

Piano Lessons and Life Skills

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What motivates a parent to send their child to piano lessons? Men and women who had piano lessons in their youth are most likely to have their children attend piano lessons. Sometimes, parents find themselves affording their child a piano education after being deprived of it when they were young. Others love the instrument so much. Practically parents want an activity that their child will pursue on a long-term basis and enjoy it as well.

Some parents, however, still need a compelling reason to sign up for piano lessons. There are just too numerous competing activities such as swimming, gymnastics, art classes, and sports lessons. Contented with their child's multitude of talents, there is really no urgent desire for a concert pianist in the family. Are there other benefits to piano lessons aside from adeptness in playing music?

First benefit is the ability to handle pressures in life. Piano students become proficient in handling stress as a natural part of learning. The excellent execution of a musical piece reflects the countless hours that a student must practice at home to be able to play their best. The skills acquired in controlling one's nerves in various music performances are transferable and these life skills will last a lifetime.

Second benefit is the ability to respond to criticism. Piano students learn to work under the close scrutiny of a mentor, in this case, their piano teacher. Students learn to accept advice and feedback from their teacher who they view as the expert in that field. It produces adults who are more considerate to opinions different from their own.

Third benefit is the ability to cope with victory as well as setbacks. Various opportunities for public performances such as social events, recitals or even simple family gatherings teach a piano student to face a mixture of successes and disappointments. They will have a taste of spectators who are not reacting enthusiastically to their performances or audiences deeply impressed with their skills. Either way, these occasions provide them with plenty of practice to deal with triumphs and failures with poise and grace.

Fourth benefit is the value of hard work and perseverance in long term goals. Young piano students will get used to the notion that little steps today actually prepare them for the future. The perception that not everything in life is instantaneous will be embedded in their minds. Knowledge is not always linear, that is, we don't always learn at a constant rate. There will be weeks of unproductive moments. Practice time may seem to be mindless attempts to play wrong notes for no reason. Children not used to this inevitable part of long-term learning will easily be discouraged. This is where the peril dwells as children lose interest and eventually give up completely on activities that [they think] are too difficult for them.

Piano study is incremental learning as student goes from primer level books to book 1, 2, 3, 4, and so forth. Students recognize that as they advance from one level to the next level they are not only getting better but enjoying piano playing as well. In a teenager's life, especially in moments when they want something intensely, their minds will be distracted from the route of immediate or short-term gratification. Hard work will ultimately usher them back to their long-term goals.

Fifth benefit is to get accustomed to the feeling of achievement. Studying a musical instrument is about learning how to become good at something. There will be various opportunities that their talents will be validated.

The overall benefit of piano studies is not even about music itself. It is the peripheral skills acquired in the course of mastering the instruments: staying calm and focused under pressure, evaluating one's weaknesses and working at it to be better, persisting in the face of challenges, working whether one feels like doing something or not, breaking jobs into little pieces to reach goals, and providing an outlet for creativity. Your children may not turn out to be concert pianists, but they may become doctors, lawyers, entrepreneurs, engineers, writers ... because they have been provided immeasurable opportunities to develop essential life skills.