Listen Up!

Fun family sound adventures

Percussion is a never-ending journey of curiosity and experimentation. Percussion is something you feel, discover, and play with at any age! Inspired by The Evelyn Glennie Collection, these activities invite individuals, families, schools and communities to listen closely, explore bravely, and get curious about sound in everyday life.

Make your own shakers

Create your own instruments using recycled containers. The Evelyn Glennie Collection has over 200 homemade shakers from bottles, plastic tubes, tins, cardboard boxes and so much more.

- Fill your chosen containers with rice, pasta, stones, lentils, buttons or anything that rattles.
- Shake gently... then loudly, and shake in different directions. Feel the contents in your hands.
- Compare sounds based on what is inside the container. Is it grainy, smooth, heavy, light?
- Can you guess what's inside just by listening and feeling?

Found object orchestra

Turn everyday objects into an orchestra. The Evelyn Glennie Collection has so many weird and wonderful objects which are not obvious 'musical' instruments but they can create amazing and unexpected sounds.

- Tap, scrape, shake, roll, or rub safely.
- Discover which objects sound and feel bright, deep, dull, short or surprising.
- Play together and see how many sounds and vibrations you can layer.

Who knew a spoon could sound or feel like that, or that a cheese grater could be so effective when rubbed with a spatula?

Body Percussion

Your body is your first instrument.

- Clap, stomp, tap knees, click tongues, breathe rhythmically.
- Try playing barefoot and feel the vibrations through the floor.
- Notice where you feel the sound within your body.

Listening isn't just for ears. Our body is like a huge ear!

Take a Listening Walk

Step outside, walk slowly and notice what you experience around you.

- Which sounds are near? Which are far away?
- Which sounds move? Which stay still?
- Which sounds are felt through the body?
- Try closing your eyes for a moment - does listening change?

There's no right answer. Just listen.

THE EVELYN GLENNIE FOUNDATION
Teach the World to Listen

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Explore Texture

Try playing the same sound in different ways.

- Softly, firmly, slowly, quickly, distantly, lovingly, nervously.
- With fingertips, palms, nails, feet or mallets.
- How does the sound feel - rough, smooth, heavy, light?

Sound has texture too.

Slow it right down

Play as slowly as possible..

- Leave big gaps between sounds.
- Listen to how long each sound lasts.
- Notice the space between the sound – is that silence? The space is part of the music.

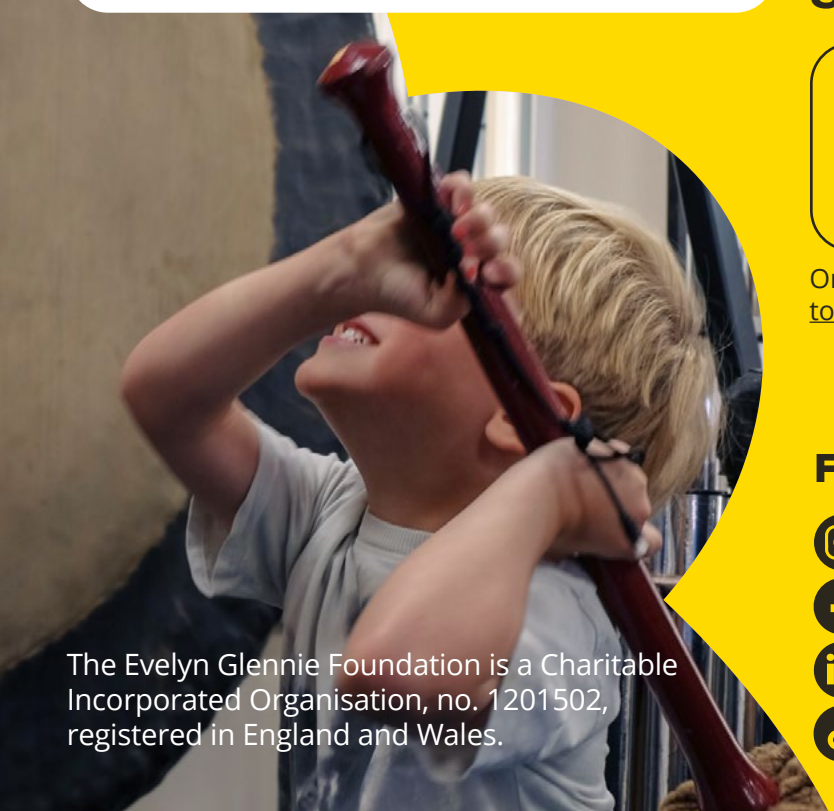
Sometimes less is more.

Sound Conversations

Turn listening into a game.

- One person plays a short sound or rhythm.
- Another responds with a new sound inspired by it.
- No copying - just reacting.

Listen first, patience, then reply.



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Tell a Story with Sound

Create a story using only sound.

- Choose a setting: a city, a forest, underwater, in space, at home or school.
- Assign sounds to characters and actions.
- Perform it live - eyes closed if you dare!

Can sound paint pictures?

Sound & Movement

Let sound inspire movement, and movement inspire sound.

- Move how a sound feels.
- Then make a sound to match a movement.
- Swap roles and see what changes.

Sound lives in the body.

Keep wondering...

- What surprised you?
- What did you feel as well as hear?
- Did listening change how you noticed the world?

That's what listening is all about.

Support our work

If this has resonated with you, scan to make a donation and help us create more free experiences like Listen Up! for everyone.

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