



ICYOLA Academy Parent Handbook

October 2025 - July 2026

Overview:

The ICYOLA Academy offers free music lessons and instrument rentals for children in Los Angeles. Our mission is to cultivate musical expression as a vehicle for personal development, and to bring to fruition the full musical and academic potential of children in inner-city Los Angeles. ICYOLA envisions a Los Angeles where all inner-city youth can access music education, developing them into confident, disciplined individuals ready for success in all areas of life. We believe musical excellence and personal growth create a foundation for lifelong achievement, community connection, and meaningful societal contribution.

Instruments:

At the beginning of each school year, each student will be loaned an instrument at no cost to the family. The family is responsible for the safekeeping of this instrument, and ICYOLA will cover the costs of repairs if needed under normal circumstances. However, if an instrument is ever intentionally damaged, or if serious negligence leads to damage, the family will be responsible for covering the cost of repairs. Here are some tips for instrument safety:

- Parents are encouraged to observe a student's introductory lessons. Parents should learn how to assemble and disassemble their child's instrument and properly store the instrument in its case.
- Do not leave instruments in the car. Extreme temperatures and humidity can cause wooden instruments to crack.
- Remind your child to be gentle with their instrument. Instruments are fragile, and one drop can seriously damage an instrument.
- String players should always loosen their bows after they are done practicing.

Grade Levels:

If you are enrolling in the ICYOLA Academy for the first time, and your child has no prior experience playing their instrument, they will join the **PRELUDE** class.

Students who have completed **Prelude** will be invited to join **INTERMEZZO**. Students enrolling at ICYOLA may audition to skip Prelude and be placed into Intermezzo if they have taken at least one year of music lessons.

Intermezzo students who have developed strong fundamental skills on their instrument will be invited to audition for our highest grade level, **JUNIOR SYMPHONY**. Auditions will be held at the end of each semester. Students enrolling at ICYOLA for the first time may audition for Junior Symphony if they have taken at least three years of music lessons.

Schedule:

Strings:

Every Wednesday, all violin, viola and cello students will receive a 30 minute individual lesson with an ICYOLA faculty member at the ICYOLA Office. These lessons will be scheduled between 3pm and 8:30pm. Students will be assigned a time slot for their lesson at the beginning of the academic year. ICYOLA will do its best to accommodate each family's availability, but we cannot guarantee your preferred time slot. Individual lessons will only be offered on Wednesdays.

In addition to their individual lessons, all students must participate in weekly group classes on Sunday afternoons at Knox Presbyterian Church. These group classes will teach our students the skills specific to orchestral music, and reinforce what they are learning in their individual lessons. Group classes are also essential to developing community within our organization.

Woodwinds:

Every Sunday, all flute and clarinet students will receive a 30 minute individual lesson with an ICYOLA faculty member at the ICYOLA Office. These lessons will be scheduled between 3pm and 6pm. Students will be assigned a time slot for their lesson at the beginning of the academic year. ICYOLA will do its best to accommodate each family's availability, but we cannot guarantee your preferred time slot. Individual lessons will only be offered on Wednesdays. As of the 2026/27 school year, there are no group classes for woodwind students.

Sunday Strings Group Class Schedule:

Jr. Symphony:	3:00pm-4:30pm
Prelude:	3:00pm-4:00pm
Intermezzo:	4:00pm-5:00pm

Attendance Requirement:

Students must attend at least **90%** of their classes. If students fall below this threshold, they may be asked to leave the program. ICYOLA will thoroughly review the circumstances of a student's absences before they are asked to leave the program.

Due to our faculty's limited availability, we will not be able to offer make-up lessons if a student cancels their lesson, even with appropriate notice. In that scenario, lessons will resume the following Wednesday. Faculty may make exceptions on a case by case basis.

Recital Attendance:

ICYOLA will host a recital for all students at the end of each semester. Recitals are essential to a young musician's development. If a student does not participate in a recital, they may not be invited to return to the academy for the following semester. ICYOLA will provide families with at least two months notice before a recital, so the family can make appropriate arrangements.

Punctuality:

In order to accommodate as many families as possible, faculty members teach lessons back to back. Because of this, families **must** arrive on time. Teachers will not be able to extend classes if a student arrives late. ICYOLA asks that families arrive 10 minutes prior to their assigned lesson time. If a family is more than 10 minutes late, the teacher has the right to cancel the lesson.

Practice:

Consistent practice is far and away the most important factor in a student's success. Students will receive a spiral bound practice log at the beginning of the academic year. In this practice log, teachers, students and parents will keep track of what a student is meant to be practicing each week. Teachers will set practice goals for their students each week, and students are responsible for writing down how many minutes they have practiced each day. **Parents must sign the practice log before each lesson to certify that what their kid has recorded is true and accurate.**

If a student forgets to bring his or her practice log to class or brings a blank practice log for **two weeks consecutively**, they will be sent home without a lesson.

If students forget to bring their practice log to class or bring a blank practice log for **four weeks consecutively**, they will be asked to turn in their instrument, and **they will be placed at the back of our waiting list to rejoin the program.**

A practice log will be considered "blank" if the student did not record any practice throughout the entire week.

Students will be rewarded for consistent practicing. **If a student practices *every single day* for an entire month, they will win their choice of:**

- 1) Box of munchkins from Dunkin Donuts
- 2) \$10 Amazon Gift Card
- 3) Milkshake from Chick Fil A
- 4) \$10 Starbucks Gift Card
- 5) Giant Candy Bar (Hersheys, Reese's or Kit Kat)

Written Homework

Students will be given a written homework assignment each week. Every assignment is due one week after it was assigned. These assignments help students develop an understanding of music reading and music theory. Homework is not graded, but it must be turned in. If a student fails to turn in at least 90% of their homework assignments by the end of the year, they may be asked to leave the program.

Playing Assessments:

Twice a year, students will participate in a playing assessment. They will perform the music they are learning in their classes to a panel of ICYOLA faculty members, and will receive a grade on their performance. If this evaluation reveals that a student is not practicing and not committed to their lessons, they may be asked to leave the program.

Parent/Guardian Signature:

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