracks and play along at their own pace.
- Join in by clapping along or playing simple percussion (like tapping on a table) to make it feel like a family activity.





#### 4. Recommended Songs to Inspire Your Child

Introduce your child to songs that are fun, beginner-friendly, and inspiring. Here are some great options, **you'll find plenty more on Guitar Playground:**

- “Smoke on the Water” by Deep Purple (easy riff for beginners)
- “Yellow Submarine” by The Beatles (simple chords and fun lyrics)
- “Riptide” by Vance Joy (great for learning strumming patterns)

Listening together can spark ideas for what they might want to learn next if they're at a level where they can read tablature.

#### 5. Online Resources for Extra Support

If your child ever feels stuck or needs extra help, there are plenty of online tools that can complement their Guitar Playground lessons:

- **Chord Charts:** Websites like Ultimate Guitar provide free chord diagrams for almost any song your child might want to learn.
- **Tuning Apps:** Apps like GuitarTuna make tuning easy and fun with built-in games and visuals.
- **Backing tracks:** Playing along with backing tracks, or even the original songs is the #1 way to stay motivated not only for kids, but adults learning guitar as well.

## RECAP

Congratulations! You've made it through the **Guitar Parent's Playbook™**, and now you're equipped with all the tools and strategies you need to support your child's guitar journey. Remember, your involvement can make a world of difference in their success and enjoyment of learning guitar.

- **Keep it fun:** Use creative strategies like plushies, the Guitar Lesson Trail, and listening to music together to make practice enjoyable.
- **Be their biggest fan:** Celebrate every small win, encourage effort over perfection, and show genuine interest in what they're learning.
- **Stay patient:** Progress takes time, and every child learns at their own pace. Celebrate the journey, not just the destination.
- **Use the resources:** From printable templates to beginner-friendly accessories, these tools will help keep practice organized and exciting.

***"Every great guitarist started as a beginner, and with your encouragement, your child can become one too."***

Now that you have these tips and resources, it's time to put them into action.

1. **Sign up for Guitar Playground™** if you haven't already, and let your child experience the fun, song-based learning method designed just for kids.
2. **Stay engaged:** Keep checking in with your child, praise them on their progress, and celebrate their achievements.
3. **Reach out:** If you ever need additional tips or support, don't hesitate to contact us. We're here to help your child fall in love with guitar!