

Instrument Care: Helpful Tips

I would strongly recommend that instruments not be experimented with until the first lesson unless the music store gives you some instruction. Instruments are fragile and can easily be damaged if not handled properly. Please resist temptation and wait for your first lesson. Beginners do not use the bow for several weeks. The early songs are played using "pizzicato" (plucking the instrument).

Keep your instrument in a safe place at home- away from younger siblings and family pets. It should be kept in the case when not in use. Never treat your instrument like a toy and always use care when handling it. (We will review proper care of instruments and bows at the first few lessons.)

Success on any instrument depends on PRACTICE. Beginners will start slowly in the first few weeks practicing basic skills, working up to 10 minutes per day. They should aim for 70 minutes per week during the second month. Remember that it takes time to learn proper hand position and how to produce the different notes using a good tone. Please listen to your child's practice and praise your child as you hear him/her progress. You will soon recognize songs like "Mary Had a Little Lamb." Ask your child to play "Family Home Concerts." This will help to motivate your child to want to practice when the newness wears off and practice may start to slack off. More advanced students should practice 20-30 minutes per day or at least 100 minutes per week. All students will receive a Weekly Practice Chart to maintain. A parent's signature (initials) is required each week. This helps the student monitor his/her progress as well as the teacher and the parent. Be sure to communicate with your child about his/her progress each week.

The classroom teacher will review the lesson schedule with the class and tell students the best location to keep the instruments on "lesson day" to save space in the classroom. **Please remember to take instruments home at the end of the day every week!** (You will need it to practice and it is safest when it is home with you.)

Strings performances and special events will be noted in the school newsletter. Students will also receive letters about concerts, rehearsals and special events, as well as information about Area Honors Orchestra. This group is open to students who have played at least

one year and starts in mid November. Continuing Strings students will receive audition information at their weekly lessons around mid-October.

Any question? Send e-mail to Ms. McMahan at

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