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How To Choose The Right Teacher

Finding the right music teacher for your child is very important to their overall success and development. A great teacher will fuel their passion, help them achieve maximum improvement in the quickest amount of time, and help them avoid bad habits that can hurt their playing. It's important that you take the time to find the right teacher.

Not all teachers are the same. When you work with the wrong teacher, some problems you will likely have are:

You will spend a lot more money for lessons for something a better teacher could teach in less time. Your child will spend a lot more time than they should trying to learn and master what they want to be able to play. They will likely feel disappointed and discouraged because their improvement will be slow, and probably won't know why.

But when you find the right teacher,

Your child will learn to play much faster. They will reach their goals a lot easier. They'll feel GREAT as they go through the journey of learning their instrument! And you will save a lot of time and money-even if the better teacher is more expensive.

Choosing the right teacher is going to have a huge impact on your child's playing, but also on your bank account, and both of your time.

So how do you know when you have found the right one? Here are some things you need to know about a teacher before you begin lessons. Ask potential teachers the following questions:

1. "Can you tell me how you teach the lessons?" - This is probably the most important question that you can ask any teacher, yet almost no one ever asks it!

The reason for this question is that each student has different goals and learning styles. Unless a prospective teacher knows the student, their age, and musical preferences, they can't adequately say how they will teach YOUR CHILD. A good teacher needs to know these things before they formulate a lesson plan.

Listen to the language the teacher uses when trying to answer this question. Do they talk about "what they do" or do they want to know more about what YOUR CHILD wants and needs to learn?

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2. “How will you help my child to better organize their practice time?” – Good teachers will show in detail how your child can manage their practice time. They will tell both of you what and exactly how to practice each day. How they practice is very important to their growth as a player. If you are working with a teacher now, ask them to get specific with you about how your child can learn to effectively manage their own practice time.

3. “Do you teach the style of music your child wants to learn?” – You want to make sure your teacher has experience teaching the styles your child want to learn. A varied musical background is beneficial because many kids don't know what styles they like, but you want to know if the teacher is excellent at teaching the style or styles of music that YOUR CHILD wants to play.

4. “Have you successfully taught many other students to reach their musical goals?” – Are there places where you can find several of their former and/or current students and parents to hear what they have to say about the teacher?

Good results are not always based on the skill level of a teacher's students. Not all students want to become professional players. Many just want to play for fun, but if those students feel fulfilled and happy about their experience with their teacher, you can consider this a good result.

If you find a teacher who has proven track record of successfully teaching players to reach their musical goals and/or play on a highly advanced level, you have likely found a great teacher.

Most great teachers have testimonials from their students. Search for this on their website.

Avoid These Common Mistakes!

Mistake 1. Choosing a teacher based on location! – One of the first questions most parents ask a new teacher is “Where are you located?” If you are pretty sure the teacher teaches within 30 minutes of your home, do not even ask the teacher where he/she is located until AFTER you are sure you want your child to study with him/her.

You might be thinking that it's a waste of your busy time to travel far for your child to study with a great teacher, but the truth is, the EXACT OPPOSITE IS TRUE! The extra travel time that may be required for your child to study with a great teacher is time well invested. If they study with an 'average teacher' they WILL waste a lot of practice time as they study things which are not as helpful to them learning their instrument and reaching their goals. In addition, the better teacher will help them get more out of their practice time, (which saves even more time since they can actually get better while practicing less!) The bottom line: It's often worth traveling 3 times the distance in order to get 10 times the value from a better teacher!!!

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Mistake 2. Choosing a teacher based on price per lesson! – An experienced teacher with the qualities mentioned in the questions above can help your child progress at a much faster rate than an average one. A great teacher that can focus the lessons with proven techniques that will get specific results and help avoid unnecessary practice will save money and time in the long run.

For example, if it takes an average teacher 9 lessons at \$25 a lesson to help your child achieve a certain short term goal, that adds up to \$225. But if a great teacher charging \$50 a lesson can help achieve that same goal in 3 lessons, that adds up to \$150.

More experienced teachers are usually worth MORE than the higher price they charge for lessons! Excellent teachers are usually in demand and are often not cheap. In general, don't look for the teacher with the lowest rates, you usually get what you pay for... or LESS! If you simply can't afford to pay the higher rates for a really good teacher, ask them if your child can take lessons on a bi-monthly basis instead of taking weekly lessons.

From the teacher's point of view, parents who are primarily motivated by price do not help to make their child a very good student. This is not always true of course, but statistically speaking, it is. The reason for this assumption is that when parents are choosing a teacher based **mainly** on price or location, this means they are not likely to be focused on finding the **right** teacher who can help their child reach their musical goals. Good teachers do not want to feel like they are "selling lessons" like it is a mere commodity for sale, they truly care about people and helping students to transform their lives through music.

Mistake 3. Assuming that the best player is the best teacher! – Many students are immediately attracted to great players and want to learn from them. Just because a player can play does not mean they can explain what they do. What's important are the teacher's teaching skills and experience. This is what you should look for in a teacher.

The BIGGEST Mistake You Can Make Right Now Is...

The biggest mistake you can make right now is to do nothing with the information you've just learned! If you want to save a lot of time, money and energy, and have your child feel GREAT as they learn to play their instrument, then invest the time right now to search for a great teacher who meets the criteria discussed in this guide.