

Tips for First-Time Band Parents

1. **You will hear some interesting sounds in the first few months of band.** This is totally normal! Beginning band students are learning not only how to read music but also how to produce a sound on their instrument. Every professional musician was once a beginner, and it will get better!
2. **Encourage your student when playing at home.** Music helps to develop perseverance and dedication. Not everything will come easily, and when things feel difficult, that is when it is most important to stick with something.
3. **Regular practice is an important piece of your child's progression in band.** Practicing at least 5 days per week is a great place to start. Even a little bit of playing outside of band lessons and rehearsals will make a positive difference.
4. **Treat practice like any other homework for school.** Plan practicing into your child's schedule to ensure they get the most out of their lessons.
5. **Ensure your child remembers their instrument and band folder on band days.** It can be challenging for students to participate in lessons and rehearsals without their band supplies.
6. **If your child is a clarinet or saxophone player, be sure to keep a good supply of reeds on hand.** Working reeds will allow your child to have the best experience in band. Reeds are not built to last forever; when a reed has worn out, it is important to throw it out.
7. **Have your child's instrument checked by an instrument repair technician regularly.** Keeping an instrument in working order will help your child to have the best experience in band possible. **Please do not try to fix an instrument on your own without consulting your band director first.**

Here is a step-by-step practice guide for new music. If you find your child is getting frustrated, these are some strategies to help them to work through the music.

1. First, take a look through the music and play it mentally. Consider what notes and rhythms you see.
2. Second, break the music down into smaller "chunks" - usually 2-4 measures.
3. Play one small section of music at a time. If it is challenging, slow down the tempo (speed) and try again.
4. Put 2 smaller sections together. If that is difficult, break it back down to the smaller sections again.
5. Put the larger sections together and play the music all the way through.
6. Ask yourself how it went - are there spots that still need work? Go back to that spot and work on it slowly again.