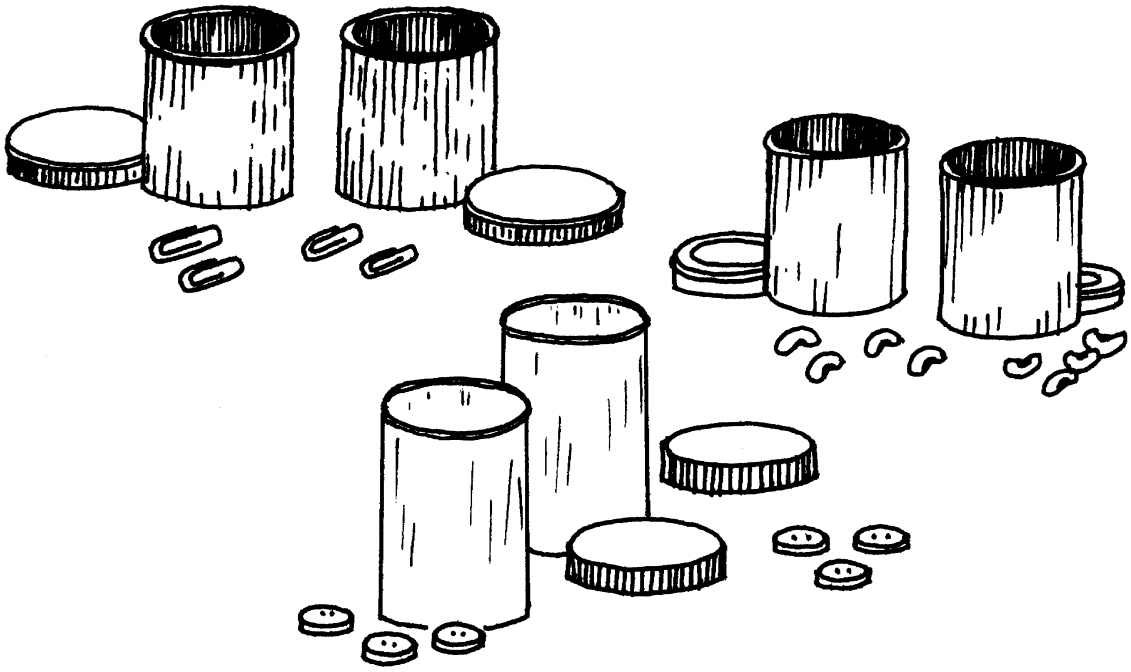
MUSIC

Sound Cans

3 to 6



HOME CONNECTION

Suggest that parents and children go on a "sound search" around their homes. They can have fun shaking household objects and testing for vibrations.

Purpose: This experiment is designed to help children differentiate various sounds. It is an auditory matching exercise, in which children find pairs of the same sound. Children refine auditory skills as they attend to subtle distinctions in sound.

Materials:

- buttons
- paper clips
- seeds
- small plastic containers with lids (empty film canisters or vitamin containers)

Preparation:

1. In each of 2 identical containers, place an equal amount of seeds.

2. In each of 2 identical containers, place the same number of same-sized buttons.

3. In each of 2 identical containers, place the same number of same-sized paper clips.

4. Put lids on all the containers.

Activity: In a small group of 3, have the children experiment with shaking each of the 6 sound cans. Ask, "Do all the cans sound alike?" They may find that some do and some don't. Then ask them to try to find those that sound alike. When children match a pair, ask them to describe the sounds. Also ask what they think is making the sounds.

