

Buying A Guitar And Sizing Your Child For A Guitar 3/17

This collection of data represents my current research on guitar availability for less than full sized guitars. There is probably more information here than you are interested in! If you'd like, you can give me a call and I will walk you through the possibilities represented here.

Guitar Size Nomenclature

Actual dimensions of guitars, referred to as 1/4, 1/2, 3/4, are not standardized from one maker to the next. Therefore the vibrating string length is given also as the "scale length". Here is a rough guide to sizing based on vibrating string length:

8/8 Full Sized Guitars are generally 65cm in string length, full size guitars nut size is 52mm.

7/8 Sized Guitars = 60cm-64cm (range of 4cm)

3/4 Sized Guitars = 53cm - 59cm (range of 6cm)

1/2 Sized Guitars = 48cm - 53cm (range of 5cm)

1/4 Sized Guitars = 40cm - 48cm (range of 8cm)

1/8 Sized Guitars = 35cm-40cm (range of 5cm)

I have listed the guitars below according to how the retailer lists them, as 1/2, 3/4, etc. Be aware that these labels do not always line up with the measurements I have given above for the different sizes, so I have also included the vibrating string lengths.

Sizing Your Child For A Guitar

We do not yet have a reliable formula for sizing your child for a guitar based on body measurements. To size your child, bring them to group class and we will "try on" several sizes there. Guitars can be found locally, or through one of our suppliers below. If you buy one locally, try to buy it based on the teacher's approval, with full refund if the teacher says a guitar is not suitable. We can also sometimes find a used instrument for you in the program, and your guitar can be re-sold within the program.

Here is one sizing method I've seen, but have not done the research to see how reliable it is: measure from the floor to the belly button to determine a child's scale (string) length:

24 in = 40 cm

26 in = 45 cm

28.5 in = 50 cm

33.5 in = 55 cm

35.5 in = 60 cm

36.75 in = 63 cm

Higher = 65 cm or full size

Common Sense Shopping

Decide on the price range before you start researching, you pretty much get what you pay for. When comparing guitars of the same string length, check for differences in the quality of the wood, and remember that you should try to avoid guitars with laminated tops - you want a solid top guitar. Check with me, I'm glad to help you.

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I. GETTING THE BEST

1. Ruben Flores Guitars

<http://www.rubenflores.com/flores.html>

Contact for prices.

3/4 size 54.4cm (Requinto)

3/4 size 58cm and 61cm (Cadet)

7/8 size 63.6cm (Senorita)

Note: My students 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.

2. Gringo Star Guitars: available through: Brent Weaver.

brentweaver2003@yahoo.com, <http://www.gringostarguitar.com/>

(contact for price and availability)

Joven guitars made by Benjamin Garcia:

45, 50, 51, 52, 53, 55, 59, 60, 62, 63, 64, and 65 cm guitars

Guitars by Jose Luis Diaz Reyes:

full sized, also 55cm

3. Kala Gitarlele (3 models ranging from \$225-\$500)

<https://kalabrand.com/collections/gitarlele>

The dealer tells me the vibrating string length is 17 inches - 43.18cm

II. GOOD GUITARS

1. Cordoba Guitars, Iberia Series - available locally at Jackson Music and online. Be sure the dealer checks out the guitar for imperfections before they ship it. Contact for prices.

a. available from Strings By Mail <http://www.stringsbymail.com/> and Amazon

1/4 sized 43.8cm Cordoba Guilele

1/2 size 48cm (Requinto)

1/2 size 58cm (Requinto)

3/4 size 61.5cm

7/8 size 63cm

There is one other solid top guitar-uke I am aware of besides the Cordoba Guilele mentioned above. It is the Gretsch G9126 Guitar Ukulele. I have not seen one of these instruments but I assume it is also a good buy: Available at Amazon

43.2cm scale length (17 in.)

b. available from Elderly

<http://elderly.com/search/elderly?terms=cordoba&x=0&y=0>

The only Cordoba they carry is the Cordoba 3/4 (59cm scale length) which is different from that carried by Strings By Mail, it is less expensive and must not be the Iberia line.

2. Check out

<http://www.leihinstrumente.com/Guitars/Children's-Guitars/>

This is a company as yet “untested” but they look good. Prices on all of these guitar range from \$208 to \$440 depending on the size and quality of materials. Some of the lower priced models I would put in the “Passable Quality Guitars” below.

III.PASSABLE QUALITY GUITARS

I DO NOT recommend the cheaper laminated top guitars, except in the case of a very young child. Even then I prefer the solid tops, as the sound of the laminated top guitars are just not as good. I suggest the better quality solid top guitars by these companies below. Contact for prices. Always check to see that the top is solid, not laminated. Sides are sometimes laminated, this is not as much an issue.

1. Strunal Guitars: Factory made from the Czech Republic - playable and have a passable sound.

1/4 size 44cm 1/2 size 53cm 3/4 size 57cm 7/8 size 62cm

a. Available through Young Musicians 800-826-8648 ymonline.com, all solid top sizes \$260 (guitar)+\$28 (padded carrying bag)+\$15(shipping)=\$303

b. PRO ARTE Available from

<http://www.leihinstrumente.com/Guitars/Children's-Guitars/>

These sound very similar to the Strunals, if not identical. When asked about the source, the company responded "A few years ago they were made by Strunal, but now they are coming from a new factory in Romania." For more information, contact Michael at service@leihinstrumente.de

This company's has other guitars that are probably in the "Passable" category. All of their guitars are listed above in the "Good" category.

2. 1/4 sized Guitalele GL-1 by Yamaha.

43.2cm scale length (17 in.) - \$100 includes a gig bag

Top: Spruce - laminated

available from Musicians Friend -

<http://www.musiciansfriend.com/folk-traditional-instruments/yamaha-gl1-mini-6-string-nylon-guitalele>,

also available from Amazon

3. There is also a laminated top Cordoba Guilele at Amazon for \$109 with a gig bag and tuner included. Similar to the one listed above under "GOOD GUITARS" category, except this

one has a laminated top.

IV. OTHER 1/4, 1/2, 3/4 SIZED GUITARS

smallguitars.com 909-276-4877 All guitars are laminated top except when it says solid top. Contact for prices.

V. CASES FOR GUITARS:

Contact for prices, available from

1. Strings by mail:

<https://www.stringsbymail.com/instruments-1089/guitar-cases-uke-cases-1171/?zenid=s1ponimuathufmgfhsgb2fuap1>

2. <http://www.smallguitars.com/results.php?CategoryID=85>