

TEN WAYS TO HELP YOUR CHILD SUCCEED

Parents often ask me what they can do to help their children succeed at piano lessons. Here are a few suggestions.

1. Stay informed! Read your monthly newsletters, reply when relevant, and check the e-mail loop and website often.
2. Decide on a practice time and help your child remember when it is time to practice. Read the article *On Practice* (archived on the *Asberry School of Music* website) for more practice tips.
3. Make sure your child brings his assignment folder, along with his music, to each lesson. At least once a week, check the assignment folder to see that your child is keeping up with his practice sheets, practicing as suggested, and completing written assignments. Praise generously!
4. Keep your piano tuned (once a year is minimal) and well-maintained. If you can't remember when your piano was last tuned, it has been too long! I use and recommend Holly Ross of *Southern Keyboards*. Her phone number is 770-953-0938.
5. Take advantage of performance opportunities available to your child. Events such as Federated Festival, GCMTA Ensemble Concert, and the Spring Piano Recital are very motivating for students.
6. Introduce your children to the works of the masters by playing classical music in your home. Most children enjoy the works of Haydn, Mozart, Beethoven, Chopin and Joplin. And go to concerts with your children whenever possible.
7. Take advantage of computer technology. There are numerous websites, computer programs, and MIDI packages which make it possible to explore music in entirely new ways.
8. Purchase a metronome! It is an essential practice tool for students in their second year of study and beyond. I recommend the **Seiko SQ-50 Quartz Metronome**. It retails for \$41.95 but can be purchased for a discount through *amazon.com*. To buy one, use the link under "Recommended Resources" on the *Asberry School of Music* website.
9. Consider replacing your electronic keyboard with a high quality digital instrument or an acoustic piano. A beginning student can learn the most basic elements of with only a small keyboard to practice on, but that keyboard has real limitations, and at some point it is no longer an adequate practice instrument. A student's success in learning to play the piano--or ANY

instrument, for that matter--generally corresponds with the quality of the instrument on which the student practices.

10. Help your child keep a portfolio—"a collection of writings, photos, artwork, poetry, ticket stubs, video tapes, cassette recordings, doodles, sticker books, and diary entries created by the child about her own musical process." This great idea comes from Jessica Baron Turner in the book *Your Musical Child*. Ms. Turner says, "You might start with a scrapbook... Begin by taking photos of your child making music... Add photos of family music experiences—going to a concert, singing together, listening to a marching band at a parade... Save concert and event ticket stubs, recital programs, letters from grandparents that refer to music, any document or treasure that relates to your child's musical interest... Then at least once every couple of weeks, take a few minutes with your child to write, draw, paint, or make a collage together about music... Incorporate all the recent musical goodies into your child's musical portfolio. List favorite songs and CD's... Add magazine pictures of musical artists... Everything and anything goes, the more the better."

The idea is to provide children with a concrete way to recognize their musical growth and to share their experiences with others. A display of student portfolios might be a nice addition to the spring recital! My nine-year old son, Nathan, studies the violin and the guitar as well as the piano, and we are looking forward to creating a musical portfolio this year.

As always, feel free to call or e-mail me with any questions or concerns you might have. I am hard to reach by phone during the day, but if you leave a message on my voice mail, I will return your call within 24 hours. And I check my e-mail several times a day. Together, we can make 2005-2006 your child's best music year yet!