

Parent to Parent:
How to Help your Child at his Lesson

by Juliana McAshan

Attend lessons regularly and teach your child to watch lessons in progress if he must wait his turn. The best way to do this is to watch the lesson yourself. This indicates to your child that something important is going on, and also gives him a role for good behavior.

When you practice at home, use the same routines and sequence of events that you observe at the lesson. Use the same language and practice the same exercises that the teacher uses. The teacher is watching for signs that these exercises have become easy and natural for the child, so that he will be ready for the next steps in his learning.

Often a child will appear to be forgetful at his lesson, or do poorly in exercises which he did well at home. Do not become alarmed at this or interfere by giving him hints and reminders while he is trying to pay attention to his teacher. The reason he is having difficulty is that he is working with a relatively unfamiliar person. By "helping" too much you will only postpone the day when the relationship between the teacher and the child is an easy and natural one. The child's attention should be centered on his lesson; his work is with the teacher. You can best help him to focus his attention by not intruding on his work.

If you have your child's best interests at heart, let him make mistakes, because the lesson is a learning process. He is learning through his errors; he is also learning that it is all right to take a chance and that a mistake is not the end of the world.

If a child makes many mistakes in his lesson, do not scold him but resolve to practice more and better with him before the next lesson. Good practice is always the cure for bad lessons.

Sometimes, the teacher will invite the parent to participate. At such times, a complete response is expected, so pay close attention to the lesson.

Bring a notebook to the lesson and write down the important points as the teacher presents them. Study the notes before practice times. If you do this, the child will make steady progress, and will soon be ready for the next step in his learning.

About younger brothers and sisters at the lesson . . . they are always welcome to come, to listen and to learn, but this must never be at the expense of the child receiving instruction.

When watching the lessons of other children, show interest in these students, but avoid making comparisons between your child and others. Such comparisons can be unfair to all concerned, especially since you know a great deal about your own child and very little about the backgrounds of the others.

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