

YOUR CHILD AND PIANO LESSONS

There are many great reasons for your child to learn to play the piano. Studies have shown that participation in music motivates students to stay in school, and that students in the arts are more cooperative with teachers and peers, more self-confident and better able to express their ideas. But perhaps the best reason to learn a musical instrument is for the pure fun of it. The piano is an ideal instrument on which to start music lessons. It is capable of playing melody and harmony simultaneously. Even if a student decides to take up another instrument, a background in piano gives him an important foundation in the fundamentals of music.

WHEN SHOULD MY CHILD START PIANO LESSONS?

- On average, age seven or eight is a good time to start, although students can begin earlier. A child's attention span and eagerness to learn are the best indicators of readiness.
- Remember: it's never too late to start!

HOW SHOULD I GO ABOUT FINDING A GOOD TEACHER?

- Ask friends, whose children take lessons, about their teacher. Search the internet for professional piano teachers in your community, or contact your local music store or school music faculty for suggestions.
- Many teachers have websites. Research their policies, philosophy, education and rates before meeting with them. Ideally, a teacher should have a degree in piano or piano pedagogy.
- Is the teacher affiliated with professional music organizations and do they participate in continuing education programs?
- Does the teacher have a sense of humor, and are they compatible with your child's personality?

ARE PRIVATE LESSONS THE ONLY OPTION?

- While private one-on-one instruction is ideal, there are other learning alternatives. Some teachers offer group instruction, individual lessons, or a combination of the two. For some students, group lessons are great for learning early keyboard skills, music theory, and ensemble, and for nurturing a sense of social camaraderie with other piano students.

WHAT REASONABLE EXPECTATIONS SHOULD I EXPECT FROM THE TEACHER?

- The ability to build a student's self-esteem through realistic affirmation and showing genuine concern for them.
- The ability to select interesting and varied music that emphasizes technical development; the best "musical" learning occurs *through* music itself, not just finger exercises.
- Many good teachers emphasize the development of ear-training, sight-singing, and analytical skills.

WHAT DO I NEED TO DO IN ORDER TO ENSURE MY CHILD'S SUCCESS?

- A well-tuned piano, an appropriate bench, good lighting, and a quiet room are essential to good practice.
- Avoid distractions from TV, video games, or other media, and establish a daily practice routine.
- Establish clear priorities. Avoid over-scheduling your child's activities.
- Listen to your child practice and attend their recitals. Your presence is a demonstration of interest and support.
- Take your child to concerts. Musical performances can inspire and encourage them.

SHOW ENTHUSIASM & ENCOURAGE YOUR CHILD'S PROGRESS

- Encourage your child to be creative at the piano – to improvise, to compose, to experiment with new sounds.
- Be open to contemporary & popular music. Students are highly motivated to play their favorite music on the piano. Resist the urge to impose your own tastes or values on them!
- Success at the piano depends on the process and not immediate gratification. This is one of the reasons that children who do well in music often achieve academic success as well.
- Through the habit of self-discipline, students develop the confidence to master difficult tasks and to pursue challenging goals in other aspects of life.