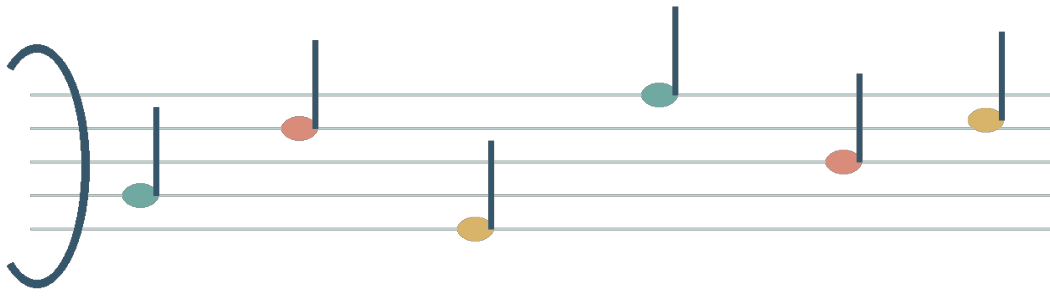


A PARENT'S GUIDE

MLT Piano Programme

Helping musical understanding grow—
in lessons and at home



Listen • Sing • Move • Think • Create

A practical introduction to Music Learning Theory for parents and carers.

Welcome



Thank you for supporting your child's musical journey.

My teaching is informed by Music Learning Theory (MLT), developed from the work of music educator and researcher Edwin Gordon. MLT offers a way of understanding musical development that is rather different from a traditional “learn the notes, practise the piece” approach.

Children develop a deep understanding of music before they fully express, read and create it.

Just as children learn to speak by listening and communicating before they learn to read and write, musical learning begins with listening, singing, movement and making sense of musical patterns.

Your role is not to become your child's music teacher. You provide the environment, encouragement and routines that allow musical understanding to grow.



Environment

Make music part of life



Encouragement

Notice effort and curiosity



Routine

Keep it short and regular

What Makes MLT Different?



Progress is not measured only by how many pieces a child can play or how quickly they can name notes. We look at how a child hears, understands and thinks musically.

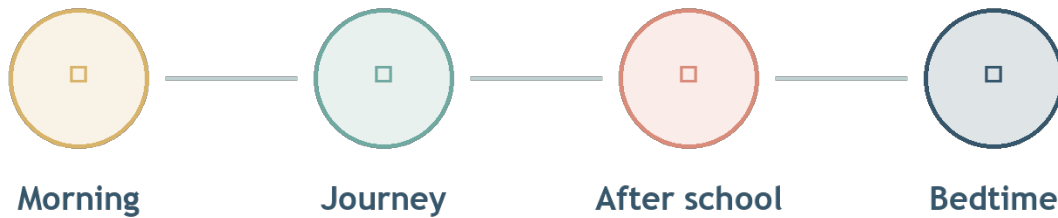
 Listen Absorb a rich musical vocabulary	 Sing & chant Experience melody and rhythm	 Move Feel beat, flow and phrasing
 Patterns Recognise musical building blocks	 Create Improvise and make choices	 Read & write Connect meaning to notation

The goal is not simply to play the right notes. It is to hear, understand, predict, remember, create and communicate music.

Why Listening Matters



Listening is not an optional extra. Regular listening develops musical memory, tonality, rhythm, pattern recognition, confidence and audiation.



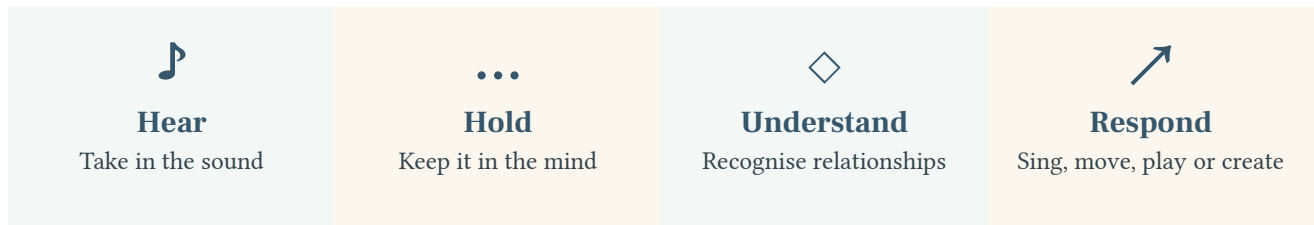
Attach listening to a routine that already exists.

A few relaxed minutes while getting ready, travelling, eating breakfast or winding down can be more valuable than turning listening into another homework task.

What Is Audiation?



Audiation is the ability to hear and understand music in your mind when the sound is no longer physically present.



Audiation is to music what thought is to language.

Singing, chanting, moving, listening and imagining music away from the piano are not distractions from learning. They are part of the learning.

The MLT Learning Journey



These are interconnected experiences, not a rigid staircase. Children revisit them as their musical vocabulary grows.

Notation becomes a meaningful picture of music the child already understands—not a set of symbols decoded mechanically.

Why It May Not Look Like “Just Piano”



A lesson may include singing, chanting, movement, improvising, pattern work or listening. It may not always produce several finished pages of written music.



