



Strings of Joy Guide for Parents or Guardians

From Susan Davenny Wyner, WPO Musical Director and Conductor

Encourage good practice habits at home. The parents must lead the student.

- Arrange a regular time for practice.
- Find a quiet place to practice, without distractions or interruptions.
- Insist on the use of a music stand when the student practices.
- Insist on the student practicing nearly every day.
- Sign the practice record each week.

Encourage good work habits in other studies.

- Students who do well in instrumental music usually do well in school work.
- Daily practice should fit in with the homework and activity schedule.

Help protect your instrument.

- Provide a safe place to keep the instrument.
- Always keep the instrument in its case when it is not being used.
- Never allow brothers or sisters to “try” to play the instrument.
- Never leave an instrument in a car, especially overnight.
- Some instruments and other materials are extremely fragile, so be sure to understand how to care for each piece of the instrument.
- Avoid extreme temperatures and humidity.

Show an interest in your student’s music and progress.

- Feel free to sit with your student when he/she practices at home.
- Ask your student about the lesson.
- Ask to hear what he/she has been practicing.
- Look often at the book to see how many weeks a particular lesson has been assigned.

Be patient. There is no “instant” success when learning to play a musical instrument.

Never make fun of the sounds that might be heard in the beginning.

Teach your student responsibility.

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P.O. Box 8507, Warren, OH 44484-0507 • 174 N. Park Ave, Suite 10, Warren, OH 44484-0507
330-399-3606 • www.warrenphilharmonic.org • email: warren.philharmonic@gmail.com

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The learning of a musical instrument must be viewed as a partnership among the student, the parent/guardian, and the teacher. All three are crucial for success. Without the full and total support and commitment of the family, failure is more likely to occur.

Get to know the teacher!

A broad aim of the Strings of Joy program is to develop students' musical, social and personal awareness through participating in instrumental music instruction and ensembles, rehearsals and performances.

A commitment to regular home practice and attendance at lessons is essential for progress to be made. As a famous teacher says, "only practice on the days you eat."

Student requirements:

- To attend lessons regularly and on time.
- Bring the appropriate gear to lessons (books, instruments, school diary).
- To practice (only on the days you eat).
- To have a positive attitude.

Missing lessons and absentees:

- Students unable to attend their lesson for ANY reason must notify the teacher in advance, at least 24 hours before the lesson.
- Lessons missed by students without appropriate notice may not necessarily be made up. In the event of the teacher being unavailable to attend (due to illness, public holidays, etc) the lesson will be made up.

What others say about musical instruction:

"I would teach the children music, physics, and philosophy. But the most important is music, for in the patterns of the arts are the key to all learning."

Plato

"Studies have shown that listening to and studying music provides academic benefits for students. By taking music lessons, children have a greater ability to grasp concepts that are also essential to subjects like math and science. Playing a musical instrument helps with coordination and concentration. And when a child masters a song or musical technique, he or she feels a sense of accomplishment and pride that can overflow into the classroom."

Ralph Marino, Jr. Superintendent of Schools, Horseheads NY

Why Study Music?
(Adapted from Dr. Timothy Lautzenhiser)

A Preparation for Life

Why should a young person consider studying music and joining a performance ensemble?

What will this mean in a student's life?

CREATIVITY: Creativity is the source of all possibilities. We are constantly challenged to explore this area of the mind. Music appeals to the part of the mind which opens new horizons. The study of music supports wonderment, imagination, appreciation and sensitivity. Music allows us to experience creativity as an inventive thinking style.

COMMUNICATION: Music is a language unto itself. Music can only be explained by music. If we do not expose the human to music, we are depriving the individual of an array of personal understandings that cannot be found in any other part of life.

CRITICAL ASSESSMENT: Intelligence is the ability to process facts and respond according to the given situation. Emotional stability stems from the capacity to deal with life's many inconsistencies. To accomplish both, the individual must be able to access the cognitive (factual) and affective (emotional) sides of the mind. Music is one of the few academic disciplines which demands this ability and reinforces learning patterns to allow for greater critical assessment.

COMMITMENT: Success is not measured by *what we start*, but rather by *what we complete*. In music, every student will be required to perform the entire composition from beginning to end. Although there may be errors in the performance, it is most unusual to see an individual simply stop and put the instrument away. The important qualities of tenacity and persistence establish habits for positive, productive living.

These attributes can be found in many subject areas; however, MUSIC does not make these optional, but a fundamental necessity from the first note ever played. Participation at the level of excellence is not a personal preference; it is a requirement.

Success breeds success in every avenue of life. Therefore, a successful and well-trained musician does tackle life with knowledge of "what it takes to get there," and the wisdom of "what it brings to life."

Reference: Lautzenhiser, T. (1993). *Director's Communication Kit*. p.44.