

When parents sign their child up for voice lessons, naturally they want to be sure of a few key things:

1. Does the teacher know what he or she is doing?
2. Is the teacher a good match for my child?
3. Is my child making progress?

One of the easiest ways to be sure of all this is to observe a lesson and see for yourself, of course. However, this may not always be the best route for a few reasons — although some situations are certainly different. The following is what I have found works best for me in my voice studio.

At the First Lesson

I always welcome parents to sit in on their child's first singing lesson! This way they know what I am about and what they are paying for. It's tough to start singing for someone that you have never met, and having Mom or Dad there can be a bonus. For some kids, singing comes naturally at lesson number one, though, and they may prefer their parent NOT be there! I let the parent and child decide among themselves in this instance.

After the First Lesson

Going forward, I prefer students attend lessons on their own. The reason why many music teachers prefer to work one on one with students is because it's likely the young student will not open up to the teacher with two adults in the room. That can be stressful and take the fun out of singing!

Not only that, some parents have the tendency to play armchair critic when it is solely the teacher's job to offer vocal advice during lesson time. It is crucial that parents be respectful of the teacher and do not overstep their boundaries.

Naturally there are unique situations to consider. There may also be times when a young student has physical or mental limitations, and having a parent there is necessary.

My Studio Policies

I've found that it's good to retain some flexibility, but to remain firm about general studio policies, and this certainly includes who can attend voice lessons. As long as you remain open and consistent with communication, I have found that parents are fine with my arrangement. You can measure their kid's singing progress in other ways (practice time, performances, etc.).

To find the best teacher for your child, you may need to sit in on a few voice lessons... and ask a lot of questions! You will find that the time spent doing this is well worth it once your child gains skills and confidence as a singer.