

## Sunshine Ones and Practising

While some young children love practising, for others it can be frustrating, even if they enjoy class. The following are some suggestions provided by other teachers that have worked for their students. As always, the most important thing is to find what works for your unique child, and stick with it.

- 1) If at all possible, choose a time of day when your Sunshine is not over-tired or hungry.
- 2) Shorter and more frequent is better! As music student myself, I know that I learn more when I practise in shorter, more frequent sessions.
- 3) Practising is not just the keyboard pages of the book and the critter chants. At this age in particular, practising should include singing, playing the rhythm ensembles with their castanet, clapping the rhythm of their songs or reading with their Hop or Turtle puppets, talking about High and Low sounds (parents can play high sounds and low sounds on the keyboard), writing out rhythm stories (parents clap and sing), finding notes on their tinsheet/back of book, and their homefun (H) pages.
- 4) At this point in the year, teachers are generally satisfied with 2-3 days of keyboard practise. Practising of other activities can make up the other 2-3 days of practising (and counts for their coloured in days on the homework page).
- 5) Practising the K pages does not always have to be on your keyboard/piano. Try reading having the students read the K pages on their tinsheet or back of book.

- 6) With reluctant keyboard practisers, switching places and having the parent playing and Sunshine pointing can also sometimes work.
- 7) Another option is as follows: Parents put their hands on the keys and Sunshines put their hands on top. Parents' fingers are played by the Sunshines pushing down on their fingers.
- 8) With Sunshines, talk less, do more. Big explanations are generally not very helpful at this age!
- 9) As much as possible, give children some choice in when they are going to practise and what. Asking "Do you want to practise?" is generally met with a response of 'No', even if the child enjoys practising! Instead, ask "Would you like to practise before or after dinner/this show/snack?" This gives the children some choice, and many will happily practise at the time they have decided.
- 10) If your child is having difficulties finding the correct key, it is more helpful to demonstrate where they are with your hand then taking your child's hand and positioning it for them. Patience is important, so give them time to discover it for themselves.
- 11) Perfection is not required. Each child learns at their own pace-and they ARE learning! I have seen improvement in each of my students in all areas of the program.

12) If you sense frustration or confusion, take things a little slower, switch activities or stop for the day. Sunshines, especially at this time of the year, do not require long practise sessions. 5-10 minutes a day 5 days a week is usually plenty!

13) Enjoy your time together!