

## *How to Help your Child Practice*

Many times teachers are asked by parents how they can help their child practice the piano at home. Even if you have no music background and do not know what “Middle C” is you can still help!

- 1) Show an interest in your child’s piano lessons. Many times students quit lessons because they “lose interest” - the majority of the time they quit because the parents never took an interest in their piano lessons. Try to set a regular daily practice time and sit next to or in the same room as your child when they play. You will be amazed at how much they will start to actually *enjoy* practicing!
- 2) If your child started lessons in September, chances are if you help them with their daily practicing and theory you will be able to learn along with them. Most beginner method books move at a slow pace, enabling the parent to follow along. Find some spare time and sit down with the book to become familiar with how it is set up. Most books show where the hands should be placed on the piano to play each piece. Teachers at **Whitby School of Music** will also assist you if you have questions. Some parents even take it to the next level by enrolling themselves in lessons so they can help their child at home with practicing but also enjoy the wonderful world of music themselves!
- 3) If your child has taken lessons for a while the pieces they are playing may be hard for you to understand. If you want to know if what they are playing is “correct” just listen! If it sounds wrong, chances are they are playing wrong notes or wrong rhythm.
- 4) As a student progresses the pieces naturally become harder and your child may become discouraged at times. Teachers at **Whitby School of Music** try to avoid this as much as possible by assigning small portions of a piece, allowing the child to practice at home with minimal problems. If your child becomes upset that the piece is “too hard” try not to give into their anger/frustration. Explain to them that sometimes it takes a while to learn one piece and they just need to be patient. You can also help them by suggesting they practice just the right hand or just the left hand, or by clapping the rhythm while counting out-loud. This is part of the normal process to learning new music.
- 5) Unless your child has *just* started lessons they have been assigned scales and sometimes triads. Students often “forget” to practice these. Please be sure they practice scales and chords daily for they are important warm-up exercises for pianists. Just like you would not play football or soccer without stretching and warming up, you should not play the piano without playing scales first! Scales and chords also form the basis for music. A secure knowledge of scales and chords will assist them in learning new pieces.
- 6) Keep your expectations reasonable. If your child is five years old they will most likely progress at a slower pace than a ten year-old beginner due to their learning capability. Be patient and encourage your child to enjoy what they are playing. Remember that with daily and regular practice they will continue to improve and therefore progress.