

## *Use of Singing Voice*

The following categories have been found to describe stages through which some children progress when learning to use a singing voice. It should be noted that each of these categories refer to the physical use each child has of the voice. Within each of the categories, except #1, children may be singing out-of-tune, or they may be singing in tune when song material fits their range. The ability to sing in tune is not really a concern until the "initial range singer" or "singer" stages are achieved.

1. **Pre-singer:** Often referred to as a non-singer, this child, when asked to sing, chants the words to a song instead.
2. **Speaking Range Singer:** This child sings, but in his/her speaking voice, low, register. This register is from about "a below middle c" to "middle c" for young children but begins to expand upwards in pitch as the child enters the middle and upper elementary school grades.
3. **Limited Range Singer:** This stage is exhibited by some children in the primary grades. The middle register, a lighter quality voice, is used when singing but the range of this voice is very narrow, usually "d above middle c" to "f# above middle c". Some middle and upper elementary school children will exhibit this register, but many will sing in this range with their speaking, low, register.
4. **Initial range singer:** This child uses middle register and sings with a range from "d above middle c" to "a above middle c", often referred to as initial song range. A register lift in the voice occurs from a to b-flat, from middle to high register. These students do not as yet access the upper register. The teacher should listen carefully for the quality of voice students use when singing in the initial song range. Upper elementary children can access this range with their speaking, low, register.
5. **Singer:** This child does lift the voice above the register lift and uses the upper (head) register.

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TABLE 4.1 *Children's Vocal Development*

AGE	DEVELOPMENTAL ACTIVITY
Less than one	Vocalizes (babbles) vowels and consonants
One to two	Babbles in irregular rhythmic patterns Imitates the contour of songs' melodic phrases, but not discrete pitches
Two	Babbles in extended melodic phrases Babbles in small intervals of seconds, thirds Imitates occasional discrete pitches of songs
Three	Invents spontaneous songs with discrete pitches and recurring rhythmic and melodic patterns Reproduces nursery rhymes and childhood chants
Four to five (kindergarten)	Discovers differences between speaking and singing voices Shifts song qualities from light and airy to the playground yell for lively songs Sings spontaneous songs spanning two octaves Sings in tune within range of five pitches, d to a
Six to seven (grade one)	Sings in tune in range of C to b, with smaller tessitura Can begin to develop head voice, with guidance Begins to have expressive control of voice
Seven to eight (grade two)	Sings in tune in range of octave, about C to c' or d to d', with smaller tessitura
Eight to nine (grade three)	Sings in tune in range of B $\flat$ to e $\flat$ , with smaller tessitura Can perform fundamental harmony songs such as melody over vocal ostinato or sustained pitch
Nine to ten (grade four)	Sings in tune in range of A to e', with smaller tessitura Sings with increasing resonance (grades four, five, and six) May experience first vocal change (boys, beginning age ten) Can perform canons, rounds, descants, countermelodies Can sing with appropriate phrasing, with guidance
Ten to eleven (grade five)	Sings in tune in range of A $\flat$ to f', with C to c' octave tessitura Is increasingly selective of song repertoire Prefers songs in middle range Prefers songs without sentimental or babyish texts Can perform two-part songs
Eleven to twelve (grade six)	Sings in tune in range of G to g', with C to c' octave tessitura Can perform three-part songs

Note: c = middle c; c' = one octave higher; C = one octave lower than middle c.