

I want to begin by thanking you for providing your child with the opportunity to take piano lessons. Apart from the obvious skills of learning how to play the piano and how to read music, several less obvious skills will develop:

- The knowledge that problems can have more than one solution (and questions can have multiple answers)
- An understanding of historical time periods, the role of music played during that period of time, and the relationship to other arts
- Self-discipline
- Risk-taking
- Metacognition (thinking about their thinking)
- Reacting to mistakes in appropriate ways
- Dealing with subtleties (small differences can have large effects)
- Expression emotion through the performance of music

The Lesson

Your child will learn through his/her relationship with me, and in order to form a relationship of trust and fun, we need to be able to communicate - just the two of us. The child needs to get used to my way of saying and correcting things, and I need to get used to the child's natural and comfortable behavior. This does not occur when a parent becomes involved in the lesson and makes comments about the child's performance/behavior. This causes stress in the child and interrupts the flow of instruction. (If I have issues with behavior or anything else I will stop the lesson and speak with you about it.)

Please come to the lesson with a book to read or something else to do for those times when I do not need your participation in the lesson. I will make comments from time to time and I will ask you to participate in the lesson as I see a need. (Expect to participate in the

lesson if your child is between the ages of four and six and taking lessons for the first time.)

Mistakes

Mistakes are good; mistakes are fine. If we are not learning if we are not making mistakes. We learn by making mistakes. I expect mistakes during a lesson and they don't bother me. They inform my teaching. I know highly intelligent people that are so afraid of making a mistake that they limit their daily choices and activities and never reach their full potential.

Your Role as Parent

I expect parents to attend lessons. Children – especially young children – often do not remember how to do a task after a few minutes. This is where I can use your help. Having regular times helps – either once during the day or several smaller sessions.

I expect regular (daily) practice and you may need to encourage your child to practice. Practice is based upon goals, not the clock. Playing through songs and stopping when the alarm goes off is not practicing. There is a difference between playing and practicing. (Please consider your child's schedule before committing to piano lessons. Missed lessons due to sports activities limit progress.)

I didn't like practicing when I started. (My teacher even assigned work when I went on summer vacation!) I don't know how my life would have turned out if I had been allowed quit lessons. Music has allowed me to travel around the world, appear on television and to compose songs that are played on the Internet, Pandora, Spotify, iTunes, and airlines.

Don't get upset when you hear mistakes. Songs should sound terrible at first; this is to be expected.

Please follow my directions. If you (or your partner) feel the need to teach your child a differently please let me know and I will cancel lessons. This causes stress and confusion with the child who naturally wants to obey their parent(s) as well as their piano teacher.

My Role as Teacher

It is my role to assign music and learning materials based upon my understanding of your child's emotional, physical and mental capabilities. Every child is different; for some, progress is fast - for others not so much. Expect me to ask questions during the year as lessons progress.

If your child is not making adequate progress (or there are behavioral issues) I will speak with you and *may* place them on four weeks of probation. If performance does not improve after this time, I will cancel lessons.

Cancellations

Life happens. I may need to cancel lessons from time to time and I will provide you with as much advance notice as is possible when I need to cancel a lesson. Please do the same with me.

Please do not bring a sick child to lessons.