

## DESIGNING A DEDICATED SPOT FOR MUSIC PRACTICE

by Lori Hausen



I get asked all the time, “How can I encourage my child to practice their instrument?” It’s not uncommon for parents to struggle with practice time - just add it to the list of parent/child arguments, and some days it might not feel worth it!

Parents, we get it! Practice time can be hard! So today we’ll dive into one of our favorite tips for making Music for Life. Setting up a dedicated spot for music practice. It doesn’t need to be a fancy studio or a big space in your home to make it special. But it does need to follow our **Play It. Protect It. Learn It. Love It.** motto!

### **Play It**

First and foremost, it’s important to make sure this a spot that is equipped with everything your student needs to play successfully. The area should be large enough for the instrument, accessories, and any movement needed to support proper form. Light should be ample (but not too bright) to make sure that sheet music can be easily read.

Make sure gear like a music stand, sheet music, and accessories are always available and set up in this space. If your student has to scurry around the house to find what they need to practice, you’ll have to endure a lot more moans and groans getting them started. No more “the dog ate my music” excuses!

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### **Protect It**

If possible, locate this space in an area that helps protect your musical instruments. For example, guitars and string instruments require very precise climate control. The space should reflect the unique care needs, humidity levels, and safekeeping of your child's chosen instrument. A damp basement or dry finished attic area should be a last resort, especially for temperature and humidity-sensitive instruments. If you have a brass or woodwind player in the house, you might want to locate the practice area near a laundry or spare bath, or mudroom with a sink. Set up this space with cleaning supplies like their mild detergent, grease/slide cream, brushes and lint-free cloths. Whether it's simply a clarinet mouthpiece or a full trumpet submersion, part of practice is learning how to care for your instrument. Using proper cleaning techniques are part of that process!

Consider storage! Unlike a soccer ball that can bounce onto the mud room floor without repercussions, the space for music practice should have a special spot to keep your instrument safe. A cabinet, closet, corner, shelf, or other ample space to store instruments and accessories will keep damage at bay.

### **Learn It**

Practice areas should be as distraction-free as possible. Consider separating this space from the family room, TV, kitchen, and other temptations that can distract from the learning process. Find an area in your home where your child can focus on their craft, making each precious practice moment count!

When it comes to playing, keep in mind those within ear-shot of the practice area. Both beginners and advanced students learning a new piece might prefer a more private area to play as they are learning. Squeaks and squawks are a reality with beginners, and you don't want them holding back their passion as they learn a new talent. Setting aside a more private space will help them build confidence as they learn. On the flip side, make sure there is room for loved ones to gather for an impromptu performance when the time is right!

### **Love It**

The last tip is all about making this spot fun and special! String holiday lights up in the room for an extra sparkle. Let your child pick a fresh new paint color for the area. Pick up some music-themed throw pillows or artwork at the store. Display their music awards and recital photos to make it personalized!

This is a project you can enjoy together, and a great way to reward your student with special touches and keepsakes for their practice area as they achieve new heights in their music journey. Did they lend an extra hand around the house? Put a gift card on the piano bench. Ace a big exam at school? Post an "I'm proud of you Post-it" on the music room door. Tell us how you show your student to **Love It** when it comes to playing Music for Life!

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