

A Parent's Guide to Supporting Your Child in Middle School Music

Success = 5% inspiration + 95% perspiration!!

Congratulations on enrolling in the music program here at Bay Middle School! It is our hope that you and your child have begun a lifelong pursuit of the arts, and we wish you success. The children who are most successful in reaching their highest potential are those whom have the continued support of their parents and family.

Children develop discipline and motivation over time. These are qualities largely dependent on our attitude which contributes much to our continuous enjoyment of and satisfaction with life. Start this year's participation in music with the commitment to keep going no matter what! Don't even allow quitting as a possibility or option. By asking your child to give 100% regardless of the circumstances, he or she will achieve that much more than if they were to only give a portion of their efforts.

The following pages are some practical ideas to help prepare your student for your success. Thank you for your continued support of our music program here at Bay Middle!

Supporting Your Young Musician

1. Put a Practice Plan in Writing

Make written AGREEMENT between the parent, director and child to practice the required amount of time for the school year. Agree upon a daily practice time and location. Set a timer that buzzes when practicing time is up. For the middle school level, we recommend 15-20 minutes a day, for five days a week at minimum. Students will be introduced to practice plans the in the first weeks of school and will bring their worksheet home for your help and approval. See the practice plan at the back of this packet. If the plan is not working students and parents should sit down and amend the plan so it can realistically be achieved.

2. Use Positive Reinforcement

- To maintain motivation, give your child plenty of positive reinforcement at all times. Examples include:
- Actively listening to your child practice
- Attending your child's performances
- Celebrating music milestones (concerts, progress reports, playing tests)
- Praise your child with your words
 - "Wow! That's really improved!"
 - "That sounds great"
 - "Be patient, you can get it right!"
 - "Look how far you've come!"
 - "We're proud of you!"

Remember that any impatience with or disapproval may diminish your child's level of self-esteem. Adjust your expectation level to your child's ability and length of study.

3. Reacting Appropriately

Be mindful to react appropriately when your child states "I Don't Want To Practice." Some suggestions are below:

- Focus on the responsibility and commitment made earlier, rather than the feeling of the moment
- Focus discussion on the feelings of relief, satisfaction, and improvement that will come once completed.
- Model responsibility at home by completing tasks prior to personal hobbies and interests.
- Never compare your child to another... instead encourage them to compete against their previous efforts.

4. Setting the Scene

- Use the below suggestions as you decide a practice area.
- Set a regular time/place to practice that is free from distractions
- Purchase a collapsible music stand to ensure that music remains at eye level and avoids poor posture habits.
- Decide on a safe place to store the instrument
- Explain to other family members the value of the instrument – it is not a toy to be played with lightly!
- Supply a cleaning rag in the case for polishing and dusting.

5. How to Practice

- Warm-up with songs you've previously played, reminding you of your previous successes.
- Move onto the assigned exercises and pieces, breaking it down in the following steps:
 1. Clap and count the rhythm of the song.
 2. Say or Sing the note names of the song—in rhythm.
 3. Say or Sing the finger numbers of the song—in rhythm.
 4. Finger the notes as you say either the letter name or finger number (air bow along if you want).
 5. Play the song Pizzicato—SLOWLY at first.
 6. Play the song Arco—SLOWLY at first.
 7. Find the hard parts & practice them separately (practice note by note, measure by measure, line by line).
 8. Play it again & again, until you can play it well.
 9. Listen to yourself—do you like what you hear?
- Finish by reviewing your goals for the day – have you achieved your goal? Congratulate yourself!



MY PRACTICE PLAN

DIRECTIONS: List your activities and responsibilities for each day of the week. Then on the calendar, fill in the scheduled events. Choose a regular time of day that can be your practice time. Right before or after something you do every day (such as eat dinner) is a great time to practice.

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
7 a.m.							
8 a.m.	<i>School Hours</i>						
9 a.m.							
10 a.m.							
11 a.m.							
12 p.m.							
1 p.m.						LUNCH	LUNCH
2 p.m.							
3 p.m.							
4 p.m.							
5 p.m.							
6 p.m.	DINNER						
7 p.m.							
8 p.m.							
9 p.m.	BED						

ACTIVITIES

Mon.	Tues.	Wed.	Thurs.	Fri.	Sat.	Sun.

Activities are things you do each week, such as homework, soccer practice, private lessons, youth group, chores, etc.