**Practicing Guidelines**

*For Parents and Students*

**The Purpose of Practice**

Practice and repetition are central to success in the study of a musical instrument. As long as the teacher is providing diligent guidance and instruction, the student’s amount of progress depends on the quality of her practice between lessons. So if we made a graph of the effort and time required for musical success, it might look like this:

**Length and Frequency of Practice**

A student should be practicing each day for the same length of time as the lesson. For example, a 30 minute lesson equals 30 minutes of daily practice. This can be challenging, especially for young students with shorter attention spans. The following are keys for helping a child stay focused during practice:

1. The instrument should be located in a remote area of the house to reduce distraction and noise.
2. Younger players may become unfocused during a 30 minute practice session so the time should be broken into smaller, more manageable segments.
3. A parent or guardian should be attentive from another room. This person can be ready to help the child refocus if he becomes discouraged, distracted or simply stuck in one place.

**Content of Practice Sessions**

At the end of each lesson, each student will have a written assignment page with reminders about specific skills to practice and improve. It will also show assigned pages, scales, and any other item to practice before the next lesson. Here are some universal practice guidelines to follow:

1. The student should practice everything on the page every day.
2. The student should focus first on the items which are the most difficult and then move on to the easier items—(*instead of the other way around*).
3. The student must daily work on the parts that are not perfect-- right up to the next lesson. *Musicians, even if you do not attain perfection, you will be well aware of your particular difficulties and ready to grow in those areas.*

*\*\*TIP: It’s common to have blind spots or road blocks during the week when it seems like there is nothing left to practice. If this happens, the student should ask an adult or older sibling to listen as he plays and to offer a fresh perspective.*