

Three Steps for Sizing and Buying a Guitar Your Child 8/21

STEP 1. SIZE YOUR CHILD FOR A GUITAR

The best way to size your child for a guitar is to bring them to group class and we will “try on” several sizes there. Another way to estimate the correct size guitar for a child is to use this chart directly below. The “Childs Size” figure below is a measurement from the floor to the child’s navel, in inches. The “Guitar Size” figure is the length of the vibrating string in cm. Categories are very approximate:

Child Size.....	Guitar Size (Category)
24in.....	40 cm (1/8 Sized Guitar)
26in.....	45 cm (1/4 Sized Guitar)
28.5in.....	50 cm (1/2 Sized Guitar)
33.5in.....	55 cm (3/4 Sized Guitar)
35.5in.....	60 cm (7/8 Sized Guitar)
36.75in.....	63 cm (7/8 Sized Guitar)
Larger.....	65 cm (full size)

Once we establish the size needed for your child, remember the size of the guitar based on the vibrating string length in centimeters, not on the basis of whatever fractional label ($\frac{1}{4}$, $\frac{1}{2}$, $\frac{3}{4}$) the manufacturer puts on their website or on the label inside the guitar. This is because these fractional sizes are not standardized from one make to another in terms of the actual vibrating string length. Here are some ranges in vibrating string lengths I have encountered:

- 8/8 Full Sized Guitars = 65cm in string length, nut size is 52mm.
- 7/8 Sized = 60cm-64cm (range of 4cm)
- 3/4 Sized = 53cm - 59cm (range of 6cm)
- 1/2 Sized = 48cm - 53cm (range of 5cm)
- 1/4 Sized = 40cm - 48cm (range of 8cm)
- 1/8 Sized = 35cm-40cm (range of 5cm)

Is your child left handed? I’ve never worked with a left-handed child that couldn’t learn right-handed. My son Sam is a lefty. When he was very young and getting started, he would still do “air guitar” as a lefty, but when handed his guitar he would play as a righty because that was how he was being taught. He now plays professionally as a righty. I asked him in his mid 20’s if he thought he could turn the guitar around and play as a lefty. The question was as absurd to him as it was asking a right-handed person!

If you learn to play the guitar as a lefty, you have to hold the guitar pointed in the other direction with the strings having been removed and reversed. Paul McCartney and Jimi Hendrix are the pop music examples I can think of for this, I don’t know of any classical guitarists who play left-handed. If your choice is to learn left handed, you will never be able to walk into a guitar store or pick up a friend’s guitar and play it!

STEP 2. DECIDE HOW MUCH YOU WANT TO SPEND

Decide on the price range before you look at the list below or start researching their sites. Common sense shopping applies here: you pretty much get what you pay for. The more expensive guitars have a better sound and will hold their value on resale within our program.

Special Concerns for Expensive Instruments

Are you thinking of spending up to \$1000 or more? Buying a guitar sight-unseen always involves an element of risk, but you can minimize that by buying a reputable maker's instrument from a reputable dealer. The risk is the cost of shipping to send it back if you don't like the guitar.

Concerning whether to buy a guitar with a cedar or spruce top (this is only a concern for fairly expensive instruments):

- a. Sound produced by spruce: spruce has a very direct sound, very clear, and sometimes described as bright.
- b. Sound produced by cedar: these guitars are described as being darker, warmer, and fuller sounding than spruce guitars.

These descriptions are generalities - individual guitars still have their individual sound, whether cedar or spruce tops. In my opinion it often comes down to this: do you prefer Italian or French cuisine? Besides the issue of sound there is the issue of the guitar's playability, though that can be somewhat adjusted by a local luthier or a good guitar technician. Rosewood sides and back do contribute to the overall sound, as opposed to mahogany.

STEP 3. DECIDE ON ONE OF THE GUITARS LISTED BELOW

Some of the guitars listed below can be found locally. If you buy one locally, try to buy it contingent on the teacher's approval, with full refund guaranteed if the teacher says the guitar is not suitable. Jackson's Music store is comfortable with this arrangement.

When comparing prices and guitars, remember these points:

- When comparing guitars of the same string length, check for differences in the quality of the wood, and remember to avoid guitars with laminated tops - you want a solid top guitar, and not one with any electronics.
- Check to see if the price includes a nice hard shell case, or a less expensive (and less protective) gig bag
- **All prices given below are subject to change.**
- Full sized instruments are also available at these sites.
- Several suppliers are given for some of the same factory-made guitars just in case one of the suppliers is out.

I. USED GUITARS

To see if there are any used instruments from other students in our program, check with me and I'll put out an email to all of my students. The ones I am aware of are on our website winstonsalemsuzukischool.com under the tab Guitars for Sale.

Before buying a new guitar from one of these sources below, you also might want to check these prices against the used instruments nationally for sale through the Guitar Center: <https://www.guitarcenter.com/Used/Guitars.gc>. Be sure to then select the category “Used Classical & Nylon Guitars”

If you have any questions contact me, I'm glad to help you with this.