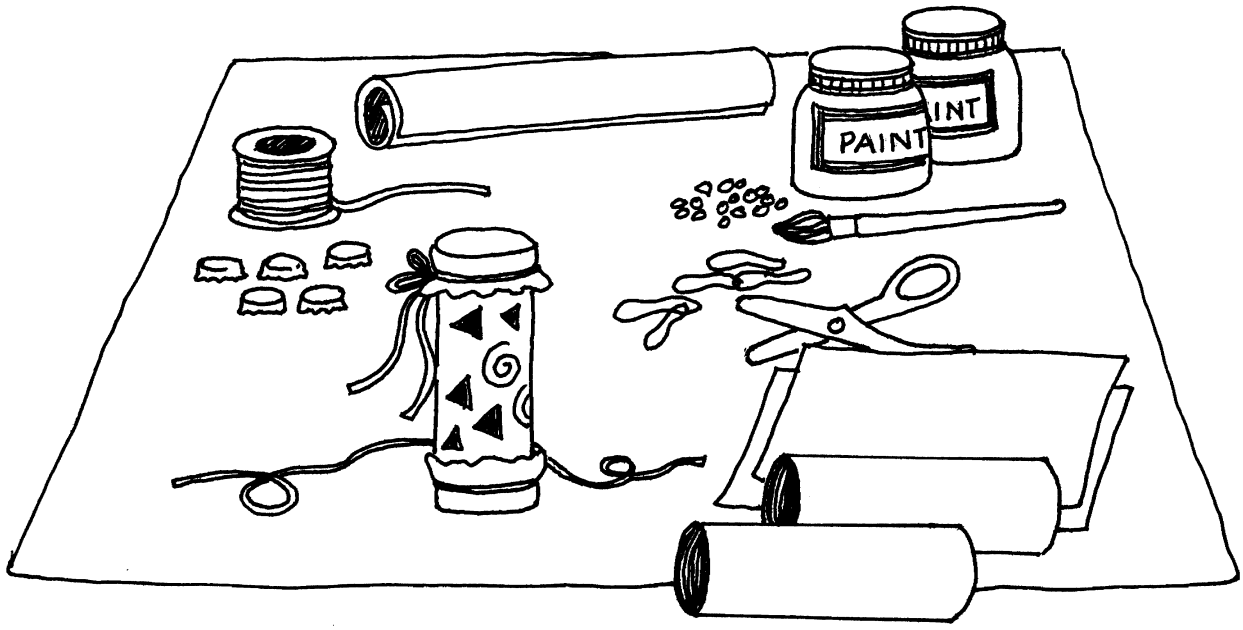
Extensions and variations:

- Add or take away some of the contents of the containers. Have the children shake the cans. Ask, "How does this change the sound? What would happen if we mixed the contents? Could we still make a pair?"

- Sound cans can be used to create rhythmic patterns or shake out a song.

Maracas

3 to 6



Purpose: Maracas are percussion instruments. Playing maracas provides an opportunity for children to experience sequencing rhythmic patterns. The process of making and playing maracas increases a child's fine motor development. With careful teacher guidance, children discover a variety of pitches and compare them. Children shake out patterns using their maracas.

HOME CONNECTION

Parents, teach your child a song that you sang when you were your child's age.

Materials:

toilet paper tubes	rubber bands
aluminum foil	ribbons, yarn
tempera paint	crepe paper streamers
thick paper	seeds, pebbles, and bottle caps

Preparation:

1. The children paint the exterior of the paper tubes.

2. When the paint is dry, the children cover one end of the paper tube with aluminum foil or thick paper secured with a rubber band. Younger children should be assisted by adult helpers.

3. They fill the paper tube with a handful of seeds, pebbles, or bottle caps.

4. The opened end is then secured as in Step 2.

5. Children can decorate the outside of the paper tube with crepe paper streamers, ribbons, or yarn.

Activity: In a small or large group, children sit in a circle and take turns establishing a rhythm, which the group then follows. For example, use the rhythm of each child's name: Jo-nas—2 beats; El-e-na—3 beats. Ask the children to guess how the sound is made. Have them experiment shaking their maracas at different rates—fast, slow, medium. Ask what sound is made when the maraca is rolled. Tapped?

Extensions and variations:

- Sing or play a song, using the maracas to keep time.

