

Choosing the right ukulele

Guidance for parents and carers

When you want to buy your learner's first ukulele, there are some factors to consider:

1. The right size.

- If your learner is 3-7 years old, then I recommend a "soprano" ukulele. It's the smallest size and even though you may be tempted to buy a bigger ukulele because it might make a bigger sound, or looks better, children this young will struggle holding it, holding the chords and playing on its frets.
- If your learner is older than 8 years old, you could consider buying a "concert" ukulele, the next size up, but a "soprano" ukulele would still work.
- For children 11 and older, unless they have very small hands, I definitely recommend a "concert" ukulele.
- The next size up is a "tenor" ukulele. I don't recommend it for very beginners, even though you may like the sound it makes!
- There is another size, "baritone" ukulele. Please don't buy this one if you want to take my classes because bariton ukuleles have a different tuning, the strings are different, so the chords are different and I don't teach "baritone" ukulele in my classes.



SOPRANO

CONCERT

TENOR

BARITONE

2. Is your child left-handed or right-handed?

- If your child is right-handed, then you are lucky and buy any ukulele, from the list I provided below (unless it says left-handed in its description!). When it arrives, tune it and you will be ready to go.
- If your child is left-handed, you have 3 options:
 - buy a left-handed ukulele, it should say in its description that it is a left-handed ukulele;
 - buy a right-handed ukulele and tune it as left handed (see details in [HERE](#));
 - buy a right-handed ukulele and swap the strings around to make it into a left-handed ukulele. See details in [HERE](#).
- If your child is young, or keeps swapping between their left and right hand when using spoons, drawing or writing tools, then you can just buy a right-handed ukulele (most of the times they are cheaper than the left-handed ukulele) and they can experiment for a few weeks and see what comes natural to them. After that tune it as right-handed or left-handed, depending what your child is choosing to play as.
- **NOTE:** some children might be right-handed when it comes to writing, but they may want to choose to play their instruments as left-handed. I would encourage them to play how they feel most comfortable doing so. My daughter writes with her right hand, but decided to play the ukulele and the guitar left-handed. However, we forgot to mention this to her teacher when she started violin lessons, so her violin teacher gave her a right-handed violin and she's got on with it amazingly, so we didn't change it. Children are amazing, aren't they?

Right-handed ukulele - suggested "soprano" ukulele in [HERE](#) and [HERE](#)

Left-handed ukulele - suggested "soprano" ukulele in [HERE](#) and [HERE](#)

Right-handed ukulele - suggested "concert" ukulele in [HERE](#) and [HERE](#)

Left-handed ukulele - suggested "concert" ukulele in [HERE](#) and [HERE](#)

3. Shape of the ukulele.

For total beginners, please choose a traditional shape, the shape that looks like a small guitar (please see photos below);

Please steer away from pineapple shapes and any other funky shapes as it's tricky for a young learner, total beginner to actually hold the instrument properly.



4. The Colour of the ukulele.

Yes, it matters! It would be great to choose the ukulele together with your child, or go for their favourite colour, if you buy it as a gift. After years and years of teaching young children to play the guitar or the ukulele, I have noticed that if they have the instrument they love, they would pick it up and play it more often!

Pretty patterns ukulele - suggested "soprano" ukulele in [HERE](#) and [HERE](#)

Pretty patterns ukulele - suggested "concert" ukulele in [HERE](#) and [HERE](#)

4. Accessories

- bag
- CAPO
- strap

While most ukuleles will come with a bag, please make sure you also buy a ukulele CAPO (make sure it says it is a "ukulele" CAPO and not a guitar CAPO as the guitar one is too big) and a strap. As beginners, we will adapt some pop songs to easier keys and use a CAPO to play easier chords.

Suggested ukulele "CAPO" in [HERE](#).

I suggest investing in a strap. This will help your young child hold the ukulele better and not worry about dropping it. It also makes it easier to switch the chords when you have a strap as the strap will hold the weight of the ukulele and you can move your fingers faster. Please steer away from [THIS](#) type of straps; they are no use to children and beginners.

Suggested ukulele strap in [HERE](#).

Correct playing positions:



**sitting on a small stool with
no arms,
feet flat on the floor**



**sitting directly
on the floor, legs crossed**

I am looking forward to meeting your learner in my classes!

**Best wishes,
Bella Ely, aka Your ukulele teacher**