



STAY TUNED 🎵 🎵 🎵

How to Be the Best Life Coach for Your Kids

Every parent wants their kid to be successful. I know; I'm a parent. And as a parent, there are things that you can do to ensure that your child is successful in their piano learning. Their teacher serves as a methods coach - they learn "a way of learning" through the Simply Music® method. But their time as an instructor is limited in the short 30-45 minute lessons each week.

Most schools that have a high parent participation have more successful students. That's where you come in as a parent and serve as their life coach in every aspect of their lives. What does it mean to be the best life coach that you can be, particularly in piano? Of course, first and foremost, is to hold your kids accountable to making sure they practice at least five times a week. Here are some ideas that I encourage parents to do:

- ♪ Determine a specific time of day that they are going to practice (for example, right after their snack with they get home from school). Let's face it. What we want to do is establish a habit of practicing piano without too much goading. I liken it to brushing your teeth. On a daily basis without being told, we automatically know when to brush our teeth (at least I would hope so). If they know that their piano time is at 4:00, they have that expectation and it is less of a struggle for you as a life coach when that battle time comes.
- ♪ Be engaged in their musical experience. Sit with them and listen to their music. Kids love it when they are being listened to. Help them check off their playlists. Some parents manage their kids' playlist daily by initialing it. Be involved in their lesson time. Hold to the 24 hour rule and help them to watch and listen to their DVD/CD within 24 hours of the last lesson. Use words of encouragement to support them emotionally in their piano journey. And an occasional reward for their consistent hard work can be a good thing.
- ♪ Expose them to music consistently. We have so many opportunities to expose our children to good music. Radios, concerts, performances, cable and television shows. I always tell my students, "Great musicians are great listeners." The more they learn and listen to music, the more likely that music will be a part of their world for the rest of their lives.

I have three children ages 17, 15, 13. All grew up with Simply Music® lessons and all three are still playing the piano. I am confident that whatever they do, music will be a part of it.

Bernadette Ashby ~ advanced Simply Music® teacher for 13 years, San Jose, CA

From Moonlight

Beethoven, perhaps the greatest of the classical composers, wrote Ode to Joy towards the end of his career. He was deaf and ill and had suffered much in his lifetime. Yet he was able to compose this magnificent piece by hearing it in his head. He never heard it played. It is said that at its premiere performance, Beethoven was conducting and it wasn't until he turned to the audience at the end and saw them standing and applauding and yelling out praise and emotion, that he knew that this wonderful Ode to Joy was felt by all who heard it as he had felt it in his head when he heard it. Truly one of the most uplifting and magnificent pieces of music ever written.



*Composer's Corner ~ Ludwig Van Beethoven
Ode to Joy*

Simply Music®: A Wise Choice

You have chosen a remarkable music program. As you prepare for the new school year, establishing daily routines and developing discipline and time management skills can be as valuable as the academic achievements. Here are some tips to kick start your Simply Music® school year:

♪ Choose your words wisely

PLAY! Play sounds are much more inviting than "practice", so capitalize on our language's verb choice; rather than *work* the piano--we *play* the piano (its FUN!) What a subtle difference a word choice makes in the delivery and receipt of a request. Watch as your tone lightens, your player's response will soften--from heavy to light, perhaps even po-lite.

♪ Use your time wisely

We all know we are sharper and fresher early in the day. At the same time, we all experience the mad rush in the morning, all minutes consumed as we make our way out the door. If it's not part of the routine, like brushing, washing, bed making and breakfast eating, it's not going to happen. This is the week to initiate and establish the pattern for the school year. Set your standards now and reap the benefits going forward. Even if it's just 10-15 minutes in the morning that takes pressure off squeezing in your full play before the end of the day.

♪ Choose your battles wisely

My daughter never has two feet on the floor when playing. I look at how I sit at my desk and wonder why! I'm the same way. Is she playing? Yes, is she performing? No. Shall I engage in battle? No. Her fingers are in the right place. As she starts warming up I might ask her to introduce what she's playing to the audience (me) and guess what, her feet somehow find their way to the floor without my even firing a shot.

The Playing Field & the Coach~ Setting up a Conducive and Motivating Environment

When I was eleven, my piano play space was in the basement. It seemed a bit dungeon like, but it had absolutely no distractions, so in that regard it was perfect. I didn't turn out to be much of a performer, perhaps because I had no audience, or maybe it was the lack of supervision. Hard to say.

Our piano now is located in the family room adjacent to the kitchen--the hub of all activity. For years I was available to answer any of Grace's questions. Recently, I've started to make myself scarce when the music starts, thus reducing rescue requests and decreasing my distracting commentary.

Naturally, many factors play into finding the physical environment that best suits your child's learning and your style of coaching. Be flexible and willing to experiment-- it will shift and change over time.

On Your Mark, Get Set!

For some children, knowing where to begin, or where to pick up from the last play time can be the biggest hurdle. Of course the notes book, easy to find and flip open to is a good start. Once home from the lesson, park that notes book in the same spot every time (near your music). Use clips to hold the pages open to the current lesson. To really get set for a good run of playing, paperclip the pages in each project book that will be used during the week's lesson. Stack them up open faced and ready to go. Put the DVD in the player (or laptop if available) so it's cued and ready for play.

Race Pace

As you listen to your pianist ripping through music at record speed, consider these pace-setting possibilities: Sing, voice the clues, slap, tap, listen to or play with the Simply Music® CD. Make your own recording. Exaggerate slow motion playing. Go slower and slower each time; again and again and again...

"The more slowly things are learnt the more rapidly they are acquired". ~ Neil Moore

We know you have tips that are working and worth sharing. We'd love to hear them.

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