

## 7 Easy Things Parents Can Do Right Now to Extend Their Child's Musical Life



Many parents find small ways to help their children with school homework each day. They also may know the basics of how to help their children with things like swinging a baseball bat, throwing a football or swimming. But when it comes time to playing a musical instrument, many students quit too early because their parents have no idea how to help even the slightest bit. Whether your

child has just come home with their instrument for the first time or they have been playing for a while, there are a few things you can do *right now* in order to ensure your child continues their successful study of music for years to come.

Here are seven things you can do today to help your child continue to succeed in music:

- 1. Dedicate 10 minutes for practice time daily.** Calm the house down and make the home quiet for 10 minutes, or at least dedicate a “practice zone” somewhere in your house. You would want it quiet and calm for homework — this is no different. Keeping a set time every day helps solidify a routine, and [treating music as a core subject](#) is key. Value what your child is doing for those 10 minutes each day.
- 2. Listen to something beautiful with them.** Find some music that includes the instrument that your child plays and listen to it with them while you make dinner or in the car. Pandora, Spotify, and YouTube are great ways to listen to some of the masters play. If your kids play baseball, you play catch with them. If they play a musical instrument, you listen to music with them. Who knows, you just may like it!
- 3. Check their posture.** Poor posture will lead to bad playing, which will most likely lead to quitting (and a few muscle aches). It only takes a few minutes to learn what good posture is for playing an instrument and help your child solidify it as part of their routine. A quick glance once in a while during your child's practice is all it takes. Consider placing a large mirror in their practice space so they can check their posture consistently.

4. **Learn how to put together and maintain their instrument.** It only takes five minutes. Go to the [Music Parents' Guide YouTube Channel](#) (coming soon) or another instructional video on the internet and learn how to do this. It's easier than most other things you need to learn how to do, and it may save your child's musical life.
5. **Buy a Play-a-Long CD.** Find a recording of a piece your child is playing so they can play along with it. It's a lot more fun that way! There are also [jazz improvisation CD](#) accompaniments to have fun with, and [SmartMusic software](#) that has a ton of accompaniment tracks for your child to perform with. A less affordable option is to find free sheet music and accompaniments online.
6. **Know when your child needs a break.** Studies have shown that sometimes a break is just what you need to wake up your brain. If you see your child getting frustrated or bored, insisting that they "fight through it" isn't always the best strategy. Allow them to take a break and do something fun for a few minutes then go back to practicing. The break is also a good time to listen to some music (see #1).
7. **Be there.** Be present, if you can. Sit and watch your child make music and support them. If you can't physically be there, ask them how they are doing with their music from time to time; ask them what they like to listen to and what they like about music class. *Be there.*

A successful musical life is developed one day at a time with small successes. Parents are extremely busy, but not too busy to pay attention to the items above. You may not know all the details necessary to help your child with every aspect of their daily practice, but treating their practice as a crucial part of their growth will ensure that they grow up to be amazing human beings.