

Who Says Music is Essential?

The following are transcripts of MENC's "**Why Music?**" public service messages.

Hey there. I'm **Ricky Skaggs**. Parents, listen up. Want to know an easy way to help your kids get the most out of the new school year? Music. I'm not talking about buying them a new CD at the record store. I'm talking about getting them psyched about learning music at school. Their school has a music teacher just waiting to open their young minds and spirits to all the benefits music education provides: The joy of playing music with other kids in class or school band. The sense of pride from mastering an instrument - whether the violin or their own voice. The way learning music has been proven to enhance the skills kids use when learning math and science. It's a fact. But maybe it's better to just tell your kids that music class may be the most fun they can have at school this year without getting in trouble. Now that'll get their attention!

Want to know which teacher your kids are most likely to choose as a role model this year in school? Hey, I'm **Suzy Bogguss**. It's the person who teaches them about music. Not sports or English or history. Music. Surprised? You shouldn't be. Music teachers have always played an important role in the lives of their students. They help our kids tap into their natural creativity. They teach them about cooperation and self-discipline. It's a bonus that when kids have learned about scales and clefs, they find math and English concepts easier to grasp. That's because of how music education expands a young person's "spatial I.Q." Reading poetry or solving an equation is easier if kids know their sharps and flats. It's a fact! Help your kids get to know the music teacher at their school. Get them involved in music this year!

Hey, I'm **Bonnie Raitt**. Remember how excited you were as a kid to go back to school at the end of the summer? Seeing old friends, making new ones. Getting new books and a new locker. A "clean" slate. And music class. That special room where you went to sing, and perform with your friends, and learn all sorts of interesting stuff about great composers and instruments and different kinds of music! We remember our music teachers because they were so passionate about helping us learn to love music. They helped spark a love for listening to notes and voices and rhythms that continues to enrich our lives even today. Know what? I bet your kids feel the same way about music class. Ask 'em. And make sure they get involved with music in school this year!

Hey there. This is **Gloria Estefan**. The first few weeks of the new school year are such a great time in a kid's life. They may not admit it to you, but they're psyched about being back. As parents, we always wonder how we can help our kids keep up that sense of enthusiasm for the whole year. Here's a suggestion: encourage them to get the most out of music class. "But music's just a special," they might say. "Once a week." Unfortunately, that may be true. But remind them that it's forty-five of the best minutes they'll have all week. That their music teachers want to open their minds to the amazing power of rhythm and melody and harmony. And that learning to make music is cooler than just about anything else. Except maybe getting a locker next to their best friend!

Hello, I'm **Peter Nero**. You know the expression "practice makes perfect?" Well, it sure is true in music. And practicing music is one of the most valuable ways a student can spend time. A young person who studies music reinforces teamwork, communication skills, self-discipline, and creativity - all qualities kids need to be successful in their other schoolwork. Parents, think about encouraging your children to try out several instruments at school until they find the one that really "clicks." Get to know the school's music teacher, and encourage your child to join school music ensembles. And please don't forget that your kids all have an instrument that's free and sounds wonderful: their voices!

Want to know one of the best ways to help kids do better in school? Hi, I'm **Patti Austin**. I visit a lot of schools both at home and when I'm on the road, and I hear too many students say, "School's boring." And I say to them, "What about music class?" You know, learning music opens up the mind like nothing else. Performing in a school music ensemble is fun and challenging for kids. It encourages creativity while instilling self-discipline. And learning music even develops something called "spatial IQ," which helps students tackle the challenges of other subjects like math and science. Some night this week, sit down as a family and play your kids some music you really love. Then listen to what your kids like and compare notes. Even better, sit down at the piano and sing some songs together! Help your kids learn to love music!

Hello there, I'm **Nerissa Niels**. Kids have a lot on their plates these days. It can be hard, as parents, to stop and think about how something like learning music now can help them in the future. Music helps kids because it's a performing art, and children need to learn to perform well to succeed in society. Getting an 85% on a math test is pretty good - but hitting 85% of the right notes during a concert isn't good enough for most music students, or their teachers! A special kind of practice and preparation goes into the discipline of performing music. And it helps kids perform better in all areas of their lives.

How can we help our kids prepare for the future? Hi, I'm **Robert Cray**. I don't have to tell you that children face pretty tough challenges these days. It can be hard to keep them involved in their schoolwork. We adults need to make sure our kids find something in school that really sparks their interest...like music! Not only is music in school fun, but studies show that kids who learn music find science and math concepts easier to grasp, and that they show significant increases in self-esteem and thinking skills. And music and creativity go together, too. Your school music teacher can tell you all about it. So help prepare your children for life. Encourage them to learn to love music.

Homework. Soccer. Part-time jobs. The internet! Are you and your busy kids overlooking something important? Don't forget music! This is **Richard Marx**. Studying music is one of the most valuable ways a student can spend time. Practicing music reinforces teamwork, communication skills, self-discipline, and creativity - all qualities kids need to be successful in their other schoolwork. These skills will help kids later, too, in their jobs in and in society. Help your kids learn that there's more to music than what they hear on the radio. The more they learn about it, the more they'll enjoy listening to their favorite tunes. Then, maybe they can even explain to you why they think their own music is so cool! Hey, turn off the TV and play music with your kids!

Everyone loves to listen to music. But have you ever stopped to think about why it's great for kids to learn to play music? Hi, I'm **Nitanju Bolade-Casel** from Sweet Honey in the Rock. These days, it seems people focus way too much on the economics of school music instead of on the amazing positive effects it has on kids. It's such a thrill for a child when he or she gets that first instrument, or masters a simple part on the flute, or performs a showstopper with the school chorus. And there's so much music out there to play and listen to! When kids learn to appreciate a show tune, a Beethoven symphony, or traditional African music, in addition to what they hear on the radio, it opens their young minds to the diversity of the world around them. Make sure your kids learn to love music. Support your school music program!

One of the many things people expect schools to do these days is inspire students to be creative. Hey y'all, **Kix Brooks** from Brooks & Dunn here. Educators and psychologists agree. They say that helping young minds tap their creativity is just as important as mastering math and English skills. And, of course, all parents love to experience the joy of seeing and hearing something their child has created. Well, one of the best places creativity is actively encouraged is in music class. Kids working out a phrase in a choir part. Learning technical stuff like fingerings on an instrument. Or even composing and arranging music on computers. Music classrooms are bursting with creative energy just waiting to be explored by young minds. Don't let it go to waste. Support your school music program!

Hi there, I'm **Sara Evans**. One of the great things about music is how it brings people together. Kids like to hang out, listen to music, and talk about what's hot - and what's not - on the music scene. And playing instruments and singing provides a way for young people to get together and interact in a cooperative and respectful way. Kids who play in school ensembles understand that every part has to work together for the result to be the magical art called music. Your local school music program provides a golden opportunity for a child to experience the rewards of learning music. Why not pay a visit to the music teacher to find out what's going on? Get your kids involved with school music!

Hello, this is **Ronnie Dunn** from Brooks & Dunn. Why do kids love music? Maybe it's because music is fun - plain and simple. It offers kids a way to move their bodies and use their voices. It opens up their minds to dream about where they can go and what they can do when they get older. Music is also such a valuable form of communication. Our kids - American kids - come from more cultures and backgrounds than in any nation in history. And sometimes the most fertile common ground they share is that of music. Music classrooms are great places for kids to explore their creativity, develop skills, and interact with other young people. Help your children get involved in music. Support your school music program!