HUDSON | MONTESSORI SCHOOL

Parent HELP!!!

Tips and tricks to help your child succeed in music.

A child begins learning an instrument with a tremendous amount of excitement and energy, not knowing, of course, what it takes to acquire the necessary ability to succeed in music. This document is meant to clarify, give ideas, and encourage us as parents in our efforts to help our children.

Realities parents need to know

1. The child will be very excited by the novelty of the new instrument, but it will wear off when regular work is involved.
2. Children are not ready for complete independence from day one! They do not have the necessary foresight, discipline, endurance, and understanding of what they are doing in music. They need us parents and teachers to help them, because they will learn! They will give up if they are not guided and encouraged – this is a guarantee. Most children, in the best of situations will want to quit, and this is normal.
3. No one is born tone deaf. Music is a language, and based on genetic and environmental factors, some acquire musical ability sooner than others, but music IS part of every human. Babies in the womb respond to music. Everyone can develop musical ability with the right environment and enough repetitions!
4. Children are brilliant.
5. You do not need to have music in your background to help your child succeed, but you have to be willing to be patiently persistent.
6. Playing music is a joy. It feeds the mind and soul like no other work. It engages the brain like no other work. It is the reward! When we humans experience the joy of making music, we know it and there is nothing like it – especially making music with others.

Tips and tricks to creating the environment at home where a child will WANT to practice

1. <u>Counsel together</u>
   Use the momentum of beginning an instrument, or a new school year to establish routines. Talk with your child and share with them that you are excited to watch them grow and help them along the way. Really communicate. Listen to what they are excited about, and what they don't like. Acknowledge that to succeed, practice must be consistent, and have your child come up with solutions to make it work. For example, decide on the time of day to practice, what you are practicing for, etc. You will need to counsel together quite often as the years go by. This will give a place to discuss conflicts, frustrations, etc., and help you adjust course as necessary.

2. <u>Small, consistent doses of correct practice are better than infrequent long practice sessions.</u>
   Don't try to cram. Be consistent. If the child has not practiced for a period of time, counsel together, set a course, and be consistent. Repeat that formula as necessary.

3. Be aware of how they need to practice.
   Little ones need mom or dad right there to help them practice correctly. Older children need you to check in. Have them explain what they are learning. When they can explain their purpose, they will take more ownership.
4. Be excited and encouraging in successes, all the while striving for more beauty and excellence.
   Enjoy their progress! Even if it is rough at the beginning! Genuine, specific praise will melt their heart over time. ("You played that all the way with no stops. Way to go!" or, your sound is really becoming clearer!")
5. Children need specific goals.
   We all love progress, and then we become more motivated. Goals should be achievable and challenging. Teachers set the goals (this is why getting an individual teacher is so important) for weekly work. The student then prepares for the next lesson to learn more! Parents need to be aware of these goals. Ask teachers to clarify these goals if they are not clear from week to week. They will be motivated when they feel progress. Mastery requires repetitions, and many repetitions build confidence and strength.
6. Just get started
   If you can just get the child to get the instrument out, or sit down at the piano, you have gained a very important victory.

7. Avoid condescending, comparative, and other negative communication patterns. Lift the child, challenging them to rise up because you know what they can be. Do not put them down. This is easier said than done, especially when we are tired and spent for the day.
8. Feed 'em or fool em'
9. Grandpa Rhodes taught me this in relation to getting kids to do things they don't feel like doing. Make sure kids are fed, or use snacks to motivate. Use simple games or challenges to gain the necessary repetitions to help your child progress. The true reward for the child will be playing a piece of music with ease. That is the end goal and that reward lasts longer than a snack, but snacks are great!

10. If music is important to you, it will be important to them, even if they are teenagers.
    Children need to push back and become independent, but being on the other side of this journey now, it was clear that music was important to my parents. Our family situation was unique and so is yours. Teenagers can do amazing things!

More ideas will come as you patiently but persistently make music a part of your family's life. You will bond with and know your child in different ways and find a lot of joy for yourself. You will give them a gift that will last a lifetime.