

HOW PARENTS CAN HELP THEIR CHILDREN LEARN TO PRACTICE

Playing an instrument develops more than music skills. It teaches children how to plan time and set goals. By showing your child how to get organized for practice sessions, you will be helping him develop skills that will carry over into other academic subjects.

1. The Right Supplies

Backup supply of reeds, oil, cleaning supplies, music and a folding music stand. A metronome is also useful. Of course the instrument should be in good playing condition.

2. Organizing the Equipment

Name tag on everything that has to be taken to school. Designate a place to put the instrument, music, and stand - same place every day.

3. Know the Band Director and the Schedule of Events

Coordinate the home calendar with special tryout dates and always note the concert dates.

4. Environment

Set aside a place to practice. Make sure the lighting is good and the student is not disturbed by other family activities and that the family is not unduly disturbed.

A regular time for practice is a must. Mornings if the afternoon is full.

Sit in on the practice sessions so you can learn what your child is learning.

Encourage your student to practice. Don't use practice as punishment. Remember your child still needs encouragement to brush their teeth, make the bed, etc., and will need to be reminded to practice as a part of their school homework.

Try to be patient with your child and offer encouragement when the going gets tough. You know it will pass; help them through the rough spots.

Create a musical atmosphere in the home by listening to recordings or watching concerts on PBS.

No young musician always plays his instrument beautifully. Be patient. Expect gradual improvement. Help your child learn to pace their practice sessions. Every day for short sessions is better than once a week for several hours.

Excerpted from "Help Your Child Learn To Practice," The Instrumentalist, by Barbara Prentice