

Practice Guide

We all experience peaks and troughs when it comes to practice, no matter what the age!

For children up to 9 years old, parents or guardians should be present during practice time. At this age they are unlikely to understand what is required from their practice time at the instrument. I have useful hand-outs for parents if they don't know how to best help their child. I also write in their note books the areas of focus for the week. *Please* use these.

Young Children (3 – 6 years)

Most children struggle with the concept of practice. It's not 'fun' and they don't see adults doing it, so it's understandable why they might resist and question why they have to do it. At this age, the main area of focus is to form a habit of practising – 5 minutes at the same time of day, every day, will be sufficient for progress and they will learn an important life skill.

I have a whole host of questions you can ask your child, do ask me for a list.

7 – 9 years old

By this age children should be gaining a little more independence in their practice. They will still need you close by to provide support and guidance though. It's common for resistance at this age; an increase in workload at school, other activities, their friends aren't playing an instrument. All perfectly normal! Helping your child through this time will most likely result in a peak in interest down the line. Talk to me so we can work out repertoire to keep the flow of interest going.

10+ years old

At this age, you shouldn't need to be as present for practice. Having said that, this is the age where homework and other activities can take over and a gentle prompt might be needed. Please ask me for advice should you need help.

Some might find this image interesting.

HOW MUCH SHOULD MY CHILD PRACTICE?

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Practices per week	Time spent per practice	Reason for lessons	Progress?	Long-lasting musical impact?
6-7	1-5 hours	Competitive/high achieving/aspiring concert pianist	Yes	Yes**
4-5*	20 mins – 1 hour	Have fun with music, achieve well, develop skills that last into adulthood	Yes	Most likely
2-3	10 mins – 30 mins	"Just want to have fun"	Not much	Very unlikely
0-1	0-30 minutes	"Just want to have fun"	No	No

* FUN ZONE!

For parents who say they "just want their child to have fun"... 4-5 practices per week means students can **actually** have fun with piano. 'Fun' means they will be able to play. They will enjoy their musical experience AND are likely to take musical skills into adulthood, making lessons a worthwhile investment for parents. **Less practice than this does not achieve the parent's desired outcome.**

**Assuming creative and sight-reading skills are included

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