

## ***PARENTS AND HOME PRACTICE: AN INTEGRAL PART OF SUCCESS***

There is scarcely a more neglected area in the field of instrumental music than that of parent-teacher relationships. *The successful and superior student is invariably backed up by enlightened, supportive, and progressive parents.* Be involved with your child!

Music study is a three-way partnership composed of the teacher, student, and parent. Each member of the partnership has a responsibility. Most parents are eager to be active members of the partnership, but need guidance and definition.

### **PARENTS' RESPONSIBILITIES**

The parents' responsibilities in a musical partnership are...

- ***Patience*** in repeatedly reminding the student to do his/her daily practicing, and doing this kindly, but firmly.
- ***Encouragement*** when the going gets rough (and it will!). Some things in music are easily learned, others require intensive and repeated application. Parental sympathy and understanding are important.
- ***Imagination*** in creating a musical atmosphere in the home by tuning in interesting musical programs on television and the radio. Invite friends who play instruments into your home, and have them play for your child. Add an attractive CD to your family collection.
- ***Common sense*** in avoiding undue stress on musical work. All healthy children want and need a considerable daily portion of vigorous physical activity. Try for a balanced schedule of interests into which music practice fits as a natural and compensating element.
- ***Provide for the appropriate practice conditions.*** Your child must have the correct accessories if he/she is to be successful. This includes a music stand, valve or slide oil, the proper sticks, and of course, a method book.

## ***FAVORABLE PRACTICE CONDITIONS***

As a young person advances in his/her music study and is presented with increasingly difficult problems in thinking and playing, the regularity and quality of his preparation become more and more important. Regularity and quality can be promoted if parents will assume the responsibility for seeing that favorable practice conditions exist. Here are some suggestions as to how this can be achieved:

1. *SCHEDULE A REGULAR TIME FOR PRACTICE.* The best time for practice is when minds are fresh and receptive.
2. *SEE THAT PROPER PHYSICAL CONDITIONS PREVAIL.* A quiet room, adequate lighting, sufficient ventilation, and comfort all necessities. I will insist that every music student has a folding music stand for his/her use at home. If you did not rent an instrument from Nazareth Music Center, please see me in order that we can make arrangements for the purchase of a stand for your child. He cannot practice without one.
3. *KEEP ALL INSTRUMENTS IN FIRST-RATE CONDITION.* If something is wrong with your child's instrument, ***do not attempt to fix it yourself!*** I cannot tell you how many times I've encountered parents who only thought they were trying to be helpful and made an instrument in need of repair in greater need of repair!!! Please bring the instrument to me, and if I cannot fix it, we will send the instrument to a reputable instrument repair shop.
4. *PRAISE WORK WELL DONE.* A congratulatory remark may be interjected during a practice session, or a complimentary comment may be made later.
5. *NEVER USE PRACTICE AS A PUNISHMENT.* It is advisable to occasionally reschedule a practice period to allow for important conflicting school events. But avoid giving preference to any and all activities conflicting with the practice schedule.
6. *SPEND TIME LISTENING TO YOUR CHILD PRACTICE.* Ask for your "favorite song" and encourage your child to play for others and family.
7. *ATTEND A LESSON AT SCHOOL!* You are always welcome to visit Steckel and sit-in on a lesson.

## ***PARENTAL HELP***

1. Remind your child to practice new work first...the first ten minutes of any practice session (including that of professional musicians) is usually the most productive time period.
2. When wrong notes and hesitation occurs, suggest:
  - a. Practicing in short session, a few measures at a time.
  - b. Practicing more slowly!
  - c. Checking the written notes carefully to make sure they have been read correctly.
3. I will expect that each student practice about 20 minutes a day.

**IMPORTANT NOTE:** To help develop a regular habit of practice, I ask that you assist in keeping a record of your child's practice time. There is a practice record on the inside cover of your child's music book. The students have been instructed to keep track of their daily practice time. ***You are asked to verify this weekly by signing your initials in the appropriate box next to the week's practice time.*** It is extremely important that good practice habits are established at an early stage. Practice charts will be checked at each lesson. Your help is appreciated.

Parents can and **MUST** have the firmness to insist on what they know is best in the long run, regardless of the frequency, length, and volume of resistance. *It is common for all children to resist practice some time or another.* Sustaining interest can be a real and difficult problem, and it is perhaps this aspect of music study where parental action is most important.

## ***EXPLANATION OF ROTATING SCHEDULE***

1. All lessons will be thirty minutes in length.
2. Students should bring their instrument and book to school the day of their lesson. Do not bring your music stand.
3. Students should report promptly to the appropriate room at the given time. They should enter the room quietly, and assemble their instruments while the previous lesson is finishing up. This will help to save time.
4. It is the students' responsibility to report to the music room at the correct time and not the classroom teacher's job to remind him to go! In the past, some creative parents have sent "post-it" notes to school with their children to serve as a reminder of the lesson time.
5. Keep the enclosed roster and weekly schedule in a handy place at home, so you can easily refer to it when needed.

