

3 WAYS TO ENCOURAGE YOUR CHILD TO PRACTICE WITHOUT TEARS AND TANTRUMS



Learning to play a new instrument is a fun and beneficial experience for kids!

BUT... Having them practice at home can be ROUGH.

It doesn't have to be! Here are 3 strategies parents can use to get their child to practice at home without it feeling like a chore...

1 MAKE A PRACTICE NEST!



When choosing a place in your home for your piano or instrument, select a space that is well-lit, lived in and inviting. It should be in the heart of the home. Avoid bedrooms, basements or other isolated areas of the house. Feeling shut away from family will inevitably create a reluctance to spend time on the piano.

Make the space warm and welcoming with good lighting and heat. Add some comfortable chairs or fun cushions for family members to curl up on when they drop in to listen to piano practice. Put up some inspiring art or their certificates of achievement and to remind them of their goals and accomplishments. Add a small surprise now and then like a treat or encouraging note!



Keep it organized. Have your child help you put together a small basket of everything they might need for practice: pencils, highlighters, dice or pennies for games. Clear out old music they no longer use and any knickknacks or clutter that could be distracting.

2 DIVIDE UP PRACTICE TIME



A child's attention span can be calculated based on their age.

For example, a 6 year old can focus on one thing for about 6 minutes while a 16 year old can go for 16+ minutes! Add in having to focus on learning something new, and you might want to give your child some breaks.

Set a timer and break up those practice sessions! Instead of asking them to spend 30 minutes practicing, have them spend 5-10 minutes working on one song or line of music at a time. Choose a time of day that they are most fresh and relaxed.

Give them a little time to focus on practicing hard parts of music, then follow it up with a few minutes of free play!

Practicing those hard parts is needed in order to learn and grow, but having fun and keeping the joy alive is equally important. Give them time for both!



3 MAKE IT A GAME!



Who doesn't love games?!

Here is a game that I had my son play when he was reluctant to practice called the "3 Jellybean Practice."

Put three jellybeans on the left side of your music. When you encounter a tricky measure, you play it once, and if you get it right, you move the jellybean to the right side of the music. If you play it again and get it right, you put the next jellybean on the right side of the stand. If you play it again and miss a note or rhythm, then all three jellybeans get put to the left. You must play the measure correctly three times in a row in order to keep the jellybeans. The next step is to connect the tricky measure to the measure before it and continue playing.



You could team up with your child and have them help you create a practicing game! Or have them teach you the piece (even if you already know how to play it). I also challenged him to play his piece with different tempos or dynamics to "trick" him into a little extra practice. Above all, make it fun and encouraging.