



Praise Your Child

By Liz Livingston

Give your child accurate, specific praise for a task well done. The task does not need to be perfectly done. Most of us cannot do anything perfectly yet. Look for the good and then tell them what you see.

"You focused the whole time!"

"I like how you smiled when you played that!"

"Thank you for trying!"

"Way to go on keeping your violin up as you played!"

"You kept the string pressed down by your finger the whole time. That made a lovely tone!"

"You did just what your teacher asked!"

"Hearing you play makes me happy!"

"I love how hard you are working right now."

"This is a difficult part. I appreciate how you keep trying."

"That was a beautiful, smooth sound."

"That made me smile!"

"You figured it out!"

"Congratulations! That's the best you've done so far!"

"You are making forward progress!"

Equally important with praising your child is providing a chance for your child to look for the good in what s/he does:

"What did you think? What did you like about how you played that time?"

"Give yourself a pat on the back."

Also remember that kind, appropriate touch can be so important to children. As a parent, you keep that sacred relationship of trust with a child by appropriate affection, such as a hug, a gentle pat on the back, a high five, tousling their hair, or giving them a kiss on the cheek. You have to be careful to watch your child's responses: if they feel uncomfortable with anything you do, you need to respect their preferences. Never belittle them with your words or behavior.

The main point is for music time together to be as happy as possible! When they grow up, they will have sweet memories of practicing together if you do your best to make it sweet.