

## Obtaining an Instrument

The best option for most families to obtain an instrument is to rent-to-(optionally)-own one from a music store. Stores have both new and high-quality used instruments available, and they offer a 4-month trial period for a very reasonable fee (generally \$30-50 for the entire 4 months). This would give your child the benefit of using a high-quality instrument at a low cost, with no obligation to purchase the instrument. At the end of the trial period, you could return the instrument if your child decided not to play it, or you could enter into a monthly payment plan, which could be as low as \$24 per month, depending on the instrument and whether or not you add a maintenance plan. During the payment plan period, you can return the instrument at any time and only owe for the amount of time you had the instrument, as long as it hasn't been damaged. If you haven't returned the instrument by the end of the payment plan, when you have met the purchase price, you would then own the instrument. [Here is a link to a rental brochure](#) from The Music Mart as an example. Other good music stores in the area include Groth Music, Schmitt Music, and Eckroth Music. All of those stores have very similar plans, but the total cost might be different from one store to another. All of the stores would deliver the instrument to JMS.

We are planning to have a virtual instrument display and question/answer session with The Music Mart on May 20, to explain their rent-to-own program, show the instruments they have available, and allow families to ask questions and/or sign up for an instrument. More information (including a Zoom link) will be sent once we finalize the time for the virtual display. In case you are unable to attend the virtual display, The Music Mart's phone number and website are listed on the next page, along with a few other area music stores.

[The Music Mart](#) (Mankato, Lamberton, Rochester, and Faribault)-- the Mankato number is 507-345-1399

[Groth Music](#) (Bloomington)-- 952-948-5200

[Schmitt Music](#) (many metro locations)-- the Edina number is 612-238-9930

[Eckroth Music](#) (Roseville)-- 651-704-9654

Another option is to purchase a new or used instrument outright (at a store, online, through a classified ad, etc.). Sometimes this can be a good option, but it has many potential drawbacks:

- If your child quits, you're stuck with the instrument unless you can sell it.
- There would probably not be a maintenance agreement, so if anything goes wrong and the instrument needs to be repaired, you'd probably be stuck paying the bill, which could be quite expensive.
- If the instrument isn't in good playing condition, your child will have difficulty playing it. Learning an instrument is hard enough when it is in good working order-- nothing kills the joy of learning to play an instrument like trying to play one that doesn't work properly.
- Many places sell cheap instruments that look good to the untrained eye but are of such low quality that some band directors call them ISOs-- instrument-shaped objects. They will probably work okay for a while, but if anything goes wrong, repair shops generally can't fix them because they don't have the parts for them. Please, please, please... [read the information in this link](#) before purchasing an instrument anywhere other than a reputable music store.

If you already have an instrument that you want your child to play, please have me look it over to be sure it's in good playing condition (again, trying to play an instrument that is not in good condition would be very frustrating and disheartening to a beginner).

Occasionally, the school has older instruments available to borrow in cases of financial hardship. Currently, we only have clarinets and trombones available. Let me know if you would like to discuss borrowing one.