Making music with kids online, no sign-up: a chip-tune studio, beats and chords

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Three free ways for kids to make music online with no account. A four-lane 8-bit studio where nothing sounds wrong, a beat maker, and a chord finder.

The hardest part of making music with a young child is the first minute. Hand a five-year-old a keyboard and most of what comes out sounds wrong to them, and they decide they are bad at music. The fix music teachers use is old and simple: take away the notes that clash, so whatever the child plays sounds good. Peabody's Beep Boop Studio is built on that rule. This post covers it, plus a beat maker and a chord finder, all free, all in the browser, none needing an account.

Peabody (peabody.kids) is a free learning site for children, free through the end of 2026, with stories in the library and a Music section. Everything below is at make music online for kids.

The Beep Boop Studio: an 8-bit song maker

The Beep Boop Studio is a step sequencer, the kind of grid musicians call a tracker, made for a child. It is modelled on the sound chips in old game consoles, which could only play a few sounds at once. The studio has four lanes, one for each:

- Lane: Beep · What it plays: The tune, in a thin, beepy voice
- Lane: Boop · What it plays: A second, rounder voice to answer the first
- Lane: Bass · What it plays: The low notes, on a soft triangle wave
- Lane: Drums · What it plays: Boom, snap and tss, made of noise

Each lane is a grid. A bar is sixteen squares wide, counted in fours, and the brighter squares show where each beat starts. Tap a square and that note plays on that step. A song can be one, two or four bars long and plays round and round, so a pattern that repeats starts to sound like a real song. Copy bar 1 to every bar makes a whole song from one idea; then a child changes one bar to make it their own.

Every choice is a big box rather than something to type. There are three speeds (slow, medium and fast, shown as a tortoise, a walker and a hare) and three starting patterns, Bouncy, Spooky and Hero, for a child who wants something to change rather than a blank grid.

Why nothing sounds wrong

Every row in the studio is a note of the pentatonic scale: five notes, C, D, E, G and A, then the same notes higher up. It leaves out the two notes, F and B, that rub against their neighbours.

With those gone, any notes a child picks sound good together, played at once or one after another.

This is a classroom trick with a long history. Many elementary music classrooms, especially those that use the Orff approach, have xylophones whose bars lift off, so a teacher can take away F and B and let children improvise without a wrong note. Many folk songs and nursery tunes use only those five notes for the same reason. The studio's rows are labelled do, re, mi, so, la for the youngest, and with letter names from third grade.

Saving a song, and showing it

A child names a song by picking one of three silly names; nothing is typed. Up to twelve songs are kept on the device, in the browser, and are never sent anywhere. A child who is signed in to a family account can tap Show my family on one saved song, and that one song goes to the family's My Stuff, the way a drawing goes on the fridge. A visitor's songs stay on the device.

There is a route in from the radio too: on Peabody Radio, the Beep Boop Arcade station has a Make it mine button that opens the tune playing as four lanes in the studio, ready to change. Our post on free music for kids has more about the radio.

Beat Buddies: the bar, made of animals

Beat Buddies, in the menu of every page in Peabody's Music section, is for younger children and for the idea underneath every song: the bar. Eight critters each play a one-bar loop of their own: the frog goes boom, the hen claps, the bee goes tss, the mouse goes shh, the bear hums, the bird tweets, the cat sings ahh and the owl goes hoo. Drag a critter onto the stage, or just tap it, and it joins in. Five on the stage at once make a song.

The learning is in the ruler under the stage. A bar has four beats, counted one, two, three, four, and each beat is cut into four small steps, sixteen in all. So the bar can be heard as one whole, two halves or four quarters, and a critter's loop is a pattern of steps that play and steps that rest. Fractions and music turn out to be the same picture. Every loop is in C major, so any mix of critters sounds right, and a slider sets how fast it goes.

The Chord Finder: piano, ukulele and guitar

For an older child who has started an instrument, or a grown-up who wants to play along, the Chord Finder draws any of 36 chords: major, minor and seven on all twelve notes. Pick a note, then a kind, then an instrument, and it shows the chord on a piano's keys or as a chord box for ukulele or guitar, plays it, and prints it as a one-page chord card.

The page explains what a chord is in a child's words: three or more notes at once, named after its root. A major chord sounds happy, a minor chord sad, and a seven chord sounds as if it wants to move on. It also suggests where to start: on ukulele, C, A minor, F and G7; on

guitar, E minor, C, G and D; on piano, C, F and G, which use only white keys.

The song sheets put chords over the words of public-domain songs, and one tap moves a whole song into a key that fits a small voice or the easiest shapes on your instrument.

How to make music with a child, not for them

- Make one bar first. In the studio, a single bar played round and round is a song. Fill it, play it, then copy it to every bar.
- Change one thing. "Keep it all the same, but change one drum." Small changes are how real songs grow.
- Say what you hear. "That part sounds spooky. What made it spooky?" Naming a feeling is how a child starts to choose one on purpose.
- Listen back later. A song saved today sounds different tomorrow, and a child who changes it is revising, the same skill as in writing.
- Stop while it's fun. Ten minutes is plenty, and an unfinished song is a reason to come back.

Making music and listening to it train each other. A child who has built a quiet bar and a loud bar hears the difference better, which is what the listening games practise, and what listening maps ask a child to follow in famous music.

Questions parents ask

Does my child need an account to make music on Peabody?

No. The studio, Beat Buddies and the Chord Finder all work with no sign-up. An account only adds the choice to show one song to the family's My Stuff.

Where are the songs saved?

In the browser, on the device the child used. They are not posted or shared anywhere, and clearing the browser's site data forgets them.

Can my child type anything or talk to anyone?

No. Every choice is a tap, a song's name is picked from three silly names, and there is no chat.

Is it free?

Yes. Peabody is free for everyone through 31 December 2026, with no ads and no card.

What age is it for?

Beat Buddies suits the youngest, since it is all dragging and tapping. The Beep Boop Studio works for early readers with do-re-mi labels and for older children with letter names. The Chord Finder is for a child learning an instrument.

Free at peabody.kids/blog/make-music-online-with-kids-no-sign-up