

Your Child Needs Music Lessons!

100 Non-Musical Benefits of Learning to Play an Instrument

Music lessons build character...

...by giving child and parent opportunities to grapple with...

- ...frustration
- ...anger
- ...failure
- ...disappointment
- ...limitations
- ...forgiving oneself
- ...forgiving others
- ...sticking to a routine
- ...replacing bad habits with good ones
- ...overcoming negative attitudes
- ...delaying gratification
- ...accepting correction
- ...forcing oneself to begin work
- ...forcing oneself to work before play

...by teaching that...

- ...habits built are not easily broken
- ...tomorrow is always a new day
- ...authority is a reality of life
- ...work is a reality of life
- ...hard work can bring joy
- ...productive work can bring satisfaction
- ...carrying responsibility is its own reward
- ...it feels better to achieve than to complain

...by developing...

- ...self-control
- ...self-discipline
- ...discernment
- ...concentration
- ...perseverance
- ...empathy
- ...courage
- ...patience with ourselves
- ...patience with others
- ...desire to encourage others
- ...quiet, well-founded confidence
rather than conceit
- ...healthy pride, rather than
haughty pride
- ...respect for others' possessions
- ...respect for those with great skill
- ...compassion for those who fail

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Music lessons build life skills...

...by giving child and parent opportunities to...

- ...practice time management
- ...develop creativity
- ...set goals (short and long term), pursue them and evaluate them
- ...design a plan, evaluate the plan, adjust the plan
- ...identify, diagnose and analyze a problem; develop a solution
- ...break large tasks into manageable parts
- ...synthesize, combining multiple ideas and skills into a greater whole
- ...stretch one's ability to focus, shutting out distractions
- ...experience a heightening of all senses, especially hearing
- ...develop fine motor skills to a high degree
- ...develop eye-ear-hand coordination
- ...learn ***how to practice...anything--*** spelling words, jump shots, multiplication tables, grand-jetés, court reporter stenography, bones of the skeletal system, Latin declensions, anything.

...by giving child and parent opportunities to...

- ...think sequentially ("What should be done first?")
- ...learn to prioritize ("Keep the main thing the main thing")
- ...learn to be purposeful ("Why did the teacher reassign this piece?")
- ...develop a mindset of quality control ("Can I find and fix my own mistakes before my teacher or parent finds them?")
- ...learn to be efficient ("In what ways could I accomplish this task better, in less time?")
- ...hear with another person's point of view ("What would the teacher say about my performance, if she were here listening?")
- ...develop English vocabulary and awareness of abstract concepts, as they attempt to express in words the sounds they hear and the feelings they experience. ("Was the sound like vanilla pudding or chocolate fudge?" "Did the sound make you feel jumpy or squishy or invisible?" "Why did the music make you feel sad?")

...by teaching the child and parent to...

- ...give attention to detail (for those who were born global thinkers)
- ...see the bigger picture (for those who were born nit pickers)
- ...think creatively (for those who were born literalists)
- ...value careful control (for those who were born impulsive)

Instruments which require a high degree of left hand independence (piano, violin, cello, classical guitar) also...

- ...build spatial relations ability
- ...build math ability
- ...build ability to learn difficult foreign languages
- ...build language ability, especially vocabulary
- ...build creative conceptual ability

Music lessons build character...

...by teaching appreciation for...

- ...the value of facing and conquering fear
- ...expensive possessions,
 their owners and their providers
- ...those who help us
- ...those who provide for us
- ...subtlety, in music and in life
- ...elegance, in art and in life
- ...a well-crafted performance
- ...a heroic effort

Friends, speak the truth.

Call a spade a spade.

If the student played poorly, praise the effort, but do *not* tell him he played well, unless it's true.

"Massaging" the truth teaches the child either to distrust our judgment or to distrust our intelligence.

It also turns the child into an overly sensitive cream puff, when it comes to receiving correction.

Speaking the truth is *not* synonymous with hurting, attacking or unjustly judging another person, if it is done with compassion and encouragement.

Indeed, it allows the performer to save face by giving him permission to speak candidly about his experience, thereby unloading some of the emotional intensity that he feels.

Truth sets us free.

Speak the truth, Friends.

Did You Know?

Thomas Jefferson and Albert Einstein were both accomplished violinists. It is said that Jefferson worked out the wording to the *Declaration of Independence* while playing. Mrs. Einstein reported that whenever Mr. Einstein was stumped by a difficult equation, he would improvise for a time on the violin or the piano, until he could solve the problem.

Music lessons build emotional maturity...

...by giving child and parent opportunities to...

- ...own the problem
- ...develop poise
- ...face fear
- ...learn one's limits
- ...build vision
- ...dream big
- ...encourage oneself
- ...encourage others

...by giving child and parent opportunities to...

- ...discover and face one's character flaws
- ...discover and tap into one's inner strengths
- ...develop grace under pressure

...by giving child and parent opportunities to...

- ...experience emotions not often talked about
- ...express those emotions appropriately
- ...develop a high degree of discrimination in hearing and listening skills
- ...develop a high degree of discernment in people
- ...set healthy limits for oneself and healthy boundaries for others

...by giving child and parent opportunities to...

- ...graciously accept compliments when one has done well
- ...graciously accept compliments when one has not done well
- ...graciously interact with those who have done better
- ...graciously interact with those who have done less well
- ...graciously deflect praise; give credit where credit is due
- ...identify and deal appropriately with hero worshipers

...by giving child and parent opportunities to...

- ...separate the quality of a performance from the worth of a person
- ...differentiate between a compliment and flattery
- ...differentiate between love and indulgence

Playing an Instrument: the Perfect Activity

The exercise of playing an instrument requires the use of all learning modalities simultaneously. There is no other activity known to neuro science which so perfectly trains all parts of a person's faculties.

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J. Michael Smith, president of the *Home School Legal Defense Association*, discusses the benefits of early music lessons and specifically the Suzuki Method. "*Teaching Music*," *Home School Heartbeat*, Vol. 64, Programs 26-30. Aired June 16-20, 2003 and January 2-6, 2006.