



What to expect when your child begins studying a stringed instrument:

Be patient. At the very beginning, do not expect your child to come home and play a tune right away. It may take months of careful attention to posture and form before you hear anything really recognizable. This is difficult for parents, especially if they can't observe the lessons. If the child is not able to remember everything covered in the lessons, ask the teacher to make a list, or set up a conference.

Practice WITH your child. Do not expect your child to practice on his or her own. It is your job as a parent to set a practice time and help the child do everything covered in the lessons. A child may sincerely love playing the violin, but still fight bitterly against practicing. The best thing is to set up a regular practice schedule, every day. It is much more beneficial to practice every day, even for just 10 minutes, than to skip days and try to force a longer practice.

Be positive. Children are very sensitive to criticism. Although they will make mistakes that need correction, acknowledge every little thing they are doing right with genuine praise. For example: "Great, you are standing tall!" "I like how your right thumb is bent!" "You are really concentrating!"

Be patient. Usually after a first piano lesson a child can come home and play a piece, but this is not so with strings. While the beginning of strings lessons might seem slow going, usually after a while everything will start to "click" and your child will be making music. This might take a few days, a few weeks, or a few years.

~Dr. Valerie Arsenault