Voice

A direct route to pitch and rhythm



Body

Beat, flow and phrasing become physical



Imagination

Children experiment and make choices



Keyboard

Technique serves musical intention

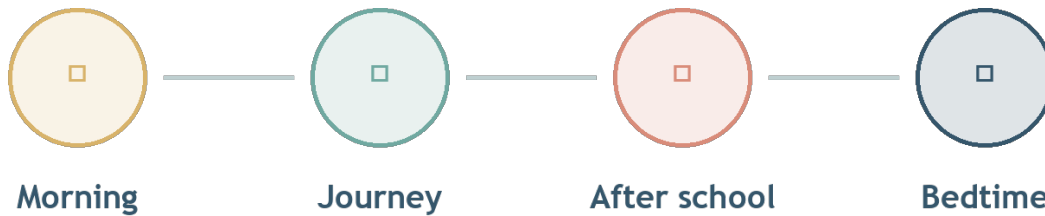
The piano is an important tool, but musical development is bigger than piano technique.

A child who hears what they are about to play, recognises patterns and makes musical decisions is developing deep, transferable musicianship.

Build Music Into Everyday Life



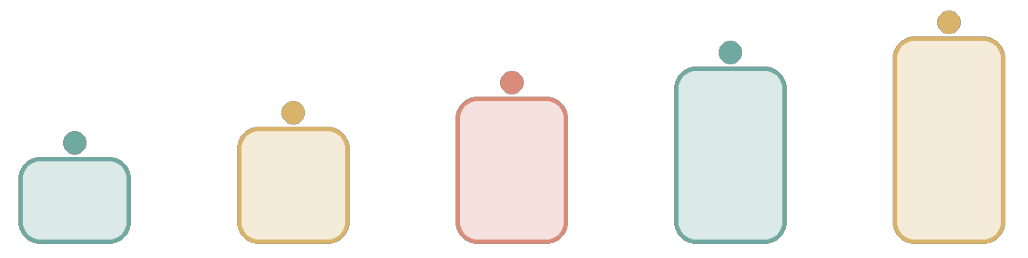
You do not need to be a pianist or music specialist. Consistency and a positive atmosphere matter far more than expert correction.



- Choose one or two reliable listening moments.
- Keep lesson recordings easy to find.
- Let your child join in by singing, moving or simply listening.
- Ask the teacher if a resource or activity is unclear.

Make music a natural part of family life, not another battle to win.

Practise Little and Often



Short, manageable sessions usually help young musicians more than occasional marathons. A small practice that happens is a success.

			
Sing or chant	Repeat	Explore	Focus
Review familiar patterns	Play something known	Improvise or invent	Try one lesson activity

Follow the resources and guidance given after each lesson; expectations will vary with age and stage.

Encourage Musical Thinking



Instead of correcting every note, use prompts that return the musical thinking to your child.

Instead of...	Try...
That's the wrong note.	Listen again—did it sound as you expected?
Start again. You made a mistake.	What part felt good? Which small bit shall we revisit?
Play it properly.	Can you make it sound more flowing / bouncy / calm?
You need to practise longer.	Let's choose one tiny goal for today.

Praise curiosity, effort, listening and creativity—not only perfect performances.

THREE PRIORITIES

What I Ask of Parents



Regular listening

Make it part of the week



Consistent attendance

Learning builds cumulatively



Short regular practice

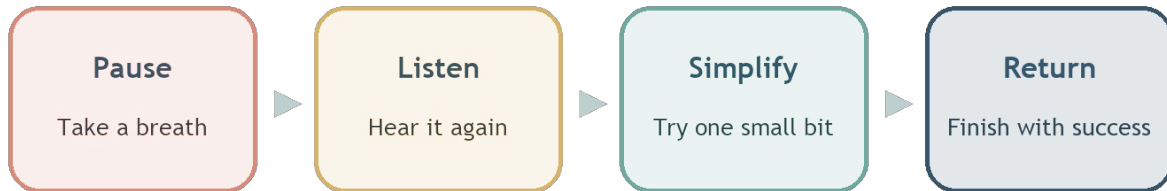
Keep it realistic and positive

You do not need to sit beside your child for every minute of practice, and you do not need to teach the lesson material yourself.

Your job is to create the conditions in which learning can happen.

Please use lesson resources and communicate concerns early. What you notice at home helps me adapt the next lesson and support your child well.

When Practice Gets Stuck



Struggle is a normal part of learning. Avoid turning practice into a battle; you do not need to solve every musical problem at home.

- Return to something familiar.
- Sing or listen before trying to play again.
- Celebrate what your child can do.
- Let me know if the difficulty continues.

It is normal if progress sometimes seems subtle, if reading develops gradually, or if a lesson includes more movement and improvisation than you expected.

Five Keys to Success



1 Listen often Feed the musical brain	2 Attend consistently Build from one experience to the next	3 Practise little and often Keep it manageable	4 Use lesson resources Connect home and lesson learning	5 Encourage enthusiastically Celebrate musical thinking
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Above all, keep music positive.

There will be easy days and difficult days, rapid progress and quieter periods. Your encouragement helps your child understand that music is not simply something to get right —it is something to listen to, understand, explore, create and enjoy.

Together, we can help children become not just capable piano players, but confident, independent and musical thinkers.

Thank you for being part of your child's musical journey. 🎵