



## Parents and Practice

### Role of the Parent

The role of the parent is vital to the success of the child. Parents can help by establishing good practice habits and a regular practice schedule from the very beginning. Although the child will become increasingly independent as the year progresses, the parent's personal interest and enjoyment are essential to maintaining the child's enthusiasm and motivation.

**Parent Time** is the special part of class when children and adults share the joy of group music-making. This time gives parents a chance to become familiar with the new material and the teacher the opportunity to model learning techniques used in this method. During Parent Time, the companion adults learn aurally- the same way that their children are learning. This kind of learning must be *experienced* so that parents understand how they can aid their children (and oftentimes themselves) on the pathway to music literacy. In addition, the children are delighted to have parents as their companion on this journey.

### At-Home Assignments

In the *Children's Keyboard Book* suggested assignments are listed in three categories: 1) Keyboard, 2) Listen, Drum and Dance, and 3) Write and Read. There is also a column in which parent or the child can record (with a star, or similar) that a particular assignment has been mastered.

Weekly assignments generally include work in each of the three categories:

- **practicing piano songs**
- **working with the Listening CD and/or Practice CD, and**
- **working in the book and/or working with manipulatives (rhythm sticks or drums)**

All aspects of the program ----- singing, dancing and drumming, practicing at the keyboard, and writing and reading the language of music ----- are reflected in the assignments. Suggested assignments are meant to serve as a general guideline. I will modify them, as necessary, for the whole group and/or individual child.

Review Home Assignments during Parent Time. In the first weeks of the course, it is particularly helpful to work through the assigned tracks on the Practice CD with the parents. Suggested practice time is **15 MINUTES, FOUR TO FIVE TIMES A WEEK..**

## **Listening CD & Practice CD**

The **Listening CD** can become an enjoyable experience for the entire family. It features a variety of instruments and musical styles, including folk songs, ethnic pieces, piano repertoire from the Baroque to the Contemporary periods, and orchestral excerpts. Parents and children are encouraged to play the Listening CD often: familiarity with the songs and repertoire plays a significant role in the child's success.

The **Practice CD** provides an opportunity for children to hear the keyboard songs played in a way they will soon be able to play them. In addition, the Keyboard Song Process (an important part of each class) is repeated on the CD. The children listen to individual tracks as assigned and practice in the four-step pattern process:

- 1. Sing the pattern**
- 2. Echo the signing**
- 3. Sing and play the pattern**
- 4. Echo singing and playing**

The four-step process should be continually emphasized. The Practice CD extends this natural learning experience to the home environment and is **NOT** intended as an accompaniment to the children's playing.

The Practice CD also contains notation games. By frequently working with the Practice CD at home, the children can play the games many times, which provides them with the much needed repetition that facilitates mastery of concepts. It is important to keep the notation games in an orderly fashion for easy access (in individual plastic bags in the keyboard class totebag).

## **Philosophy and basic beliefs of the Musikgarten Keyboard Method**

- True Music literacy ----- seeing what you hear and hearing what you see-----will make all future music learning more meaningful.
- An aural approach to the keyboard enables children to play what they hear and usually results in greater interests and enthusiasm.
- Making Music as a group is a joyful experience and provides opportunities for singing games, ensembles, and dances---- important elements in a child's music development that are not possible in a private lesson setting.

