

How To Practice

Your child's progress in band will depend a great deal on what is achieved during daily home practice sessions. Learning takes place in school, but proficiency is gained at home. You can use the following guidelines to help your child at home.

Time Schedule

A half hour a day is the minimum amount of practice time recommended for the average student. Practicing at the same time every day is best (example: 4:00 - 4:30 daily on weekdays, weekends will vary).

Climate

Practicing should be done in an area that is free of distractions away from the TV, radio, stereo, telephone, and family traffic. Good lighting, a straight-backed chair, a mirror, a metronome, and a music stand are definite assets.

It's HOW You Practice That Counts

Incorrect habits are sometimes more easily developed than correct habits, and a habit is hard to change, so THINK when you practice. Don't just go through the motions. Remember, the playing of your instrument comes through development of coordination, just like any athlete. Impatience is the enemy of the ambitious player.

1. Set a goal for the session, a line or two of music, an exercise, a scale, even a measure that is giving you trouble. Don't try to do too much at one sitting.
2. Isolate a problem or a section in a piece of music. It may be a rhythm, a measure, a line. Work it slowly at first, then build up the speed gradually. Before you leave it, put it together with the rest of the line or exercise.
3. Repetition of a problem area, over and over, reinforced the muscle memory.
4. In technical passages, change rhythms and articulations (slurring and tonguing) for even, accurate, fluid technique.

<u>Material Practiced</u>	<u>Minutes</u>	<u>Goal</u>
Long tones, easy drills, Brasses-lip slurs, slow tempo	5	Warm-up of embouchure and instrument, produce a good tone
New material, individual improvement, assignments, move ahead	10	Develop new exercises, increase range, new songs, new lessons in book
Familiar exercises and etudes	10	Improvement of finger dexterity, tonguing, and overall fluency
Personal music choices	5	Playing things you enjoy playing

IF YOU ONLY HEAR THINGS THAT THEY CAN ALREADY PLAY, THEY ARE NOT GETTING THE MOST OUT OF THEIR PRACTICE TIME, AND THEY WILL NOT IMPROVE!

Encouraging Your Child

Spend some time listening to your youngster practice. Offer constructive criticisms, but choose your words carefully. "That sounds better today" is preferable to "Aren't you ever going to learn that?"