



Practice: What can parents do to help?

Take note of these four ways that you can help your student be more successful regardless of your musical background or experience.

1) **Consistency and repetition is the key to excellence!** It is very important for students to be present at every band practice on each day that they attend school. Playing music in a group makes the music making process (and the problem-solving process, too!) much more engaging and fun. The team and community building that students do in music is one of the greatest accomplishments of the year!

Also please keep in mind that ideally students should aim to practice at least 5 days each week (one or two days of long practices sessions are **not** an effective substitute to a consistent spread of practice days). Shorter periods of daily practice are much more beneficial than one lengthy session of weekly practice. As instrumental skills are physical, it is the consistency of building good muscle memory and strength that leads to great results!

2) **Positive attitude:** As adults, it can be challenging to be interested in something that might not be in our experience. However, positive reinforce for young people, especially music students, is vital in encouraging improvement. The more excitement and interest that you show, even if it is a simple comment (consider "All of the in that last one were correct!" or "You didn't stop that time. Good!"), the more likely it is that your students will enjoy it, continue playing, and seek your approval for affirmation and further encouragement. After all, a student playing an instrument is a very special skill and source of pride and joy among many parents. Additionally, always remember that it will not always sound pretty for those first few years! If it did, they would be playing professionally already.

3) **Child as teacher:** One of the best ways to learn is to teach. Teaching others things that were just learned allows for students to reinforce concepts for themselves. You can help your son or daughter by being the "student" from time to time! The simplest way to do this is to ask them questions about how their band lessons were and what they learned. If you can afford further time to have them teach you more specific musical concepts and techniques, that's even better!

Be sure to ask questions if their instruction seems to be missing parts to a sequence or if it simply does not make sense to you. Ask for examples or for a demonstration. Be sure to keep a positive attitude, show patience, be encouraging, express excitement, and praise your child for a job well done as a teacher!

4) ***Consider a private teacher:*** As a student, I had the good fortune to have band during the school day. I was also very fortunate to have private lessons from 6th grade through high school, then in college as part of my music studies. Private lessons are crucial for long-term success. A student learns an immense amount from our band classes at Redwood, but many of these skills can be refined, polished, clarified, and modeled even greater with the assistance of a private teacher.

The private instructor has the wonderful advantage of working one-on-one with a student and the growth of the student's technique and understanding of music will increase exponentially. Lessons also keep students accountable on their instruments on further music material and on very specific challenges of their practice.

If you are interested in researching this possibility, please have your student see me for a list of local private teachers, or download a copy from the General Documents section of our website. If it is at all financially possible, we highly recommend providing this invaluable support for your young musician.