

Selecting a Teacher

FINDING A TEACHER IS ONE OF THE MOST IMPORTANT PROCESSES.

Be careful to find the right kind of teacher for your particular child considering their temperament and way of processing.

As in any profession, there are good teachers, mediocre teachers, and bad teaches. The teacher will have a lot to do with the student's enjoyment and success with lessons and playing.

The following are sources of music teachers:

Music stores, conservatories, college music departments, community and symphony orchestras, on-line listings, classified ads, music and violin shops, the local musician's union, school teachers and, of course, other parents.

It is easy and advisable to vet music teachers online, in social media, and with reliable references. It is not unreasonable to pay a teacher their lesson fee for an interview session.

While looking for a private teacher, be aware that an ad in a newspaper or directory online is not a credential. There are many different and inexpensive ways to vet a potential teacher.

Interviewing and Checking References

Questions to ask of the teacher:

1. How long have you been teaching?

Years of teaching can be a good indication of success in teaching. Always ask for recent references.

2. “Do you perform?” is a good question.

While it is not a prerequisite of being a good teacher, it is a good sign of expertise. It can be helpful to attend a performance that the teacher is in.

3. Do they have children of their own?

While this is not a prerequisite, it has been my experience in hiring teachers and child workers that parents are more experienced and tuned into the needs and complexities of children.

4. Do you specialize in a particular age group?

Some teachers specialize in beginners, intermediates, or advanced students. By asking this question, you can identify the preferences of the teacher as they apply to your children.

5. What are your expectations for the child in regard to practice, performance and production?

While you are asking these questions, try to notice the teacher's temperament, character, and disposition, as that might relate that your particular child's needs.

6. Ask for a current resume and references.

I suggest recent references because old references indicate that the teacher has not been teaching for a while, which should be pursued in further questioning. If the teacher doesn't like being questioned, that can give you additional information.

Suggested fees should be competitive with other teachers in your area which you can find out by asking around or calling music stores where lessons are offered. As of 2020, the following fees are reasonable:

Low: \$20 for a half hour; **High:** \$45 for a half hour

Low: \$30 for an hour; **High:** \$75 for an hour

Prices will be higher if the teacher comes to your home or teaches in a music store.

You can expect the teacher to want advance notice for cancelled lessons and payment for no-shows. Make sure you ask for payment and business policies at the outset.

Questions to ask of parent references:

1. How has your child progressed since working with the teacher?
2. Does your child look forward to the lessons?
3. Is the teacher punctual and honest ?
4. Does the teacher give you input and guidance?
5. Does the teacher seem to enjoy teaching?
6. Does the teacher cancel often?
7. Does the teacher mind if the parent occasionally sits in on a lesson?
8. How is the teacher's patience, intuition, and sensitivity? How well, in general, do they communicate?