A Parent’s Perspective: What Music has Given Our Children
by Jason and Jenna Day

Currently three of our four children are in school music programs. And all take private lessons on their instruments. We’ve spent months attending district band concerts, pre-assessment concerts, all-state auditions and filling out forms for solo and ensemble festivals. We are a busy family and the music takes a lot of work. But we do it. We do it for the amazing experiences it gives our children.

The world of music auditions on any level can be overwhelming. For those whose child has chosen to participate here are a few tips:

- Be realistic. With help from your child’s teacher, choose music within your child’s comfort zone. Sometimes being in the top ensemble is not the best place for your child to learn technique and progress.
- Proper practice is important. Distractions such as fatigue, hunger and time of day make it hard for a child to focus or get motivated.
- Everyone is human. There are going to be mistakes, missed notes and bad days. This is all part of life and learning.
- Enjoy the moment. We are all busy. When you sit outside the audition room, take a deep breath and listen to your child. When the performance starts, enjoy the music, enjoy the moment.

MUSIC TEACHES CHILDREN LIFE SKILLS

Music at school allows children the unique opportunity to audition and perform at various levels. Our fourth grade daughter at her first solo and ensemble festival and our oldest son at his second all-state audition both learn the same skills, even if they are on different levels:

“You prepare hours for seven minutes. With detailed oriented practice you go over every phrase, every measure and every beat. You walk into the room for your audition. A voice from behind the screen advises you what is to be played. Then it is all up to you. All the hours of practice, the phrasing, the technicality of the piece all come together for the next seven minutes. It begins with a deep breath. You begin to play and your previous efforts are exposed.” (Jason Day)

Cause and effect is how children learn to interact in their environment. Understanding this helps develop problem-solving skills and other skills to survive in the world:

“As I have watched my two sons prepare for their orchestra and band auditions, I have seen the dedication and sacrifice they have. I listened to many hours of late night practicing, going over the same four measures of music.”

“The first time they auditioned for their district, it was a great learning moment. While neither one of them placed their first time, they felt good about the audition. As we discussed their experiences, they realized how much work they needed to do to be ready for such an event. When the next time came around, they were better prepared. These life lessons go far beyond music. Even giving it your all, sometimes your audition does not turn out the way you hoped. However, if you know you have worked hard, then you have no regrets.” (Jason Day)
MUSIC PROVIDES LASTING FRIENDSHIPS AND MEMORIES

Music lessons, whether private, in a group or in a school class, gives a child focus and direction. Countless studies have shown the benefits of music in a child’s life. Our four children have benefitted greatly from their school music classes. They enjoy a positive peer group, do homework and eat lunch together, discuss composers, etudes, and performances along with the latest social trends and regular teenage gossip. They get excited when they attend an event on a higher level and see friends from previous performances. They give each other high fives for a job well done and hugs when the results were not what they had hoped.

At the last all-state audition, my son and his friend stood arm in arm as the results were being posted. Smiles, hugs and high fives were given when they found they would sit together at the performance. Placement didn’t matter as much as being able to perform with your good friend. And in the end, standing on stage with your friends and being acknowledged for a job well done by people who love and support you is one of the best feelings a child can experience...and it will make them grin ear to ear!

Full article here: nafme.org/a-parents-perspective-what-music-has-given-our-children