

SUMMER PRACTICE IDEAS

focus on 1 posture point all summer
practice tour - play a piece in every room of the house
Get together with another Suzuki family. Have the kids play together, even if it is Twinkle, and then have a BBQ or snack.
Pair up with an older musician who can be a practice buddy to your younger child.
Try to hire a musician as your summer babysitter.

Play a Skype concert for a different relative each week.

Monopoly

Create a monopoly board (Bristol board and markers) with practice jobs on each square. Build up points and rewards. Be creative by including silly things on your board as well. Instead of "Going to Jail," your child might have to make a bow hold while lying on the floor, standing on one leg, walking around the garden, etc. For the "Chance" cards, have them answer musicianship questions relating to what they have learned during the past year, such as find an "a" on your instrument, name the notes of one line of your study, say the notes of the G Scale backwards with your eyes closed. Humor is a wonderful tool. Use it whenever possible!

Bingo

Using your child's name, create a bingo game (Bristol board, markers, small envelopes and old business cards.) Your child's name spelled across the top of the board will create the columns. Now make as many as you want columns going down the board. Mark off your boxes and put a number in each one. Paste an envelope onto each box. Write an activity onto a business card and put one into each envelope. Your child picks a column (letter across the top and box number, B 3), opens the envelop, does what it says and places a marker on that square. When all the squares in a row are done, your child gets to... whatever you decide. This game will take an evening of your time to create, but can be used for years. You just have to update the jobs on the business cards as they develop new skills.

Summer Story

If you will be practicing at a cottage, Grandmas', or another new place, have your child create a story that incorporates the names of his/her review pieces. Much of the beginning repertoire can be used in stories about camping, relatives, journeys, etc. (Lightly Row, Aunt Rhody, Song of the Wind, etc.) You can read the story at practice time and your child plays each piece as it comes up.

Frequent Practice Cards (from Carol Deaville's studio)

Based on the "Frequent Flyer" model, I give out 3X5 cards, numbered 1 - 50 (or whatever number you choose - it depends upon what is considered the official "start" of

summer practice between teacher and student). For each day of practice/playing, place a sticker or stamp over the number and continue this throughout the summer. At summer's end, the child chooses a prize from a "treasure chest" if the agreed upon number of days played is reached.

Another idea is to "grow a garden." Either drawn on paper, or built from pieces of construction paper glued onto a larger piece of paper, add a stem, leaf, or petal of a flower for each day of practice. By summer's end, you have a beautiful garden with each part of the flower representing a day's worth of playing.

OLDER STUDENTS

Regular practice, review, and listening are still a must for this group, but musical friends play a more important part. Creating opportunities for kids to get together can really boost enthusiasm and motivation for practice.

Attend a summer camp or institute.

Find a practice buddy and get together regularly. Play duets.

Practice new repertoire and put on a concert for friends, relatives or neighbors. Make a CD of your concert for Grandma for her birthday.

Try a new style of music for fun – fiddle, movie tunes, jazz, etc.

Set a repertoire goal for your child this Summer

Listen to music yourself to remind you of your hopes and dreams for your child.(Music Festivals all Summer in Ottawa)

Read about motivation- "Helping Parents Practice" by Edmund Sprunger

Make a master plan - Sit down with your child and your family calendar. Block off times when you can't practice (holidays, visitors, etc) and then create a schedule for when you will. Doing this together takes the pressure off you when your child asks to skip practice one day. You can just remind him/her that you must stick to the schedule.

Even though your child will protest, this will not damage their attitude towards music. It sends the message that you value this discipline and your time together.

You might have to:

Practice under a tree while watching your other child on the soccer field. Practice before leaving for the day

Go to your child's camp/school during lunch

Hire a teenager to watch the little one while you work with your musician child Organize CD's and music books to be where you are - car, home, cottage, Grandma's, etc.

SILLY REVIEW CARDS

Using old business cards, create 2 piles. One pile contains the name of 1 review piece per card. The other pile contains 1 silly way to review:

standing on 1 foot
eyes closed
softly
as loudly as possible
in the bathroom
laying on the floor marching while playing

Your silly cards can also highlight musical concepts:

Allegro Presto Largo Pastoral

Or moods:

sadly happily angry smoothly

RESOURCES:

www.suzukimusic.ca
www.thepracticeshoppe.com
www.susanparadis.com
www.meredithstrings.com
www.thesoundpost.com - check out their supply of resource books and music.

Book by Ed Sprunger - Helping Parents Practice - a practical guide to practicing with your child

Ottawa Summer Music Festivals: www.ottawafestivals.ca