

WHY DOES MY CHILD TAKE PIANO and HOW CAN THEY SUCCEED?

Developed by Dr. Jeanine Skinner, Director, Music Academy South

- ✓ We play the piano because we like the way it feels, how it sounds, how it makes us feel.
- ✓ In addition, self-esteem, talent shows, our artistic nature, our need to be expressive...all lead us finding that being a pianist is part of our identity.

The Value of Seeking Excellence

- ✓ Equate the practicing process like a sports league that you are in.
- ✓ Standards of Excellence: OLYMPICS. SUPER BOWL. *Tour de France*.
- ✓ We take the characteristics of how to become "a winner" and bring them to the grassroots level of playing and preparation so that all students have a chance at the greatest level of success.

I. Practice Habits for Success

1. Regular and consistently scheduled time
2. Practice vs. playing
 - a. If you fail to plan, you plan to fail
 - i. Organize time with consideration of what you have to cover (strategy)
 - ii. Play through or problem solve? Is it time to perform or time to study? Test driving a car can only come when all the components have been put into place and the engine is running CLEANLY.
 - iii. Practice Approaches that all students need to use
 1. slow practicing
 2. repetition
 3. use of a metronome
 4. practice boxes
 5. work backwards (divide the work into sections and take the last section first and then the next to last...etc.
 6. link problem areas to the lead in material and then the leading out material.
 - b. Development of musicianship skills
 - i. Life skills that will stay with you for the rest of your life
 1. How to count
 2. How to read
 3. How interpret what is on the page artistically
 4. Knowing terminology
 5. Ear training
 6. Computer Assisted Drills are invaluable as support

II. Parental support: What can you do?

1. Allow time in the day/week. If the child is too scheduled or too tired, they will not practice well.
2. How much time? A minimum of time to practice each day is the length of your lesson.
3. Does your child want to excel or get by? Do they want to just pacify the family?
4. What to be listening for:
 - a. More than just a run through.
 - b. Fixing challenging passages in slower tempos.
 - c. Sectional practice....parts of the piece.
 - d. Repetitive practice of one area for improvement.
 - e. More than one dynamic! Is there energy? Does it sing? Does it draw you in to sit and listen?
 - f. Sometimes, just silence.
5. What you don't want to hear:
 - a. Racing through music every time/day. Play one time and jump off the bench (not good)
 - b. Drowning in pedal
 - c. Pounding of the keys
 - d. Crying or kicking the piano!

III. A Musicians Tool Belt will include:

1. Music Dictionary
2. Metronome
3. Good lighting and seating
4. Storage for music
5. Pencil on the piano always

Parents need to help the piano student have a quiet and undisturbed practice time.