

Towards a stress free practice!

List all the demands placed upon you and your child.
i.e. school, music, other activities, friends, down-time, etc.

Prioritize what is most important in your child's life.
Slimline activities with his / her consent.

Draw up a timetable of these activities.

Choose times for practice, which take into account :

- a) the age, ability, level of your child
- b) your child's personality
- c) your schedule, your child's schedule
- d) the amount of recommended practice time

Remember, what works for one child may not work for another.

Practicing :

Example – 1 hour 40 minutes daily practice for age 9 – 10.

Syllabus – scales, studies, pieces, orchestra, theory.

Always begin with scales to warm up.

Morning : Divide the session into 20 – 30 minute slots. : 20 minutes = scales, 20 minutes = study, 20 minutes = pieces, etc.

e.g. Mazas study or piece.

Work theory into the practice session. E.g. What key is this ? How many sharps / flats ? What are they ?

What's the related minor / major ?

What's the time signature ? Clap the rhythm.

Performance directions – what does it mean ? Give me another word for Largo ?, etc.

Dynamics – How does the piece start ? When do the dynamics change ?

Form – Is it a waltz, reel, gavotte, etc. ?

Era – What do you know about the composer ?

What are we focusing on in this piece this week ? Is it the sound, dynamics, left hand, right hand, the parts of the bow to be used, change of position.

Take a section of the piece, perhaps a quarter of it per day.

Start with a different section each day.

Pick out the really hard bits and practice them SLOWLY over and over.

If you can play the piano, then play the piece for your child. If the child can play, get her to do so.

Buy the music and listen to it while looking at the score.

Approach each piece in a similar fashion.

It is hard work – Yes.

Ask yourself what you want out of this for your child ?

Most importantly, what does your child want out of it ?

It is a big investment of time, money and human resources now.

If your child continues, then it will become even more demanding.

Take heart and hang in there. The rewards for your child will come and his / her musical ability will flourish.