

🎵 **Music, Mayhem & Memories** 🎵  
**Helping Kids Develop a Lifelong Love of Music**

**Barbie Wong**

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hosted by [Alfred Music](#) & [The Suzuki Association of the Americas](#)

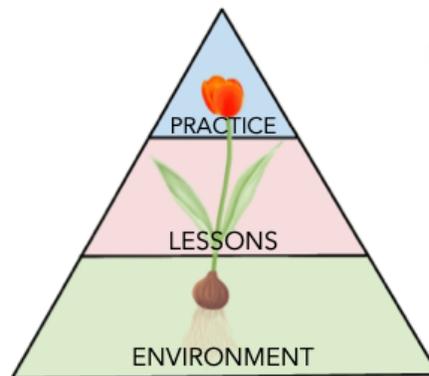
Questions to ponder:

- What hopes and dreams do you have for your child?
- Why do you want your child to be musical?
- How can music practice become less painful?
- How can we instill in our kids a lifelong love of music?

Suzuki Triangle includes the parent because they influence the environment the most.

*“...musical ability is not an inborn talent but an ability which can be developed.”*  
- Shin'ichi Suzuki

**Musical Child Pyramid**



Use this diagram to help you focus first on creating a musically rich environment. If you ever feel lost or think that raising a musical child is really hard, come back here. Let this be your guide.

🎵 **4 Keys to Musical Longevity** 🎵

**1. Bathe Your Child in Music**

Who was bathed in music growing up?

- **Mariah Carey** grew up with a mother who sang all the time.
- **Yo-Yo Ma** grew up with a musical family and they went to see live music.

- **Lin-Manuel Miranda**'s parents were not musicians but they loved music and listened to recordings of musicals a lot.

*"Children...grow by absorbing and digesting what is available in their environment."  
- Shin'ichi Suzuki*

How do you bathe a child in music?

- Play music at home.
- Play music you love so that you can share that with your child.
- Take your child to see live music.
- More ideas here: "[Top 15 Ways to Inspire Kids to Make Music](#)"

## 2. Find the Right Music Teacher

- Benjamin Bloom's study of 120 experts looked at their childhoods, what parents did, and what kind of teachers they found.
- "If the parents did not approve of the teacher's techniques or personality, another teacher was found very quickly." – Benjamin Bloom
- The right teacher has 2 qualities:
  - 1) Skilled teaching approach
  - 2) Connection with child

Who had the right music teachers?

- **Julie Andrews** studied voice with Lilian Stiles-Allen, who gave her thorough vocal training and treated her with kindness and warmth.
- **Lang Lang**'s first teacher gave him a solid foundation in piano while maintaining a strong connection to him. His second teacher was "Professor Angry" and that didn't work out.
- **Yo-Yo Ma** said, "The reason I loved my first cello teacher was that she was so nice; I could never do anything wrong. I think she made me love the cello."
- **Lin-Manuel Miranda** said, "...my life was really changed by an elementary school music teacher named Barbara Ames."

## 3. Support Music Practice

"...I have made it a hobby to investigate the stories of such prodigies, and I can report with confidence that I have never found a convincing case for anyone developing extraordinary abilities without intense, extended practice." – Anders Ericsson

Music practice includes...

- Remembering to practice
- Beginning the practice
- Knowing what to practice
- Practicing as directed (instrument skills)

These skills depend on having executive functioning skills. Kids don't acquire these fully until they are in their 20's, so we have to help them. (For more info, see Christine Goodner's book in the resources section.)

**How can you support music practice?** It's just like launching a rocket into space.

- 1) **Take away friction:** put away smartphones, make sure your child is not too tired or hungry, schedule the best time to practice, let go of other commitments, don't overschedule your child.
- 2) **Add massive power** such as...
  - Give your child ***incentives***
    - **Games:** count the number of correct repetitions, dress up, tell jokes, be creative
    - **Rewards:** stickers, 100 charts, fun outings
    - **Privileges:** first practice, then get a privilege like screen time or time with friends
    - **Narrative:** Yo-Yo Ma's dad said, "I'm going to teach you a new trick every day."
  - Have your child ***make music with others***
    - "For a little child it is a joy to do something with everybody else." "We must devise ways to help children study enjoyably in the company of their friends." – Shin'ichi Suzuki
    - **Lang Lang's** parents hosted music parties every Saturday night and he said, "Those impromptu concerts remain among the happiest memories of my childhood."
    - **Lin-Manuel Miranda** made music with his friends: "I really fell in love with musicals by doing them in school."
    - **Mariah Carey:** "What I treasured most were the jam sessions. Accomplished musicians would come and hang out and play music at my mom's bohemian spot by the bay. Live music was the best thing about living with my mom. I was surrounded by the love of

music. But even more importantly, by the love of *musicianship*—the love of the craft, the love of the process.”

