

## Maintenance and Growth

A successful program is not based on teaching alone. You must continually fine-tune your policies, communicate with and educate your families on the importance of music in the home, continue to publicize your program, and keep abreast of current research and development!

### Troubleshooting

New teachers share many of the same challenges as they maintain their programs. Following are the three most common challenges faced by new teachers as they begin:

#### Small Classes

Your Cycles class is beginning with only 3 children. You would like to throw in the towel because you feel you can't teach a class with only 3, and your budget isn't allowing for such a small group.

Sample Solution:

Almost EVERYONE has started out this way. It is not likely, even with Herculean marketing efforts, that you will begin your semester with a full class of 12. Make a full class your goal, but by all means don't lose momentum by shutting your doors to an interested group of 3 or 4. Use these families to help do your marketing for you. Explain that you must have a larger group for the class to happen. Give them a LARGE financial incentive; perhaps up to 50% off tuition if they get someone else enrolled in your class.\*

**Word of mouth is the most powerful tool you can have.** Encourage your interested families to help you!

*\*Editor's Note: This tactic has proven to be quite effective, even when starting with only 1 or 2 families!*

#### Multiple Ages

You have decided to start with one class of Toddlers after you have taken the Family Music Workshop. You have enrolled 4 toddlers at the start of the semester, 2 of whom are siblings. Those families tell their friends, whose children are babies and 4-year-olds! You want to build your program, but you don't want to teach inappropriate material to babies or preschoolers.

Sample Solution:

Offer Musikgarten's "All Together Now" (ATN) for mixed ages 0-4. ATN is a Musikgarten program that allows you to provide sound pedagogy as well as convenience for multi-

child families. Because Musikgarten shows you how to work with each stage of a child's development, you can nurture several ages at once. This will also enable you to compete with other mixed-age classes that may be offered in your community. For mixed age classes, all the children will have the same materials at home, and so the family saves some money. Still, they should be offered discounts like other families – 25% off the second child's tuition, and 50% off the third, and so forth. Be sure to ask us about sibling instrument/manipulative kits! Your classes will be full and your families happy. As your program grows to accommodate more children, you may want to start offering separate classes of babies and toddlers in addition to your "sibling" class.

### "Sticker Shock"

You have received a call from a parent who is interested in your program, but who is unprepared to pay what you are asking for tuition and materials. She asks why your prices are what they are.

#### Sample Solution:

None of us enjoy paying bills, even for necessities like electricity and heat. We all budget our money carefully, and don't like to be surprised by expenditures that are more than we have bargained for. When money is scarce, it is extracurricular activities that bear the brunt of tight budgets. However, if we know up front what we are going to have to pay for an activity, we are more likely to include it in our budgets.

### **Semester Cost = Tuition + Registration + Materials**

Your tuition price should be within the community standards of similar activities, and your registration fee should include enough to cover shipping of Family Materials (\$3 - 5 should cover this per semester), tax, and administrative costs that you may wish to cover (phone, stamps). It is important that you find out the costs of other area programs so that you can share comparisons with the parent. Most program costs include a materials fee, whether it is special clothing/equipment (dance/sports), classroom materials (art), or books (vocal or instrumental lessons). The Musikgarten materials are designed to be taken home, rather than used in the classroom, and will cost less than \$4 per week for families of children under 5!

### **Relationship Building**

People generally don't care how much you know until they know how much you care. To build a parent-teacher relationship, parents must know how much you care about their children. Take time to talk to parents about their children and other dimensions of their lives. Be enthusiastic about the child's growth and accomplishments. Honor the whole child. Build relationships by insuring that the parents understand the Musikgarten

program and what the benefits are to their child. Discuss and establish realistic expectations. Summarize the main points during the conversations to insure understanding.

Set a goal to have parents participate in every class. Give the adult a positive, fun experience; add one happy child; and you have the recipe for a relationship. The key is for parents to participate. Adults spend thousands of dollars on psycho-therapy to reach their "inner child" and to learn to play. You have the same power in your classes. Use it!

## Welcome Letter

Welcome letters do just that...they welcome new families to your studio and to the class. Take the time to make a personal connection with your families through these letters.

The letters should also offer helpful hints about the class. Include information about:

- directions/parking
- classroom attire
- restroom facilities
- class participation
- reminders of any items that may be needed during the class

Your letter should be exciting and encouraging to the parent and the child. These letters show your commitment to provide a quality education and environment for their child.