

# Strings 101: A Guide for Parents



As a parent, you have a huge influence on your child's music education. That's why we're giving you this handy list of tips and tricks, written by D'Addario Clinician Scott Laird. Here's everything you need to know to help your child reach the next level of performance.

## Practice

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- Encourage your child to practice a little bit immediately after each lesson to help solidify the information for the next week.
- Make sure your child's practice space is set up with proper room lighting, a music stand, and a pencil.
- Be sensitive about when to push hard and when to back off. Student motivation has cycles.
- When your child plays for you, always begin giving feedback with a compliment, then a suggestion for improvement, if necessary.
- Keep in mind that short periods of practice time at higher frequency are more effective than fewer extensively long sessions.
- Celebrate small victories in practice and development, so your child feels supported on his or her musical journey.

## Daily Habits

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- Encourage listening to a variety of orchestral string music for recreation. You can do this in the car or around the house. Find recordings of pieces of music that your child is learning during lessons, and encourage critical, engaged listening.
- Take your child to see and hear live string music – classical, jazz, folk, etc! Local concerts are often free and a great way to participate in the musical community.
- Encourage your child to try to play along with the radio by ear.

## Performance

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Encourage your child to practice performing by playing for others, such as for family or friends, at church, or at other community gatherings.

## Instrument Tips

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- Avoid low-quality instruments.
- Embrace the importance of periodic instrument maintenance; proper setup is key.
- Never use superglue, alcohol, or any household chemicals on the instrument, strings, rosin, or bow.
- Keep the instrument in a climate-controlled area (not in the car on a cold or hot day!)
- Learn how to tune your child's instrument. It will help to ensure a productive practice session.

## Lesson Etiquette

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- Always come prepared to lessons and rehearsals with your instrument, music, a notebook, and a pencil.
- Arrive early to lessons and rehearsals to unpack, and be ready to begin on time.

## Concert Etiquette

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- Help your child be on time! It's good to arrive at least 30 minutes before the concert.
- Remember to bring to performances: instrument, music, and uniform (if there is one – check the dress code).
- Applaud loudly at the end of each piece, unless it has multiple movements (then just clap at end of the final movement).
- Refrain from whistling or yelling during the applause.
- Plan to stay until the end of the concert, even if your child's portion of the performance is complete.