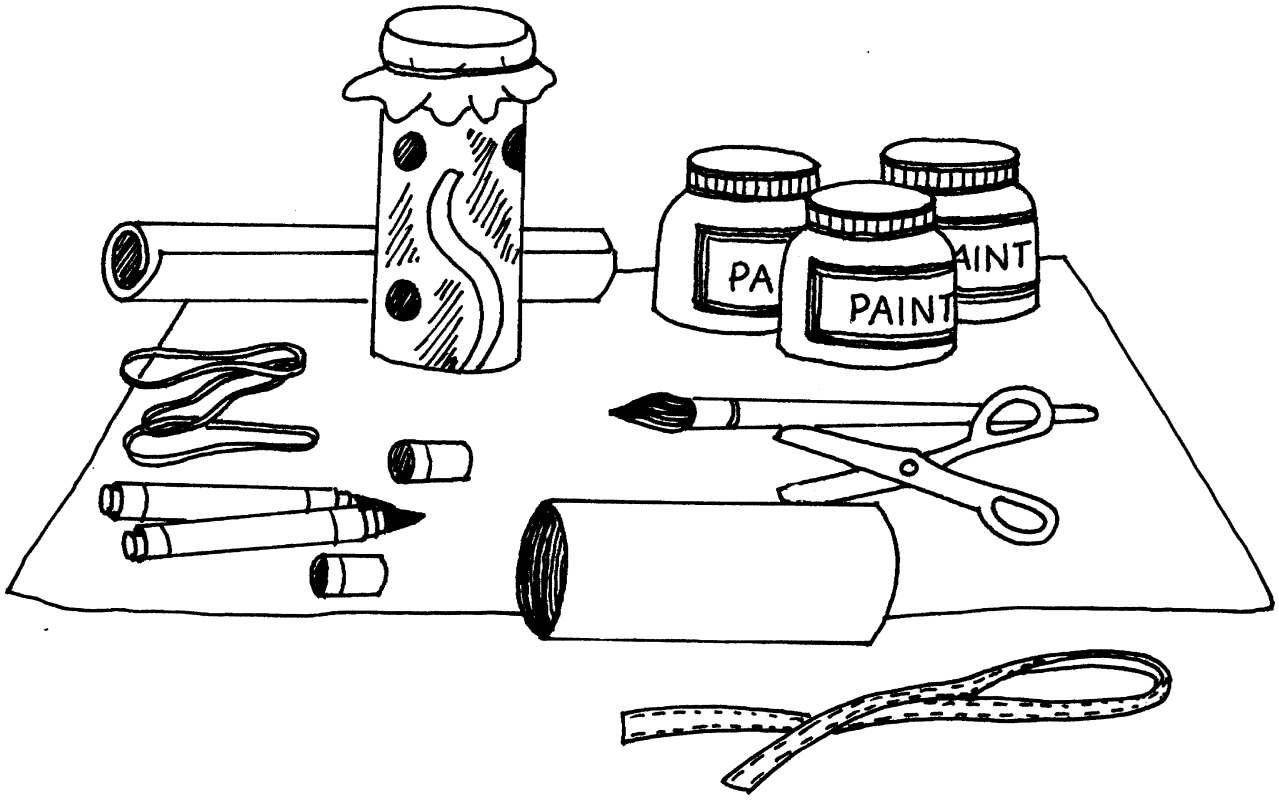
- Play music on a record or tape and have the children parade around the room, keeping the beat of the music.

- Ask older children to describe the pattern. For example: beat, beat, rest, beat, beat, rest.

- Make a tambourine. Use crayons, paint, and paper to decorate two paper plates. Select pebbles, bottle caps, or seeds, and place a handful on one plate. Staple the plates together.

Kazoo

3 to 6



HOME CONNECTION

Invite parents to the class to share their musical talents, such as singing or playing an instrument. In this way, parents model an enjoyment of music for children.

Purpose: Sound is vibration. Making a kazoo is a creative way for children to discover how air vibrates through wax paper to make high and low pitches. Besides gaining personal satisfaction and pleasure by humming out a favorite song, children will begin to understand that lower pitches vibrate slower and higher pitches vibrate faster.

Materials:

- toilet paper tubes
- tempera paint
- brushes
- decorative paper
- glue
- wax paper
- rubber bands
- scissors
- markers

Preparation:

1. Encourage each child to decorate a paper tube. Provide decorative paper, markers, and paint.

2. Make a kazoo by fastening a piece of wax paper over one end of the tube. Use a rubber band to secure the wax paper. Younger children may need help. Older children should be encouraged to complete this step independently.

Activity: Have the children hum into the kazoo. Try humming softly. Then try humming loudly. Make high sounds, then low sounds. Explore a variety of ways to make the kazoo vibrate. Play a song as a group. Ask for volunteers to play a "solo."

