

## **Simply Music: A Wise Choice**

You have chosen a remarkable music program. As you prepare for the new school year, establishing daily routines and developing discipline and time management skills can be as valuable as the academic achievements. Here are some tips to kick start your Simply Music school year.

Choose your words wisely:

PLAY! Play sounds so much more inviting than "practice", so capitalize on our language's verb choice; rather than *work* the piano--we **play** the piano (it's fun!) What a subtle difference a word choice makes in the delivery and receipt of a request. Watch as your tone lightens, your player's response will soften--from heavy to light, perhaps even po-lite.

Use your time wisely:

We all know we are sharper and fresher early in the day. At the same time, we all experience the mad rush in the morning, all minutes consumed as we make our way out the door. If it's not part of the routine, like brushing, washing, bed making and breakfast eating, it's not going to happen. This is the week to initiate and establish the pattern for the school year. Set your standards now and reap the benefits going forward. Even if it's just 10-15 minutes in the morning, that takes pressure off squeezing in your full play before the end of the day.

Choose your battles wisely:

My daughter never has two feet on the floor when playing. I look at how I sit at my desk and wonder why! I'm the same way. Is she playing? yes, is she performing? No. Shall I engage in battle? No. Her fingers are in the right place. As she starts warming up I might ask her to introduce what she's playing to the audience (me) and guess what, her feet somehow find their way to the floor without my even firing a shot.

## **The Playing Field & The Coach**

Setting up a conducive and motivating environment

When I was eleven, my piano play space was in the basement. It seemed a bit dungeon like, but it had absolutely no distractions, so in that regard it was perfect. I didn't turn out to be much of a performer, perhaps because I had no audience, or maybe it was the lack of supervision. Hard to say. Our piano now is located in the family room adjacent to the kitchen--the hub of all activity. For years I was

available to answer any of Grace's questions. Recently, I've started to make myself scarce when the music starts, thus reducing rescue requests and decreasing my distracting commentary. Naturally, many factors play into finding the physical environment that best suits your child's learning and your style of coaching. Be flexible and willing to experiment-- it will shift and change over time.

### **On your mark, get set!**

For some children, knowing where to begin, or where to pick up from the last play time can be the biggest hurdle. Of course an assignment notes book, easy to find and flip open to is a good start. Once home from the lesson, park that notes book in the same spot every time (near your music). Use clips to hold the pages open to the current lesson. To really get set for a good run of playing, paperclip the pages in each project book that will be used during the week's lesson. Stack them up open faced and ready to go. Put the DVD in the player (or laptop if available) so it's cued and ready for play.

### **Race Pace**

As you listen to your pianist ripping through music at record speed, consider these pace-setting possibilities: Sing, voice the clues, slap, tap, listen to or play with the Simply Music CD. Make your own recording. Exaggerate slow motion playing. Go slower and slower each time; again and again and again...

"The more slowly things are learnt the more rapidly they are acquired".

Neil Moore

We know you have tips that are working and worth sharing. We'd love to hear them.

C.C. Kelly ~ Parent editor  
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