

10 Ways Parents Can Help

1. Provide an instrument, book and necessary accessories. (A music stand should also be a top priority!) Assuming you've already done this for the year, consider trading up in instrument quality. Your child is much more likely to enjoy playing if their instrument sounds good and works well. Higher quality strings can have a huge impact on sound and playability. Spending \$50 on a better bow can make a more noticeable difference than the same amount toward a better instrument. Buying an instrument online is NOT recommended. An ad may say "perfect for the beginning student," when in reality it may only be perfect for making them want to quit! Local music stores can usually offer good advice.

2. Encourage your child to practice daily. Most kids struggle with this, but establishing rules ("no screen time until practice is done") or a routine time (right after dinner) can help smooth things over. Be supportive and encouraging. Saying things like "I like that one, do it again!" can let them know you're paying attention. Self-discipline is one of the best character traits of trained musicians, but most kids don't come by it naturally. They will need your help along the way. Hopefully as they get used to the routine of practicing, they will be encouraged by the progress they make, and want to do it even more.

3. Listen to Classical music at home and in the car. Music is a language, and the more your child hears it, the easier it will be for them to become fluent in it. (And excited about it!) Discover your local Classical music radio stations, or create stations/playlists on Pandora, Spotify and YouTube. Of course, purchasing recordings or going to professional concerts is even better! (Help support professional musicians!) If expense is a concern, another option is to go to concerts at a high school or with your local Youth Orchestra.

4. Encourage your child to keep playing their instrument for many years. Studies have shown that students who expect to continue long-term do up to 400% better than those that don't commit, even if playing the same amount or even less! Attitude and expectations are extremely important, and your influence can make all the difference!

5. Provide performance opportunities. Encouraging your child to play for family and friends not only gives them good practice getting over stage fright, but also lets them know you're proud of what they're doing!

6. Enroll your child in private lessons. Of course they will make progress by playing in class, but to really succeed in music, students benefit from one-on-one instruction. Struggling students can get caught up and advanced students can receive more challenge. Not all teachers will be a good fit for your child, so be sure to ask questions regarding a teacher's background and experience. Lessons generally take place weekly over a long period of time. Ask around for typical rates in your area.

7. Encourage your child to audition for honors ensembles available through their school. Even if they don't make it, just preparing for the audition will be a valuable learning experience. If they do make it, they will be playing challenging music with other advanced students, which will improve their playing and give them something to be proud of!

8. After they get some playing experience, consider having your child audition for a local youth orchestra. It's a great way to play fun, challenging music with other motivated young musicians who might even become your child's best friends!

9. Look into summer music camps to keep your child motivated and learning between school years.

10. Let your child teach you what they're learning right now! Not only does this help them solidify and rehearse what they're working on, but also it will give you greater appreciation of the challenges they're experiencing. You might be surprised at how difficult the music learning process is! Many people think of music as entertainment, but it is really reading a foreign language while manipulating a difficult instrument all precisely at the same time as everyone else in the room. It's a total brain workout while having fun!

*Thank you for taking the time to support your child's music education.
Together we will set them up for success!*