If your child is currently participating in band, orchestra or choir you have probably already heard about the importance of regular practice to ensure success. Parents can help their children succeed in music by providing them with specific practice strategies. One important strategy is to encourage regular practice. For students just beginning to learn how to sing or play an instrument a half an hour of practice three to five days a week is desirable. Parents can help their children by creating a weekly practice schedule. Practice should occur in a designated quiet area free from other distractions. Parents can also help students create productive routines to help work towards and achieve their musical goals.

Here are some ways that parents can encourage effective music practice:

- Encourage students to set a goal for each practice session. That goal could be to learn a new song, master a difficult musical passage, or learn a new scale. However, it is important to remind students that everything doesn’t have to be perfected at once. That’s why we practice.

- Help students make a plan for approaching a new piece of music. Have the student play through the piece of music and take note of the more difficult sections. This way you can help break the piece down into smaller, more manageable parts.

- Remind students to practice slowly and only gradually build up speed once they have mastered the notes and rhythms.

- Ask students what they accomplished during their practice session.

- Encourage students to “keep at it” and promote a positive attitude toward practice.

It is also important for parents to identify ineffective practicing habits. When parents can identify these habits they can step in to promote positive ones instead.

Here are a few bad practicing habits parents should look out for:

- Spending large periods of time repeating the same musical passages.
- Repeatedly playing music they’ve already mastered.
- Playing at speeds that are too fast.

When parents help students engage in effective practicing habits they are helping their students achieve.