



Twinkling The Ivories

October 2011

Tim's Top Ten Tips for a Supportive and Motivating Environment

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1. **Participate in the Suzuki piano program:** The group classes, Fall Institute, Spring Festival, recitals and graduations are all great opportunities to learn and keep moving forward.
2. **Use Supportive language:** Put yourself in your child's shoes in home practicing. "Try that again" and "check your left hand" is better than "that's wrong" and "your left hand missed a note." Ask questions instead of making judgements: "What does good hand posture look like?" instead of "your wrist is too low." Even small words can help: use "oh" instead of "no". Say "look at your hands", not "pay attention."
3. **Find inspiration at concerts and in recordings:** Edmonton has great music, for all genres, coming through, for any budget. Use the ESPS library and the Edmonton Public Library.
4. **Make a practice plan:** Figure out when you will practice each day and write it down. Usually, regular times like right after school or right after supper are best. Make sure there aren't too many other competing activities. Practice brings progress which increases motivation which helps the positive circle to keep going.
5. **Demonstrate and verbalize your commitment:** Children benefit from knowing and seeing and hearing that their parents care about these piano lessons. Commitment is up to the parents, not the children.
6. **Have a good instrument:** After all, we are producing sound! A good, tuned acoustic piano produces a beautiful sound, which is also motivating. Pianos generally do not lose their value and last for many decades (unlike keyboards). Get them the best instrument you can afford.
7. **Listen to the CD:** Make sure your child is hearing the recording adequately. When the pieces are in their heads, it is much, much easier. If the CD is lost or damaged or it's not being played enough, it becomes an exercise like walking to Calgary: you can do it, but it's a lot harder than if you were driving!
8. **Provide a social aspect to piano:** You and your child can visit with others at the groups, recitals, ESPS events, or you can have a piano party. We learn from other people, and benefit from sharing our successes and our struggles, and the music itself.
9. **Use technology:** YouTube has many piano videos; your children can put themselves on YouTube, or make a CD or DVD for their grandparents.
10. **Find more information:** The ESPS has books on child psychology, and the teachers have subscriptions to the excellent journal of the Suzuki Association of the Americas. Re-read your copy of *Nurtured by Love*, by Shinichi Suzuki. Talk with other parents at group class and find out what works for them. Communicate with your teacher about any concerns.

Tim Eckert

Great Practice Ideas!

To make practice a little more fun, how about making a Paper Piano Fortune Teller? Fill your fortune teller with practice challenges like "practice sticky fingers," "do repetitions five times," or "play a piece by your favourite composer." Complete instructions for making a Paper Piano Fortune Teller can be found on our website at www.edmontonsuzukipiano.ca

The Roll of the Dice - 4 Ways to Make Practice Fun With Your ESPS Dice

- Roll your die and use the number to squeeze the die that many times with one hand. Repeat with the other hand. This is great for small kids who need to build up strength in their piano muscles.
- Roll the die to determine the number of times you practice a challenging section of a piece.
- Roll the die to decide who picks the next piece to practice, e.g. even numbers = kid's choice, odd numbers = parent's choice.
- Roll the die to find the song number to practice. Student can roll it twice or three times, if necessary, to cover all the possible numbers, totalling up each number. So, $6 + 1 = 7 =$ Mary Had a Little Lamb. This can be adapted to where the student is in the repertoire.

Fall Institute – November 5 & 6th, 2011

By now, students participating in the Fall Institute have begun to receive their schedules for the event. Each student has been scheduled to attend a Master Class with one of our Guest Teachers (biographies of our visiting teachers are posted at www.edmontonsuzukipiano.ca) as well as a percussion class with Instructor Zach Smith.

Finally, be sure to make time to attend the parent talk. Held on both Saturday and Sunday at 1:00, Guest Teacher Nicole Elliott will provide an interactive presentation on motivation – how to help your child practice and enjoy it at the same time! There'll be time for questions at the end, too.

2011-2012 Calendar

November 5 & 6, 2011 *Fall Institute*

January 22, 2012 *Graduation*

February 5, 12, & 26, 2012 *Winter Recitals, Suzuki Charter School*

March 18, 2012 *Graduation*

April 21, 2012 *Spring Festival*

June 3, 2012 *Group Concert*

June 10 & 17, 2012 *Summer Recitals, Convocation Hall*

June 24, 2012 *Graduation*

October 2011 Graduations

Congratulations to the following students for their hard work and well-deserved graduations:

Volume 1

Lindsay Kim

Jonah Koller

Genevieve Salanguit

Isabelle Suen

Noah Thomas

Volume 2

Novin Kong

Hailey Lothamer

Moira Percival

Claudia Wang

Maya Zilkie

Volume 3

Nicholas Brubaker

Margaret Huang

Madeline Lietz

Carina Siu

***“When love is deep,
much can be
accomplished.”***

Shinichi Suzuki