

Thoughts on an Effective Learning Environment

Home Environment

Listening

A child must be immersed in the language of music if they are to learn it like they did their mother tongue. Play the Suzuki repertoire daily.

Make this your responsibility. Putting the music on yourself is a lot easier than battling with your child about it. We as parents were willing to repeat a word many times until our child 'got it'. Now we must do the same for their musical training. Listening in the car, mealtimes or bedtime is great because these are regular occurrences in the day and easy times to remember.

Practicing

The parent is the teacher. Kids don't usually want to take your advice, though, so prepare them beforehand by going over the material to be worked on.

A calm environment is necessary for learning. Try not to make practise sessions too long and tiring.

Stopping before the child is ready is a great way to help motivation for the next day's practise.

Review

Vocabulary accumulates by using learned words over and over again and gradually adding new ones. Facility with an instrument comes from playing learned pieces over and over while working on new material. Parents should take responsibility for review. Once a week have a review night at home.

Lesson Environment

Make sure your child is physically ready for the lesson: nails cut, bathroom visited, not hungry or thirsty.

Have siblings babysat so your 100% attention can be on the lesson.

If there are practising issues or other things to discuss with the teacher, try to do it at a time outside the lesson time. Try NOT to prompt your child on the way to, or during, the lesson. This makes the student-teacher relationship more difficult to develop.

Warm Fuzzy File:

Take a notebook to the lesson and record all the positive things the teacher says about your child. Either read it to your child after the lesson or, in the case of an older child (including teenagers!), put it in their bedroom and let them read it alone.

Psychological Environment

Create a positive attitude about learning. Be enthusiastic and 'fake it' when you're not feeling terrific yourself. The body leads the mind.

Never forget to provide lots of praise for your child's efforts.

Keep in mind why you are giving your child a musical education.

It may be that

music gives you and your child a shared experience.

music enhances your child's life.

music gives them more options in life.

music lessons are something they won't get in school.