

TEN WAYS TO HELP YOUR CHILD IN NATURE'S MUSIC SCHEDULE

1. Make clear to your child at the very outset of lessons-in manner enthusiastic, of course-that music training is a long term program-just as schooling is. And that there are many high points of pleasure along the way.

2. Your child has his own pace to follow, so avoid comparing him with siblings or neighbor's children who appear to be playing better than he. Anticipate "ups and downs" in his attitudes and practicing-and a number of "growing pain" periods, besides.

3. Make a study of how to help your child. Deciding when to help, when to be supportive and when to withdraw to the background permitting him to help himself, is a parental art in itself.

4. Remember to stress that the quality-not the quantity of practicing is what counts for real progress.

5. "Music comes to the child more naturally when there is music in his mother's speaking voice," says the distinguished violin educator, Suzuki. So be pleasant and encouraging about your child's practicing. Of course there will be occasions when you will need to be firm. But remember-"music in your voice"-teach him, guide him, but don't police him!

6. When you help your child, be at his side-not at the other end of the room, or in the next room. Teach him to treat the practice session with the same respect he gives to his lesson period.

7. Don't despair if practicing becomes non-existent for a while, your child will make progress anyhow at the lesson itself-though it will be slower.

8. During a "crisis", always "talk it out" with your child on the basis of mutual respect. Be sure, if it's real serious, to discuss it with the teacher first. Allow your child a voice in the final decision, though be sure it is a constructive one.

9. A sense of humor is a powerful weapon with which to dispel clashes over practicing.

10. Always let your child feel you are proud of his achievements, even if they are small.

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