

TIPS FROM "JOYFUL MUSICAL FAMILIES"

Start young, including music as part of family culture.

- Use songs to teach, to organize routines of the day like naptime, clean up time, a bath. Sing for pure fun. Notice that young children sing as they play. Follow their lead! Use singing games.
- Sing lullabies. Many fun books are available with their own CD's so Mom can learn new music in addition to those from her own childhood years. What is your "theme song" as a mother? Something a child can carry for peace, security, a reminder of your love when away from home.
- Watch great performers on PBS channels & listening to good quality recordings.
- Give music gifts-quality recordings, books, videos, and simple instruments.
- Attend live performances in the community-watch your local newspaper for many free, short, age appropriate opportunities. Those with stories, costumes, young musicians, interesting instruments or held outdoors have a special appeal for children. Familiarize your children with music & information that is part of the program.
- Point to the words of hymns for your beginning readers so they can learn to sing and read at the same time. Teach the expectation that your family will join in all the hymns in our worship services.
- Use music and movement together. Dance & musical games are natural for young children. Make it a joyful group event. Why not a kazoo band to accompany some original choreography or child created "opera"?

As your children get older, try these ideas to increase the joy and learning:

- Compose your own music. All kinds of software are available for this. The technology side of music can be very appealing to some children.
- Join the ward choir to build musical experience & skill, along with testimony & service.
- Parents need to be involved also and find the "joy". Be an adventurous adult & keep learning & exploring, too.
- Explore all different kinds of music together. Your public library might be a resource for recordings of classical, opera, folk & traditional, and world music.
- Invite a musical role model into your home--perhaps sing with the fulltime missionaries, other young adults who have talents and testimony to share with your children.
- Be a music advocate at your children's schools. What opportunities are there? Parent encouragement and support can be very influential in building a peer group of music loving children and young people. This is often a neglected area of the school curriculum. Learn more and make it better! Support your children's school music programs & events.
- Use the affordable resources put out by the church--audio tapes and CD's of hymns and children's songs, hymnbooks in varying levels of difficulty for developing pianists, course materials for learning to conduct and accompany, Family Home Evening Manual, Teaching No Greater Call, pg. 172-174. The YW Personal Progress, YM Duty to God, Primary Faith in God ALL include musical experiences. Teach from the preface of the hymnbook and Children's Songbook.
- Study Our Latter Day Hymns: Their Stories and Their Messages by Karen Lynn Davidson (see "Blessings Upon Our Heads", John S. Tanner, Ensign, Feb 2004, pg. 16 Include a small hymnal with scriptures. Read a hymn as a poem before studying.

Suggestions for Those who choose Private Music Instruction

- Children are often most ready to learn formal music skills when they have developed reading readiness skills. When they are interested in and can use the visual symbols of reading words, they will be ready to handle the visual symbols of music also. Note reading is a valuable skill for musicians!
- Maximum progress will be made when a parent is involved. A parent should attend lessons, learn, and plan to practice with a young beginning musician. Look for the teacher that would welcome your assistance as you initiate this family learning experience.
- Be patient & diligent in finding the right teacher for your child. Ask other parents, musicians, & music educators. Attend a recital of teachers you are considering. How well do the children perform?
- Work with the personality of each child individually in motivating, teaching, setting practice times, finding appropriate music and teacher.
- Find many opportunities for children taking lessons to perform, for parents, other families, your visiting & home teachers. Let them get the positive reinforcement for their hard work. Record their performances. They love to see and hear themselves play. It may be an important part of your family records
- Have children plan a family music project. “What shall we learn, sing, play and for whom and when? Is there a holiday or family birthday where our music would make the “best gift”? Should we have costumes, refreshments, invitations?”
- See [Raising Musical Kids](#) by Patrick Kavanaugh for more good ideas