

Taylor and her Guitar FLJ, 2014, N.16. John T. McMahan III

We as parents want our children to be an integral part of the world and the main part of our family. In a 21st century economy that is asking our children to be highly skilled in technology and other computer related fields. An understanding of how we acquire those skills is critical in how successful we will be in this brave new world. Preparing our kids for this world can happen in many ways and often times a collection of educational skill sets that have been accessed along this educational journey will give us a clue where our child is headed into this vast, specialized work force. I have talked much about reading and writing which is the key to ultimate success. There are so many more periphery intelligences and subject matter that play a role in amplifying and molding reading literacy and oftentimes gets our children passionate and excited about being a fantastic communicator through writing.

Howard Gardner has made an incredible career over his multiple intelligences paradigm and I want to spend some time talking about my favorite intelligence of his and how it can impact your child's reading literacy and writing. Musical connections are one of the main ways that the youth of today breathe, communicate and feel within their daily lives, nearly moment to moment. Many kids from elementary school to adults have an iPod connected to their headset, listening to their favorite music that motivates them and makes them feel good. You cannot go to a school, park or sporting event without seeing this musical connection. These amalgamations are critical for all of us because music plays such an important part of the fabric of our being.

Where this can be quite interesting is in our little children, how and what kind of music we introduce to them and how those musical patterns matriculate into other things. We as parents can have such a huge part of introductory musical moments such as the music we share with our kids to instruments we introduce to them to begin to play. Let's say if your child has piano lessons or violin lessons, there musical pattern might be to investigate composers on the internet or listen to great pianists that may inspire new musical motivations. I can remember vividly, if I heard a great song or saw a great performance that I would go into our music room and be inspired to play and possibly even create a piece of music. Music has a way of grabbing on to your soul and filling you with a passion that is indescribable. As these musical feelings grow so does your curiosity about music as a whole and constant research about a band, to a type of guitar you may want is elevated. Fantastic opportunities for reading endless material on music encompasses your spirit and is a great way of increasing literacy from vocabulary to reading fluency.

A serious musician may grow from these initial musical introductions that you give your child or just another exciting opportunity to increase reading literacy and a shared touch point that you have created with your child. Though some music is generational, to this day my son and I share musical opinions and stories every time we get together and in fact he has introduced me to some of my new, favorite bands. It is one of our greatest connections as he has become an adult, and always proves to be exciting banter. One of his favorite things to do is play me a song on you tube be it a new band from England or an American Idol episode I missed. I look so forward to these chats and parents, you will too. Remember musical connectedness can start at an early age and has many benefits from reading literacy to family conversation. You never know, you may have the next **Taylor** Swift sitting in front of you playing you a beautiful song.