

## **What is the ideal age for a child to start learning the piano?**

Since all children have different skills and abilities, the perfect age to start piano lessons depends on the individual child. There is no *right* age to begin piano lessons. However, between the ages of six and seven, children's intelligence, enthusiasm, and fine motor skills combine to give them the best chance.

Children who start to learn the piano at a later age are able to cope with a more demanding workload. They gain new skills and understanding more rapidly than younger children, often catching up with them very quickly.

Children aged four to five are able to start piano lessons if they can concentrate, follow two and three step instructions, and count to four. It is also helpful, but not essential, that they know letters A to G of the alphabet.

There are three main factors to consider when determining if a child is ready for piano lessons: academic skills, emotional maturity, and natural musical abilities.

### **Academic skills**

Addition and subtraction are important skills used in music. Music is divided into small sections called bars. Each bar has a given number of beats. Students must remember the

number of beats each type of note is worth (for example ♩ is one beat, ♪ is two beats, ♫ is a half beat).

The student also needs to make sure each bar has the correct number of beats by adding the different note values together. If a child cannot do simple arithmetic such as  $1 + 3 = 4$ , or  $4 - 2 = 2$ , then he or she may have difficulty when it comes to counting.

Piano teachers use a notebook to write down what the student needs to practise. It is important to make sure the student is following all of the instructions correctly. If a child cannot read, it will be the parent's responsibility to supervise daily practice sessions. If a parent is unable to devote that much time, it is best to wait until the child is old enough to read the teacher's notes and practise on their own.

### **Emotional maturity**

Emotional maturity is necessary because studying an instrument takes a lot of patience, concentration and repetition. If a child gets easily frustrated or bored, or is unwilling to accept constructive feedback, then he or she isn't ready for piano lessons.

### **Natural Ability**

Some children have natural musical abilities. They tend to dance and clap when they hear music; or hum along to the radio, or sing to themselves. If there's a piano in the home, does the child try to play tunes on it? Can he or she sing reasonably well in tune? These are indications that a child may have a natural 'ear' for music

**Time¶**

Many people underestimate the amount of time it takes to learn an instrument like the piano. The average piano lesson is at least 30 minutes once a week. Moreover, children (and often a supervising parent) must set aside at least 15-30 minutes a day, a minimum of five times a week, to practise the piano. Younger children need a supervising parent to be present and available as many concepts need adult reinforcement.

I recommend an initial consultation lesson, which is absolutely free, as I think it's important to meet face-to-face before making any commitments.