

HOW PARENTS CAN HELP

Students cannot make progress on an instrument if they do not play their instruments at home between lessons. During the first year, all that is required is a minimum of 15 minutes per day, every day. Regular playing in short amounts achieves better results than one or two sessions per week. If students do not play regularly, they tend to get behind the others in the group and often lose interest in the instrument altogether. **As parents, you have invested in your child's musical future with instruments and music fees, so please encourage your child to play at home.**

This is an excerpt from an article in a recent issue of 'Parent & Teacher' magazine (Feb.1999).

Research has found that active parental involvement in the first three months after a child begins music lessons is crucial to the child's success in learning to play a musical instrument. The research shows this has a profound impact on long-term participation and persistence by the child.

"We are finding that children whose parents are involved and supportive early on are at least twice as likely to continue learning over the long term as children whose parents are not." Said Dr. Gary McPherson, a senior lecturer [in music education].

But Dr. McPherson is quick to emphasise that the involvement should be supportive and encouraging, not pushy. Parents need to create a "caring and supportive environment" - being interested and occasionally listening to the child practise, discussing his or her progress, requesting favourite pieces to be played and generally making the child feel that he or she is in some way 'special' as new skills are acquired.



GOOD EQUIPMENT

Parents can also help by making sure that students have the equipment that will help them to enjoy their music making. **PLEASE DO NOT** buy an instrument for your child without discussing it first with us. There are many poor quality instruments around that will hinder a student's progress.

Also, students need a music stand, adequate reeds (if applicable) and the correct cleaning equipment for their instruments. As students improve, they will need a tuner and a metronome in order to improve.