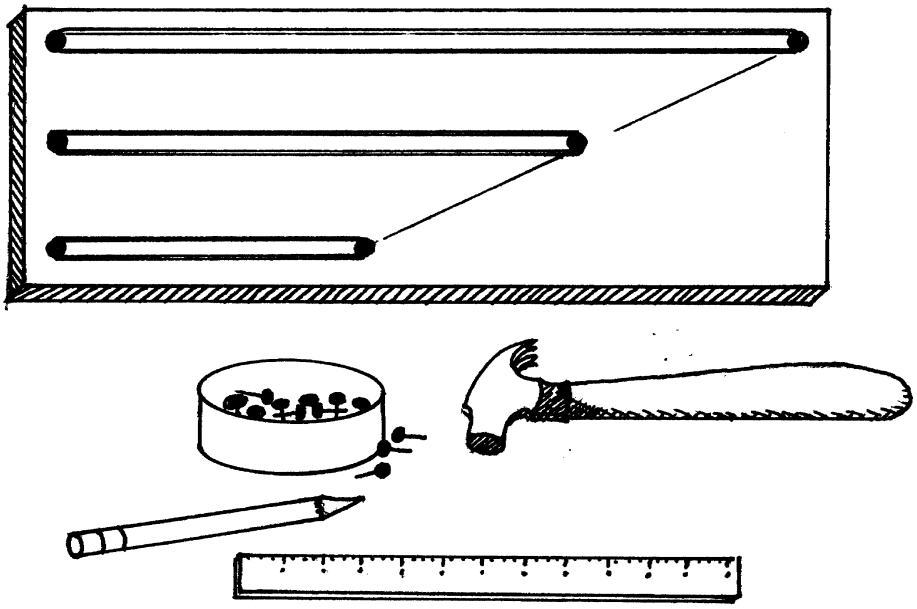
Extensions and variations:

- Play music on a record player or tape recorder and have the children parade around the room humming on their kazoos to the beat of the music.

- In a small group, ask older children to hum out a pitch pattern. Then have the other children guess the pitch pattern. For example, the pattern could be: high pitch, low pitch, high pitch, low pitch.

Wooden Harps

4 to 6



Purpose: This activity is designed to encourage children to become aware of sound and to experiment with musical instruments. Children are alert to the sounds around them and in the outdoor environment.

HOME CONNECTION

Suggest that families form an informal "family band" using handmade instruments. Hold a "sing along" at school in the evening, and invite families to come and sing and play instruments.

Materials:

wood	markers
rubber bands	hammer
nails	

Preparation:

1. Use a piece of flat wood, long enough to stretch out 3 different sizes of rubber bands. Mark the board so that children can hammer 3 evenly spaced nails vertically along the left side of the board. On the right side, starting from the top, mark a diagonal line so that the second and third nails will be opposite the left side but at shorter distances. See illustration.

Activity: The children hammer in the nails and stretch the rubber bands across them. They then strum on their harps. Suggest that they hold the back of the harps against their ears while strumming them. This way the sound will be more intense. Encourage the children to experiment with which rubber band makes the highest sound and which makes the lowest sound.

Extensions and variations:

