



Younger Ages (3-5) Policy.

“My child is younger than 6-years old... but I want them to take piano lessons NOW. How do you navigate younger students? What do you require of them?”

Great questions! Below is the main point of what I require of younger students (below the age of 6) BEFORE enrolling them in piano lessons...

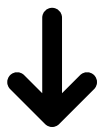
★ **My studio requires a minimum lesson of 30 minutes. If your child doesn't follow instructions well for you or is prone to throwing tantrums for you, I suggest that you wait to start piano lessons...**

I deal with hyperactivity, random questions, boredom, and other challenges almost every lesson! I never expect a younger student to stay still and silent for 30 minutes. Goodness knows, I don't even expect a 14 year old to! I have plenty of lesson plans, redirection techniques, and games to offset anything that might come up for younger ages. I do not expect a child to act like an adult.

However, I cannot work with a student who simply does not listen to or obey me. If the student is consistently blowing up in tantrums or is refusing to follow instructions, I cannot teach them anything. I welcome ALL ages and skill levels in my studio, and I never refuse a student simply because it might be “harder” to teach them. But to save a frustrating process for both of us, I ask that you prayerfully consider the maturity level of your child BEFORE enrolling them in lessons!

Below are the concepts and foundations I begin with in piano lessons for EVERY younger student!

Perhaps, if lessons don't seem possible right now, you can work on the points below to give your child a jumpstart for when they ARE ready for piano! That, or if you believe your child is ready for lessons now, you can still give your kiddo a jumpstart by working on these points at home!



1.) First, buy a piano!

The ideal piano is an acoustic with a full length keyboard (88 keys) and pedals. Acoustic pianos consist of spinet pianos, upright pianos, baby grand pianos, or grand pianos. However, home space and your budget are a huge factor in your decision, so if you plan to opt for a **digital keyboard/piano** instead, please buy one that **has 66 - 88 weighted keys**. Weighted keys are very important if you go the digital route. It will be closer to the feeling of playing on an original acoustic piano.

- Make sure your acoustic piano is **TUNED every 1-3 years** and has a piano bench.
- Make sure your digital piano has a **stand for the keyboard to sit on, a stand for music, an adjustable piano bench, and a pedal attachment**.

2.) Put the piano in a part of the house that isn't lonely or in an area the student often plays with toys/electronics or watches TV.

We must associate practice with practice. If the piano is in an area where the child is consistently motivated to learn, then practice time will be associated with learning. If your piano is in an area where the child naps or sleeps, then practice time will be associated with sleepiness. If the piano is in a room where TV is watched and games are played, the student will be distracted and want to play! Your environment plays a significant role in whether or not learning and growing can take place.

- The best place to put a piano for maximized practice time is in a **living room area** where the TV is out of sight, a **school room**, or in a **designated "piano" area**.

3.) Acoustic Pianos Should Be Kept Healthy and Tuned!

A real acoustic piano is perishable if you don't take care of it properly. **A healthy piano has clean piano keys, nothing heavy on top of the lid, is tuned every 1-3 years, and food and drink is kept away from the piano**. If taken care of properly, an acoustic piano can last anywhere from 100 to 400 years! Your piano could live longer than you! I myself own an upright piano that is nearing 200 years old. If you don't know any piano tuners, or want to know proper cleaning techniques, send me a text or an email!

4.) Avoid Making Piano Practice A Negative Consequence!!

Practicing shouldn't be a frustrating time where "I have to sit down and listen to mom and dad instead of play." Piano practice is a part of learning and growing! Without practice, I will not grow. Practicing is how I can hear my pieces get better and better each day. One day at a time!

- **Once we use practice time as a "negative consequence" it loses its true value! Please avoid phrases like this...** "No XYZ until you practice!" "You're not listening/You got it wrong! Now we have to play it X more times!" "You didn't practice today. Go practice right now or I will XYZ!"
- **Instead, use phrases like this...** "Why do we have to practice? To grow in piano!" "You're not listening. Looks like you may need XYZ when we're done practicing. Let's finish our What to Do first." "Looks like you haven't practiced yet today. We want to make our practice goal from Mrs. Hannah. Time to practice!" "Sounds like you want to XYZ. We need to make our practice goal from Mrs. Hannah, so let's finish practicing first."

5.) Encourage Your Child to Explore the Piano AND Practice.

This is about developing a sense of the everyday normalcy about the piano. It's been around the house for as long as they can remember. Sister and brother play on it, sometimes mom or dad, even house guests play on the piano sometimes. Normalcy will give your younger child curiosity and courage to play.

- Encourage your child to **explore the piano by pushing the keys with their fingers**. Try to avoid letting them push piano keys with their head, toes, or really any other body part!!
- **It will seem agonizing at first** - because they seem to be hitting "random notes," **BUT this actually helps with familiarity!** How the keys look, what keys make certain sounds, and how to press the key to make a sound. This saves time in recognizing key colors and learning how to push the keys.

6.) The Difference Between their Right and Left Sides.

In music, the left hand plays **LOW** notes, and the right hand plays **HIGH** notes! You can differentiate left and right for your child by having them play on the leftmost side of the piano (the low notes) with their left hand, and then the rightmost side (the high notes) with their right hand. You can also play "left and right" hand games too. This saves some time for learning positions and range for the student.

7.) Speak and Read the Music Alphabet. (A, B, C, D, E, F, + G.)

In music, we use the first 7 letters of the English reading alphabet to mark the names of certain white keys and lines/spaces on the staff. A wonderful help to jumpstart your child's piano lessons, is to have them know how to speak, write, and recognize these 7 letters fluently. Recognizing and speaking the music alphabet forwards AND backwards is one of the most time consuming parts of piano lessons for younger students!

8.) Speak and Read their Finger Numbers. (1, 2, 3, 4, +5)

In music, we use the numbers 1 through 5 of the English numeric system to name each finger on our left and right hands. Finger 1 is associated with the thumb. Then, we continue to count each finger accordingly. Finger 2 (pointer finger), finger 3 (middle finger), finger 4 (ring finger), and finger 5 (the pinky). By naming each finger number, or playing games with this concept, you can really push your child forward in learning music! Being able to name each finger number on demand is one of the most time consuming parts of piano lessons for younger students!

Love in Music,
Hannah E. Adhikari