II. GETTING THE BEST

1. Yulong Guo Guitars - From around \$600 to \$6000.
These guitars are becoming very popular and are a particularly good buy for the money. <https://www.goyetteguitarcenter.com/>
2. Ruben Flores/Almansa Guitars - \$470 and up.
54.4cm (Requinto)
61cm (Cadet)
63.6cm (Senorita)
These available at: <http://www.rubenflores.com/flores.html>
Note: My students need to be sure to mention that you are a student of mine and that you were told to ask for the discount this dealer offers to me.
3. Joven (Benjamin Garcia) and Jose Reyes - \$600 and up.
- Joven guitars made by Benjamin Garcia:
45, 50, 51, 52, 53, 55, 59, 60, 62, 63, 64, and 65 cm guitars (includes hard case)
- Guitars by Jose Luis Diaz Reyes - 55cm
These available from Gringo Star Guitars:
brentweaver2003@yahoo.com, <http://www.gringostarguitar.com/>
4. Alhambra, Esteve, Altamira, Kremona Guitars - Around \$300-\$900
They have a rental program that goes towards purchase.
Sizes: 40cm, 48cm, 53cm, 61cm (do not buy the 40cm Octave Guitar)
These available from Los Angeles Classical Guitars:
<https://www.lacg.net/product-category/guitars/children-fractional-guitars/>
4. XGuitars - local (in Asheville) Alhambra and Cordoba Guitars
<https://xguitars.com/collections/short-scale> (around \$800)
5. Dream Guitars - local (in Asheville) have new and used very high end guitars, and some possibly less expensive.
<https://www.dreamguitars.com/shop/instruments/guitars/nylon-string-guitars/classical-guitars.html>
6. Kenny Hill Guitars - \$895.00 with gig bag
Available with a cedar or spruce top, they come in 3 different string lengths - 65cm, 64cm, 62.8cm. Available at: <http://www.newworldguitar.com/>

III. GOOD GUITARS

1. Cordoba Guitars

63cm Dolce 7/8 \$279.99

61.5cm Cadete \$259.99

59cm C3M Cadete \$189.99

58cm 580 Requinto \$259.99

52cm 520 Requinto \$259.00

These guitars above available from Strings By Mail:

https://www.stringsbymail.com/search/results.html?inc_subcat=1&search_in_description=1&categories_id=&keyword=cordoba+guitar&x=0&y=0

These guitars directly below available from Sweetwater:

<https://www.sweetwater.com/store/detail/ProtC1M1Qtr--cordoba-protege-c1m-1-4-size-natural>

and also from Strings by Mail:

<https://www.stringsbymail.com/instruments-1089/fractional-travel-guitars-1098/cordoba-fractional-guitars-3281/>

48cm (18.9in) C1M 1/4 Protoge \$140

58cm (22.8in) C1M 1/2 Protoge \$140

61.5cm (24.2in) C1M 3/4 Protoge \$140

The two "Mini" Cordobas below are small, but the width of the neck is not reduced. I don't know how playable these might be for a small child.

<https://www.stringsbymail.com/instruments-1089/fractional-travel-guitars-1098/cordoba-fractional-guitars-3281/>

51 cm Cordoba Mini M - Natural \$199.99

58 cm Cordoba Mini II MH - Mahogany \$129

Jackson's Music locally also sometimes carries Cordoba guitars.

2. La Mancha Rubi Guitars

Rubinto cm-41 - 41cm \$189.99

Rubi cm-47 - 47cm \$299.99

Rubi cm-53 - 53cm \$299.99

Rubi cm-59 - 59.5cm \$299.99

Rubi cm-63 - 59.5cm \$299.99

Rubi s-53 - 53cm \$325.99 (s- means spruce top instead of cedar)

Rubi s-59 - 59.5cm \$325.99

Rubi s-63 - 59.5cm \$325.99

(gig bag additional \$16.99, no hard shell cases)

("sn" or "n" means "small neck" - width of the neck is a little smaller)

(CWE has a pickup system in it - not recommended)

The guitars directly above available from Strings by Mail:

<https://www.stringsbymail.com/instruments-1089/fractional-travel-guitars-1098/lamancha-fractional-guitars-3282/>

3. Kremona Soloist Series

S44C–44 cm \$300

S51C–51 cm \$300

S56C–56 cm \$300

(gig bags, no hard shell cases)

The guitars directly above available from Los Angeles Classical Guitars:

<https://www.lacg.net/product-category/guitars/children-fractional-guitars/>

4. Hola Music Guitars

½ size Model HG-34GLS, Natural Gloss Finish - \$129.95

¾ size Model HG-36GLS, Natural Gloss Finish - \$129.95

come with Savarez strings. The report on these is that they are heavier in construction and have a better sound than Yamaha or Cordoba and La Mancha guitars. Free Padded Gig Bag Included. <https://hola-music.com/>

IV. OTHER VERY SMALL GUITARS

These are "starter guitars" for very young children, passable quality.

1. Yamaha Guitalele GL-1, Natural Finish

String length 43.2cm 1/4 size (17in.) \$100

available from Musicians Friend: <https://www.musiciansfriend.com/folk-traditional-instruments/yamaha-gl1-mini-6-string-nylon-guitalele>
(of the 3 models, choose the natural finish model)

also available from Amazon: https://www.amazon.com/Yamaha-GL1-GuitaleleNatural/dp/B000RVYMWE/ref=sr_1_3?ie=UTF8&qid=1541741243&sr=83&keywords=yamaha+guitarlele&dpID=319STIUBTwL&preST=_SY300_QL70_&dpSrc=srch

2. Kala KA-GL-KOA Guitarlele - Natural = \$149

String length 43.2cm 1/4 size (17in.), and it looks like it has a full-size width neck
<https://www.amazon.com/Kala-KA-GL-KOA-Guitarlele/dp/B00OD1P6T2>

3. Gretsch G9126 Guitar Ukulele - \$159

String length 48.3 cm – 19in

it looks like it has a full size width neck

https://www.amazon.com/Gretsch-G9126-Guitar-Ukulele/dp/B00B3DXHFS/ref=sr_1_4?ie=UTF8&qid=1542222130&sr=8-4&keywords=Guilele&dpID=41h%252B-FuBcyL&preST=_SY300_QL70_&dpSrc=srch

V. CASES FOR GUITARS

https://www.stringsbymail.com/search/results.html?inc_subcat=1&search_in_description=1&categories_id=0&keyword=guitar+cases&x=0&y=0

