

Parent Support, Participation, Communication and Involvement

In making it possible for your child to play a musical instrument, you are providing the opportunity for self-expression, creativity, and achievement. Numerous studies indicate that parental attitude, support and involvement are important factors in a child's ability to successfully learn to play and to enjoy music. The Studio Web Page is an excellent resources for parents and students alike to strengthen communication in the studio. The studio-student-parent communication is an important key to a student's success.

Practicing. Practicing is the heart of continued success. Parents are asked to provide a specific time each day and an appropriate atmosphere for the instructions on the lesson plan. A minimum guideline is usually thirty minutes for beginners, and two twenty minute periods or one 40 minute period for more advanced.

Weekly Practice Schedule. I recommend that every student have a WRITTEN OUT Weekly Practice Schedule that is agreed upon and arranged with the involvement of the parent and student. I recommend having all 7 days of the week with a time, and each week the student chooses 5 of those sessions. This way, if something unexpected comes up normal practice time will still happen. There should be a number of copies of this schedule hung up - good places are: the student's bedroom, the refrigerator, and the piano or keyboard.

How You Fit In

Always keep in mind that your support is a key element in your child's success with music study. Music achievement requires effort over a period of time. You can help your child by:

- SCHEDULING PRACTICE TIMES (One of the most important things. Think of it like a rehearsal for a band or orchestra.)
- Providing a quiet place in which to practice.
- Remaining nearby during practice times as often as possible.
- Scheduling a consistent, daily time for practice.
- Praising your child's efforts and achievements.

What To Do

To give your child the best possible support, you should:

- Encourage your child to play for family and for friends.

- Expose your child to a wide variety of music, including concerts and recitals.
- Encourage your child to talk with you about his or her lessons.
- Make sure your child's instrument is always in good working order.
- Allow your child to play many types of music, not just study pieces.
- Listen to your child practice, and acknowledge improvement.
- Help your child build a personal music library.
- Try to get your child to make a minimum two-year commitment to his or her music studies.

What Not To Do

Your child's progress will be greatly enhanced if you...

- Don't use practice as a punishment.
- Don't insist your child play for others when they don't want to.
- Don't ridicule or make fun of mistakes or less-than-perfect playing.
- Don't apologize to others for your child's weak performance.
- Don't start your child on an instrument that's in poor working order or condition.
- Don't expect rapid progress and development in the beginning.

If Your Child Loses Interest

In the event your child loses interest in his or her music studies, don't panic.

- Discuss the situation with your child to determine why their interest is declining.
- Talk to your child's music teacher to see what might be done to rekindle their enthusiasm.
- Encourage your child to stick with lessons for an agreed period of time.
- Offer increased enthusiasm and support.

This message has been developed by the following organizations in the interest of making music study and participation an enjoyable and richly rewarding experience for children and their families.

American Music Conference * Music Educators National Conference * Music Teachers National Assoc. * National Assoc. of Music Merchants