

INTRODUCING MALLETS TO KINDERGARTEN AND 1ST GRADE

THE STRESS-FREE APPROACH

Getting mallets into the hands of your younger students is super exciting for them, but sometimes it can induce some stress for you as a teacher. Here are some helpful hints to take away some of the stress associated with this process.

KINDERGARTEN

- Start away from the instruments with the students copying your moves. Always start with your arms up and slowly lower them down to the floor, moving your fingers in different ways such as tapping or tickling the floor. Be sure students only touch the floor when you do.
- When you move to the instruments, use fingers only first. Review the watching activity and add in animals to the actions. For instance, your fingertips will “hop like a kangaroo,” “slither like a snake,” or “race like a rabbit.” Anytime you want students hands off of the instruments, quickly lift your hands in the air. Those who have trouble copying you can move back to using the floor as their instrument. Don't forget to tap on top of the letters in the middle of the bar!
- When adding in the mallets, do different motions with the mallets first, to make sure they are watching your moves. (Put in an “x,” put on shoulders, windshield wipers, etc.) Then have the students pinch, grab, and turn them (so they are riding a bicycle). Repeat the activity you did with the fingers, always making sure to point out students who are doing a good job raising their mallets off of the bars when it is time.
- Choose a student to take your place so that you can go around and correct any technique issues.

1ST GRADE

- Review the Kindergarten activity or complete it before moving to this section.
- The leader changes their job so that they are holding up colors. Green for play, red for stop. Again, you can see how well students are watching the “conductor” and fix any technique issues.
- Review or read the story of “The Tortoise and the Hare” and introduce how to play quickly and slowly with the mallets. Then the conductor has two jobs, they can hold up a picture of a tortoise, hare, or red for stop. You can also do this with dynamics and pitch.

FUN STOPPING IDEAS

- Mallets on top of your head like an alien or ladybug.
- Say, “Rest position!” Students respond with “HUH!” and put mallets crossed underneath their arms.
- Play like a violin.
- On their shoulders like a backpack.