

## **The Group Class Lesson ...**

*Group class learning is another valuable component of your child's music education. The many benefits of group class include: reviewing posture points and reinforcing learned techniques, strengthening ensemble skills, developing musicianship, learning how to cooperate with others, introduction to future repertoire, introduction to new techniques, enjoying the company of new friends, and being motivated by the musical environment.*

Here are some suggestions on how to help your child at group class:

- Attend group lesson regularly with your child to maintain enthusiasm. Appreciative audiences are very necessary, players want to bring joy and happiness to listeners!
- Take care of young children's snack and bathroom needs before the lesson. Please check that your child's fingernails are trimmed. Remove chewing gum.
- Arrive a few minutes early for tuning.
- Take care of any practical instrument needs before sending your child into the group (rosining the bow, putting on the shoulder pad, etc.)
- Younger siblings are welcome to come to listen and learn, but learning of the children in the group must not be disrupted. Bring quiet activities for siblings: coloring books, storybooks, snacks etc. Sit near an exit and out of the group direct line of vision.
- Keep in mind that your group class teacher and/or location may change during the course of the term.
- There will be students of different levels and ages in the group – your child will have opportunities to review and preview pieces and skills. If your child has not learned a piece, they will have the opportunity to sit and observe. Observation is an important part of learning and also teaches children how to be good audience members.
- At times you may want to write down some helpful home practice ideas. It is helpful to bring a small notebook and a pencil.
- Be understanding if your beginner wishes to watch rather than participate. Trying to convince your reluctant child to join the group is distracting for the other child and is

probably a battle you will lose anyway. Your child will learn from watching and soon will be ready to join the group actively.

- Watch and listen to the teacher and your child is likely to watch and listen to the teacher. Your child is learning concert manners from your group lesson behavior. Your interest, enthusiasm, and enjoyment are contagious!
- Visit with others after the lesson. Encourage deeper friendships by inviting fellow group members to do something social with you.
- Do not give your child hints and reminders during the group lesson. Your child's attention needs to be on the teacher, and you are showing respect for the teacher when you let the teacher do his/her job.
- If the teacher invites parents to participate please respond completely! Your enthusiasm will be contagious! Don't worry about how well you can sing clap. etc. The quality of you singing, voice etc. isn't important. What IS important is that you set a good example for your child by trying your best.
- Your child will be learning ensemble skills: how to start, stay, and stop with others. Your child will learn how to follow a leader and how to be a leader. If you feel that your child made a lot of mistakes in the group lesson, silently resolve to practice more thoroughly with the child at home. You may not be able to work on ensemble skills at home, but you can help your child feel secure with the mechanics of the pieces.
- Show interest in the other children in the lesson, but do not compare them directly to your child. A competitive child is happy when he wins. A cooperative child is happy when he does his very best.
- Praise what your child accomplished at the group lesson. Enjoy every step of the way together!

Source (in part): University of Oregon Community Music Institute, Parent Handbook, 2004-2005 and

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