



Problems with Practicing?

(how to overcome some common practicing problems)

Is your child's time overscheduled?

Comment: It doesn't take an expert to see that this student's time is overscheduled. She will have a taste of a wide variety of activities, but she probably won't experience the benefits and rewards of any particular undertaking, simply because she hasn't the time to make significant progress in any one area.

Once her teacher asked what she would like to do if she had a whole afternoon with nothing scheduled. "I guess - just sleep!" replied the exhausted youngster. Her parents must help her set priorities and limit her extracurricular activities to those she can handle. And hopefully, she will give a high priority to music lessons, as they will help her develop the emotional resources to cope with her busy lifestyle.

Does your child feel isolated during music practice?

Comment: A sympathetic adult will see that both Mother and student have some problems to solve. Mother is busy - probably she'll try to do a few chores while baby is sleeping and Trina is out of the way practicing her music. But from Trina's point of view, she's had a long school day, she wants a snack and a chance to be close to Mother. Now here she's banished to the basement while mother tends to her other responsibilities. It's understandable that Trina doesn't feel in the mood to practice. There are several ways that this picture could change. While baby is sleeping, Mother could perhaps plan some activities (like some ironing, or bring potatoes to the basement to be peeled) which she could do while sitting near Trina. She could listen while Trina plays, making this a half hour of happy sharing, also encouraging Trina and letting her know that she and her playing are important. Or, she could try to place the piano where Trina would not feel isolated during the practice time. Trina would be eager for Mother's attention and would associate the pleasure of her mother's presence and encouragement with the task of practicing. This could easily make all the difference.

One of the leading causes mentioned in research for a child's resistance to his session at the piano is that he feels isolated and lonely when practicing. His parents are preoccupied, his brother is watching TV, his friends are outside playing, etc. Few children would choose a lonely occupation (it needn't be one!) if they had a choice of social activity instead. Spend time with the child in the early stages of his learning. Later on, the music itself will become a delightful companion to him, enriching his life immeasurably.

Our system works!

