



# 7 Things Every Parent Should Know About Music Lessons



**MUSIC**  
Teacher  
**LA** Only the Best  
Of the Best



Why do children lose interest in music lessons within the first 6 months? After listening to parents tell me their stories of signing up their children with a music teacher or a music school to only see their children's loss of interest so soon, I wondered why?

In my extensive teaching career, and now running my own music school, only three students have dropped out after 6 months of studying, one due to a divorcing parents and another to a change of home address. The third student was just not interested in playing an instrument in the first place.

I questioned the parents of my many successful students about their child's accomplishments and continued love of music, and they shared with me what they believed were the keys to success. I am now sharing their insights with you.

*Olesya MacNeil*  
Founder of Music Teacher LA

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## 1. The Teacher Should Have an Advanced Music Degree

Differentiating a teacher holding at least a Bachelor or Master's Degree in Music with a teacher with no music training whatsoever is as simple as comparing a quality school education that enables a child to progress and enjoy the learning process, and a substandard education that actually nurtures a child's aversion to learning.

Teachers who have received a university degree in music have spent years studying how to master their instrument(s) or voice. They are very different from someone who knows how to play an instrument and wants to make some extra money teaching. Many have also studied the psychology of teaching both children and adults and done advanced training in Suzuki, Kodaly, or Orff teaching methods.

## 2. The Teacher Must also be a Great Teacher

Incredible music performers and great teachers don't necessarily come in the same package. Achieving great music technique, performing and building a group of fans does not equate to having the special skills and personality it takes to teach and work with children and adults. It takes creativity, enthusiasm, wide imagination, incredible patience and much more to become a really great teacher.

To become a great teacher a musician should have the teaching skills that are required to explain, elaborate, demonstrate and be creative and visionary.

Knowledge of the instrument being taught is crucial, but knowing how to teach and explain its intricacies and nuances is paramount to becoming a good instructor. A great start with a fantastic teacher will enable students of any age to make dramatic progress.



### 3. The Teacher Must Be Passionate and Creative

Parents all over the world seem to want to start teaching their children music, math and reading at a younger and younger age. The majority of new music students today are 3-5 years old.

How do 3, 4 and 5-year olds learn? Children at this age have expansive imaginations and natural curiosity. Some have pretend friends, sing unintelligible songs, and love being funny and making silly faces. They learn best when they are active - dancing, moving, stomping feet, snapping fingers and clapping hands. 5-year olds have a natural desire to become independent and feel grown up. They are eager to learn and their learning should be fun, inspiring and creative.

Music teachers must encourage learning and stimulate a child's natural curiosity and enthusiasms for learning. They must be creative in preparing their lessons plans and fill a young child's lessons with music-related activities that boosts their imagination and creativity. Once a student falls in love with music, the child will be ready for the next, more advanced level of playing, and move on to learning music theory and improvisation.

### 4. The Teacher Should Reinforce Good Study Methods

The process of music learning is very complex. It includes active listening, ear training, the improvement of hand-eye coordination, finger dexterity and technique, and learning music symbols and concepts. It requires discipline and study.

When a very young child begins taking music lessons, he or she is usually not accustomed to routine practice, homework and learning responsibilities. The first person to teach a child how to study is quite often a music teacher. Many parents take an uninvolved position expecting a music teacher to make their child's lesson fun and that is sufficient. However, the only way for a student to progress, retain information and build self-esteem and character, is to practice and have parent involvement. It makes doing future school homework seem that much easier.



## 5. As Parents, We Must be Involved in the Learning Process But Not Disruptive

Many children's homes are filled with TV, video games, and super busy working parents who don't have much time to spend reading to, engaging with, or practicing music with their children.

It is important that parents are inspired and enthusiastic team members in the music learning process, reinforcing the skills taught by the music teacher to practice and stick to a schedule, using their own imaginations to make the practice fun, consistent and engaging.

Many studies have shown that in addition to being stimulating and educational, music lessons boost brain power, improve memory, build confidence, and teach discipline and patience. We all would like the benefits of music for our children. It is crucial for parents to provide encouragement and support to their children in their music learning. Parents who give such support to their children see great improvements and a series of personal success in the lives of their little ones. Successes boost their self-esteem, passion for learning and desire to work hard.

Parents should not interrupt a lesson with questions or unnecessary requests. This not only distracts the student, but worsens his or her emotional connection with the teacher. It can lead to a loss of interest, disrespect of the teacher, and expectancy of the parent to guide the lesson process rather than a teacher.

## 6. Don't Waste Your Own or Your Child's Time on Online Music Lessons

Every professional musician has had the guidance of one or more professional teachers.

Free or paid online music lessons provide introductory instruction. They do not provide a teacher's personalized guidance, modeling, nor their ability to correct technical and rhythmical mistakes and physically work with the child's hands. The enjoyment and excitement of a child playing a duet with the teacher is not an option.



Relying on online services to provide music lessons for very young children is detrimental. All children enjoy the company of a teacher, and they progress swiftly when being assisted, motivated and directed by a professional as part of a systematic music study program.

## 7. Cheaper Rarely Means Better!

The truth is “you get what you pay for”. Despite this wisdom, some parents make the decision that their children be taught by music instructors who are “affordable”.

When those parents then wonder why their child is losing interest and not learning as hoped, the reason often lies with the teacher. In many instances, students can actually learn “bad habits” such as incorrect technique, patterns that are hard to correct moving forward. Additionally, a child’s progress with an “affordable” teacher is often significantly slower than that of one who studies with a slightly more expensive professional. In the end such affordability turns into a lengthier, less enjoyable and ultimately more expensive program compared to the faster progress provided by a professional instructor.

### *About Olesya MacNeil*

Olesya is the founder of Music Teacher LA. She has a Master’s Degree in Music, Psychology and Pedagogy and over 20 years of teaching experience.

Music Teacher LA offers music lessons on piano, voice, strings, woodwinds and drums.



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