

Summer Vacation

—Michelle Baylor, May 2010

Summer vacation is finally here. Just because there's no school, however, doesn't mean all the music your student has worked on this year should disappear! Summer routines definitely look different, however. Here are some good questions to think about as lessons draw to a close for the year.

Why don't we have lessons in the summertime?

Every teacher has her own preference for summertime schedules and routines. My personal preference is to give students, parents, and teacher a break for a little while. Although students normally have more time in the summer, I have found that few of them actually practice very well or very diligently, regardless of the summer lesson schedule. Summer scheduling can also be a bit of an issue. Although some skills are lost and progress is slowed because of the time off, I think that the renewed energy and motivation that comes in the fall is worth the cost.

Should my student practice in the summer?

Definitely! Although we don't have lessons, it is still very important for your student to keep up what has been worked on this year. Summer practice helps maintain skills so that fall doesn't feel like starting over. Often, students need "something to do" on those lazy summer days anyway. The activities outlined on your student's summer Bingo card are a combination of routine practice and fun activities that could easily be made into a summer practice routine. Try to help your student practice at least 2 or 3 times a week (of course more is always better!)

What is the goal of summer practice?

For many students it is difficult to learn something completely new without a teacher's help, but summer practice is definitely a good time to review, continue listening, and have a little fun.

- **REVIEW:** Check the article on Review (www.baylormusicstudio.com/parent-articles). Review should form the core of a summer practice routine. Get creative and see how many times your student can play his or her pieces over the summer.
- **LISTENING:** Perfect for summertime, either lazing around the house, driving to swim practice, or going on vacation. No piano needed, no skill required, just ongoing ear training and exposure to upcoming songs. Re-read the article about Listening (www.baylormusicstudio.com/parent-articles)
- **FUN:** Use the freedom of summertime to engage in unique or adventurous musical experiences. Check out picture books about music (ask me for ideas or borrow some from my library). Learn more about a famous composer using books, CDs, and videos from the library. Go to a free concert in a park. Make musical instruments out of things around the house. Remind yourself and your child that music can be fun, exciting, different, and creative. Use the relaxed schedule to re-ignite your motivation for fall lessons.

What if my student gets stuck, or needs something more?

I am always available by phone (303-937-0601) or e-mail (michelle@thebaylors.org) over the summer. Feel free to ask questions about Bingo activities, request ideas for more things to do, or come borrow new music. If necessary, I would be willing to set up a time to meet with you and your student for a "tide-us-over" lesson or two as well.

What does a teacher do over the summer?

I spend a lot of time in the summer getting ready for the fall! I will attend another week of training at the Suzuki Institute. I will refresh and reorganize my materials, make new games and lesson plans, and spend time thinking about better ways to teach the skill and art of music to your children. I will call you in August to set up our fall schedule. Looking forward to seeing you then!