#### 4. Be a Lifelong Learner

Your child will grow and change, so your approach will have to evolve continually. The fun part about parenting is that it’s never the same (okay, maybe not fun all the time) and you have to keep learning.

Thus, it’s important to...

- Read articles and books
- [Watch videos](#)
- Take a workshop or webinar (Yay! You did!)
- Take a class

If you want to learn more, consider taking my online parent class:

#### [“How to Raise a Musical Child”](#)

It’s a class for parents who want to set a strong musical foundation so that making music is joyful and meaningful.

Topics include:

- Motivating your child to practice
- Finding the right teacher
- Creating a musically rich environment
- Making music fun

6-week session, 1 hour each class, online

More details [here](#)

Parents who took this class said...

*“Barbie, thank you so much for your amazing class! Since I took your class, we are practicing longer and enjoying our time together. – Chloe Park, parent*

*“Barbie, you changed my life. Since using your techniques, my family life is calmer and happier.” - Sue Lee, parent and music teacher*

*"It was very interactive and far exceeded my expectations! In addition to helping my child with his musical skills, I gained parenting skills as well. It's a great class!" - Ryan Paquette, parent*

## 🎵 **What will you do?** 🎵

Try out any of these ideas and watch the magic unfold! Please let me know how it goes. I'm always excited to hear from parents.

Feel free to reach out to me on [Instagram](#), [YouTube](#), and TikTok (@barbiewongmusic). I'm always trying to put out info that is helpful to parents.

Thanks for taking the time to be here today!

Musically yours,  
Barbie  
barbie@barbiewong.com

## Resources

If you're looking for extra ideas or want to dive deeper into music practice techniques or building stronger connections with your child, check out these resources.

### Books for Parents

#### Start Here

Koenig, Joan. *The Musical Child*. Houghton Mifflin, 2021.

Sprunger, Edmund. *Helping Parents Practice: Ideas for Making it Easier*. Yes Publishing, 2005.

Faber, Adele & Maslich, Elaine. *How to Talk So Kids Will Listen and Listen So Kids Will Talk*. Scribner, 2012.

Ericsson, Anders and Robert Pool. *Peak: Secrets from the New Science of Expertise*. First Mariner Books, 2017.

Goodner, Christine. *The Music Practice Makeover*. Brookside Suzuki Strings, 2022.

Johnston, Philip. *The Practice Revolution*. PracticeSpot Press: Pearce, 2007.

Suzuki, Shinichi. *Nurtured By Love*. Alfred Music, 2013.

Coyle, Daniel. *The Talent Code: Greatness Isn't Born. It's Grown. Here's How*. Random House Business, 2020.

Collins, Anita. *The Music Advantage*. TarcherPerigee, 2021.

#### Dig Deeper

Amabile, Teresa and Steven Kramer. *The Progress Principle*. Harvard Business Review Press, 2011.

Bloom, Benjamin. *Developing Talent in Young People*. Ballantine Books, 1985.

Brown, Stuart. *Play: How it Shapes the Brain, Opens the Imagination, and Invigorates the Soul*. Penguin, 2009.

Wood, Wendy. *Good Habits, Bad Habits*. Macmillan, 2021.

## Videos / Films to Watch with Your Child

As with all videos, it is a good idea to check them out before showing them to your child. A great place to research is the [Common Sense Media website](#), which will provide you with a synopsis of the video, ratings for violence, sex, and language, and reviews by adults, teens, and children.

*The ages listed are simply suggestions.*

### 5 years +

- *Beethoven Lives Upstairs*
- *Mr. Bach Comes to Call*
- *Vivaldi's Ring of Mystery*
- *Mozart's Magical Voyage*
- *Mozart's Magic Fantasy*
- *Hallelujah Handel*
- *Tchaikovsky Discovers America*
- Hershey Felder's productions of famous composers such as Tchaikovsky, Debussy, Chopin, Mozart, Beethoven, Gershwin.
- *Soul*

### 10 years +

- *Yesterday*
- *Miss Americana* (documentary about Taylor Swift)
- *La La Land*

### 13 years +

- *School of Rock*
- *Ray*
- *Elvis*
- *Amadeus*
- *Bohemian Rhapsody*
- *Rocketman*
- *The World's a Little Blurry* (documentary about Billie Eilish)
- *Mozart in the Jungle*

## Podcasts to Listen to with Your Child

- David Walliams' Marvelous Musical Podcast
- Twenty Thousand Hertz
- Dolly Parton's America (for teenagers)
- The Vanishing of Harry Pace