

# How to be a successful piano parent

- **Make your child's piano practice a priority**

No one has ever become proficient at playing the piano without practicing the piano. Practice is the ONLY way to become successful at playing the piano. *Add "piano practice" to your child's daily chore list.* Successful piano students have parents who enforce daily practice time.

- **Help your child create a practice routine**

Until daily practice becomes routine, *remind your child to practice.* Reward your child (stickers, trips to the library or book store, ice cream, new music, extra screen time, movie night, etc.) when he/she practices without being reminded to do so. Rewards don't need to cost money or contain sugar.

- **Give your piano a prominent place in your home**

Don't "bury" the piano in the basement or hide the digital keyboard in your child's bedroom! No child wants to practice away from the coziness of the family's main living quarters. *Place your piano in a central location so you can encourage your child as he/she practices.* The priority and preference you give music in your home will speak volumes!

- **Deliberately schedule your child's practices**

Rather than skip piano practice on lesson day, *have your child practice as soon as possible after the piano lesson and again the day after the lesson.* When kids do this, their practice is more effective because everything they've just been taught is fresh in their minds.

- **Daily practice trumps marathon practice**

Five brief practices each week is better than a day or two of "marathon" practice. As little as fifteen minutes of daily, deliberate practice will produce more results than a lengthy "cramming" session. As the activity-scheduling parent, you'll need to *make sure your child has enough time in his/her daily schedule to include a practice session.*

- **Encourage good practice habits**

*Before your child begins to practice after his/her lesson, talk through the newest assignments with your child.* Refer to the most recent assignment sheet in your child's piano folder. Make sure your child practices exactly what was assigned! Review specific practice instructions (e.g. hands separately or hands together, slowly or up to speed, entire song or a just a section of the song; with pedal or no pedal). Lead by example! Sign the front of your child's piano folder faithfully and supervise as your child completely fills out the student log inside the folder.

- **Listen as your child practices**

*Listen from the kitchen or from the couch (not necessarily from the piano bench where your child is sitting) as your child practices.* Ask your child to find a difficult section of a piece and play it multiple times. When you hear your child repeating a difficult passage, encourage him/her. The first practice after a lesson will be the most difficult for your child so stay close and be on the lookout for signs of frustration coming from the area of the piano that first day. Offer to help. Succeeding days, as your child works through the tough new material, you may not need to help as much.

- **Request a favorite song/sing along**

*When your child's practice session is over, keep him/her at the piano playing songs that you request.* Be sincere and specific when you tell your child why you like a particular song he/she has played or is playing. "That song was your grandpa's favorite" or "That song is SO relaxing—I feel like I'm at the spa"! Invite your child to share his/her gift of music with grandparents (over the phone) or when you have guests. Feel free to sing along—even off key! The more evident your pride and interest in your child's accomplishments at the piano, the more your child will want to play.

- **Be an example**

Allow your child to see you practicing a skill or a hobby! Kids need to realize that learning anything at any age takes practice.