

Junior Music Course @ Matrix

The role of the JMC parent

Parents don't often get the chance to share in formal learning processes and so JMC offers parent and child some really special time together.

Please read the following information to get the most out of the course and get you off to a good start.

The parents' role is extremely important, both in lessons and at home:

In lessons...parents are there to share the music and to support the child to respond directly to the teacher. Regular attendance is necessary to keep up with the class.

At home...your role is one of gentle encouragement...and applause, when invited!

Practising is required at home, but this is by no means just playing.

Listening is the most important thing, and we also ask you and your child to sing, fill in a workbook page, and play the keyboard each week. Ideally, children will play or sing every day for a short time to enjoy consolidating what they did in the lesson.

Please encourage your child to sing with all their playing at home as well as in lessons and enjoy watching the DVD together as instructed in lessons (or just for fun!)

Position a CD player near the piano or keyboard so your child could try playing along if they like to do this. Do download/transfer the CD to an ipod or similar.

Keep the keyboard, DVD and CD accessible and inviting!

'Messing around' and making things up is to be encouraged.

Why not keep up with your child so you can enjoy playing duets together?

4 JMC parent 'DON'T's!

Don't show children what to play

It can be very tempting to show which notes to play - even to press their fingers down - please don't do it! It's not a short cut by any means. Children become independent at the keyboard much more quickly if parents stand back. In the long-run, please be assured: it's the easier option!

Don't react to mistakes

Wait for your child to self-correct – whether this happens in the next few seconds or the next few weeks. Don't even flinch if you hear a wrong note! Just applaud the effort and if you feel it's the right time to make a comment, do it in a specific way ('I loved this part because...', 'That really made me feel...' and so on).

Please trust us on this one, even if you don't believe it at first: we have been doing this for a long time and can see what happens further down the line!

Don't point to the notes on the page as children play

We approach notation in age-appropriate ways - at this stage, children trace the notes as they sing,

and are not asked to look at them as they play. This is not how the children are learning and results in unmusical performance.

If you would like to do extra notation with your child - and if your child is willing - you can play note games, but please not as they play (we have magnet boards you can order if you like).

Don't write the notes in the book

Ideally we hope you will try to learn in the same way as the children – by listening, copying and memorising and without the need for a score. However, if you need the notes for yourself, you could photocopy the page to write on. We would like the children's eyes to eventually go for the dots, not your writing!

Now for something positive after all those 'don'ts'!

The 'ideal' JMC parent...

Enjoys sharing the course materials at home with their child, singing and perhaps playing together, but stands back when their child is working something out on the keyboard.

Is fully involved, but lets their child be independent at the keyboard right from the start, and lets them enjoy the piano in their own way...even if the child spends just a few seconds playing the class pieces and then much longer improvising!

Encourages their child to practise in positive ways, and gives only the occasional push to help overcome an appropriate challenge. Many parents report that early mornings are a good time to practise.

Understands that the course is developmentally appropriate and that the children are learning because they are enjoying themselves.

Communicates with their teacher and/or the office. We like to hear successes and we need to hear your concerns.

You are also always welcome to contact Lindsay MacKenzie, our principal teacher, with any worries.

Enjoy the course!