

Striking the Right Notes with the Right Music Teacher

Finding the right music teacher can make all the difference between success and failure in a child's music lessons. All music teachers are not the same and do not carry the same credentials. Parents ideally want a teacher who is close, available at the right times and reasonably priced. Charlottesville Music Teachers Association (CMTA) is here to offer the following advice.

When selecting your child's music teacher, it is best to consult with friends, family members and others who are acquainted with area music teachers. Word-of-mouth is often the best resource when seeking the right teacher.

After getting a few teaching prospects, arrange an in-person interview, if possible. This allows you to familiarize yourself with the teachers, ask questions about the teacher's studio policies, expectations and teaching styles. This is also the time to address any concerns you may have.

Once you have completed the interviews, carefully balance all of the elements of personality, interaction with students, commitment to professionalism with price and location. Weigh the pros and cons. Music lessons are core to any child's complete education and making an informed decision about who your child studies with is paramount.

- The above is based on suggestions from the Music Teachers National Association (MTNA) News Release 2011.

Here are some suggestions regarding questions you might ask a teacher:

1. Do you have openings?
2. What methods do you use?
3. What are your expectations regarding group and public performances, and your general expectations?
4. Do you have a studio policy document that I can review privately?
5. Where are you located?
6. Rate? (Expect to spend between \$35 - \$60 an hour)
7. What is your policy regarding make up lessons?
8. What ages do you teach?
9. What is your policy about practice?
10. Are there other events such as the CMTA Festival in which you encourage student participation?

Here are some questions that you might expect from a prospective teacher:

1. How old is your child?
2. Do you have an instrument?
3. Does your child have any experience in playing an instrument?
4. What is the level of his/her experience?
5. How strongly motivated is your child?
6. Based on their activities/school schedule, how much time does your child have to devote to practice each week?
7. Would your child feel more comfortable with a man or woman, or does it matter?
8. Does your child like a particular style of music?