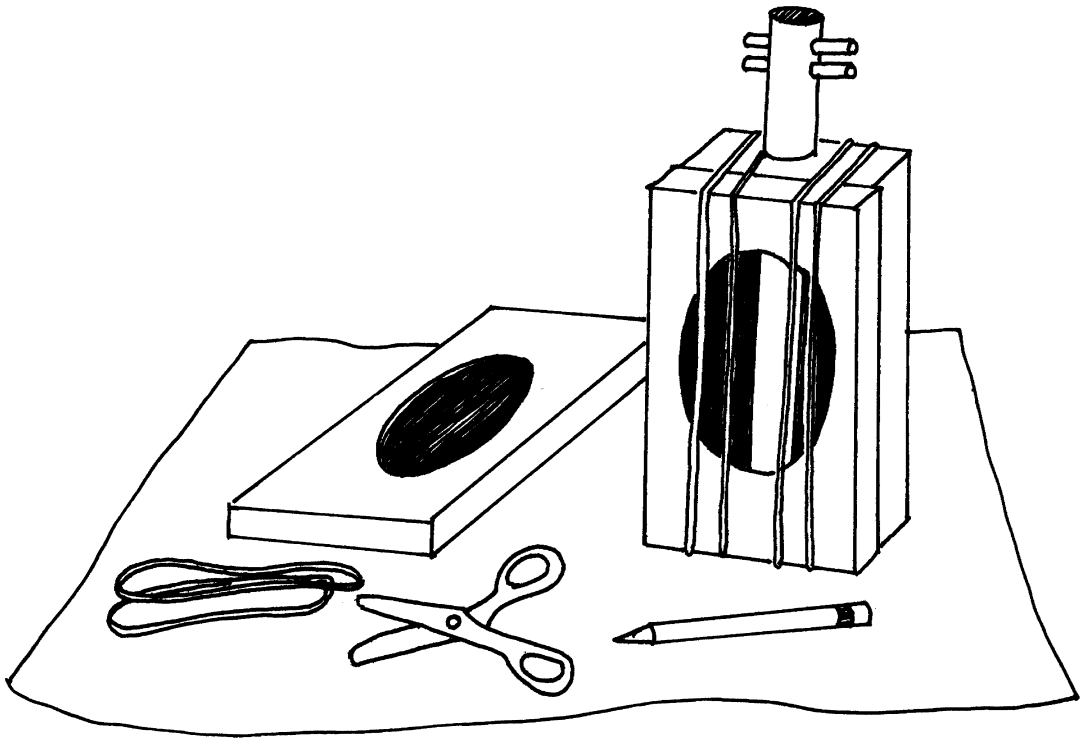
- Make lid vibrations: Collect jar lids and many sizes of rubber bands. Stretch rubber bands around the lids. Pluck the rubber bands and listen to the different sounds. Do larger lids make different sounds than smaller lids? Hold rubber bands in place with tape. What is the effect on the sound?

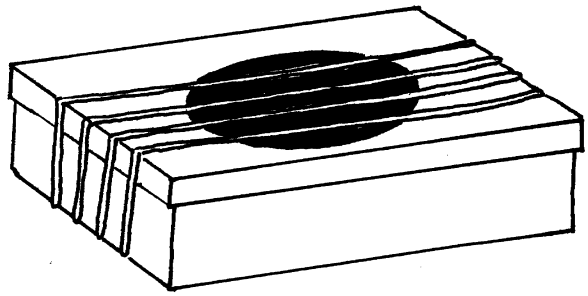
- Fill several glass containers with different amounts of water. Have small groups of children take turns tapping each with a stick. Is the sound the same? What makes the sound different? If the container is without water, will it make a sound?

- Have the children go on a sound walk around the center or outdoors. If possible, record the sounds for the children to identify the next day. If no recorder is available, make a chart with visual representations of the object that makes the sound—a picture of a garbage truck, a picture of a bird—and have the children try to recreate the sounds.

Box Banjo

5 to 6





HOME CONNECTION

Suggest that parents discuss traditional instruments with their children and the kinds of folk songs they learned as children.

Purpose: Young children are natural music makers. Children can make and play banjos using boxes and rubber bands. Making and playing instruments fosters a child's basic understanding of vibration, pitch, and tone. The teacher elicits critical thinking skills by asking children to notice higher and lower pitches. Through a process of questioning, discussing, and comparing sounds, children discover that shorter rubber bands produce a higher pitch, whereas longer rubber bands produce a lower pitch.

Materials:

- shoe box with lid
- large rubber bands
- scissors
- cardboard tube—optional
- sticks or pencils—optional

Preparation:

1. Ask volunteer parents to make 2 or 3 box banjos for the class. Using scissors, cut the oval opening in the center of the lid of the box.

2. Place the lid on the box and stretch rubber bands across the opening of the box. The rubber bands should be about an inch apart.

3. A long cardboard tube and pencils or sticks can be optionally added.

Activity: In a small group, let each child explore the box banjos, gently plucking the rubber bands over the hole. Ask the children what they notice about the sound as they play the banjo. Do all rubber bands make the same sounds? Can any conclusions be drawn regarding the different tones? How can the sound be changed?

Extensions and variations:

- Ask each child to work with a partner to find tones that sound alike and different on their box banjos.

- Establish various rhythms for children to follow. For example, plunk, plunk, rest, plunk, plunk, rest. Suggest that rhythms are patterns of sounds. Have the children make up their own patterns and play for each other.

- Sing a song and accompany it on the box banjo.