

Supporting Musical Practice

A Quick Guide and Checklist for Parents Based on [THIS](#) Blog post

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Use this quick-reference sheet and checklist to help ensure you're helping support and encourage your young musician's practice and growth!

1. Set a Realistic, Consistent Practice Goal

- Choose a daily time that fits into your family's routine
- Start small (5-10 minutes is enough for most beginners)
 - ↳ *If you aren't sure where to begin, or are skeptical of your child's abilities to complete 5-10 minutes, use the "1 minute per year of age" formula as a starting point and adjust as needed*
- Let your child help decide when practice
- Adjust the amount of time practice as needed (consistency > length)

2. Keep Practice Positive & Enjoyable

- Ask your child if they'd like you to sit nearby, or give them space
- Reward them for practicing, but don't punish them for not
- Keep the tone light, don't correct or critique them unless they specifically ask for your input
- Avoid turning practice into a "battle" or "test"
 - ↳ *If you're struggling greatly with getting your child to practice, and efforts to do so end in a "battle" please consult with your child's teacher as this indicates they are not being engaged with their music and/or instrument in a way that motivates them*

3. Organize the Space & Materials

- Designate a clean and quiet spot for musical practice.
 - ↳ *Bonus points if the only purpose of this spot, corner, or room is to practice*
- Keep their books, music, instruments, pencils and any assignment sheets or lesson/practice journals easy to access
- Label or color code materials, or the bins in which they are kept if it helps your child stay organized
- Tidy up the space together weekly to help build responsibility (and ensure they haven't lost any of their music)
- Set up a whiteboard, sticky note wall, or practice journal to give reminders for what and/or when to practice



4. Review Goals & Celebrate Effort

- Read lesson notes with your child once a week (after their lessons)
- Ask engaging questions about what they're working on
 - ↳ “What songs did your teacher have you work on in your lesson”
 - ↳ “What are you super excited to practice today?”
 - ↳ “That spot looks tricky! Maybe we should write down a question for (teacher name) on this sticky note for your next lesson?”
- Remind them it's okay to make mistakes when learning
- Praise effort, focus, and persistence when practicing over practice
- Help them remember to jot questions for their teacher to bring to their next lesson

5. Connect Music to Everyday Life

- Listen to music together at home or in the car
- Explore different styles of music
- Ask them questions about their favorite artists
 - ↳ “*What do you like about this artist?*”
 - ↳ “*What do you notice about the way their voice changes as they sing the song?*”
- Watch live or recorded performances together
- Engage them in genuine and natural conversation about music, and/or the sounds they're hearing in the world, and encourage them to do the same. (*no musical knowledge needed!*)