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## **Choosing the right instrument for your child- Mr V - [www.associatedcontent.com](http://www.associatedcontent.com)**

I am a band director with 12 years experience in public school systems. Over the years, I have learned what to look for in children to make sure they were successful on a given instrument. Below is a short summary of how to figure out the best instrument for your child.

Flute - traditionally for girls, but not always. Flute is very much like recorder or flutophone in that the fingerings are almost the same. Here is what to look for - Can your child exhale and continue air flow for at least 20 seconds? If not, flute is not a good choice. It takes A LOT of air to play the flute! Also, if your child has what we call the "teardrop" lip, that is not a good sign.

The teardrop is a small piece of skin that hangs from the upper lip and impedes the tone hole. Have your child blow into a pop bottle and see if they can make a sound. Essentially this is how you make a sound on the flute.

Clarinet. Reed instrument. Reeds are pieces of wood used to play the instrument. They are EXTREMELY fragile, so buy lots! Clarinet is a little easier to play than flute because the student makes a seal around the mouthpiece to produce sound. Good starting instrument.

Saxophone. See clarinet. Alto Saxophones are expensive, so make sure your child is serious about trying before purchasing

Trumpet. Depends very much on lip size. We look for students with medium lips for trumpet. Too thin or too thick is bad. Have your child put their lips together and make the letter M and blow through it to make a buzz. Trumpets have 3 valves, but that certainly does not make them easy to play.

Trombone - Easiest instrument to play. I have never had a child that has tried and not learned to play trombone. Don't be intimidated by the size of the instrument, it is really not that big. Plus they will grow into it!

Percussion - Contrary to popular belief, percussion students have to be among the brightest in the band. They have to have rhythm and be able to read notes and be able to play multiple instruments. If your child wants to just beat on something to make noise, buy them a cheap drumset and let them do it at home! Students successful in math and science traditionally do well in band. Don't let this effect your decision though, because it is a reciprocal effect. Band also helps math and science scores go up!

The most important thing is that your child is having a good time! Music should be fun AND educational. Encourage your child to practice daily and they will be