

To the Parents


Playing the piano is one of the true joys of life. Music surrounds us in all aspects of our lives. Performing or listening to music brings pleasure and relaxation into busy daily schedules. It can help take away the cares and tensions of a troubled world. Consequently, many parents who studied piano want to share the gift of music with their children. They begin this process by teaching children the basics of piano before beginning formal study with a professional teacher.

About This Book

This book is designed for those parents and for homeschool families who wish to include piano in the curriculum. The step-by-step method provides materials that allow students to play pieces on the piano immediately. With an accompanying CD that demonstrates how the music sounds, each lesson is explained in plain language that is easy to understand.

Preceding each student page is a guide for parents. The guide suggests steps for introducing the concept or page to the student, follow-up practice suggestions, and suggestions for reviewing the page in subsequent lessons. To aid with planning, some pages have space where parents can write notes relating to the lesson.

About the Recording

The enclosed CD contains a recording of every piece in the book. Listening or playing along with the recording is fun, but more importantly, it can reinforce musical concepts such as rhythm, dynamics, and phrasing. A CD icon () beside the title of each song shows two track numbers. The first track number is for the student part alone, and the second track number is for the student part with a colorful accompaniment. For convenience, you may download the CD onto an MP3 player, digital music player, or iPod.

About the Lessons

Parents should set aside a regular lesson time each week for the child and strictly adhere to this schedule. Some parents even have children go outside, ring the doorbell, and enter the house to begin the lessons. This ensures that students know that the lessons are a special time that is separate from other family activities.

Parents who have a good background in music can teach piano basics effectively, but at some point children will need a professional teacher to continue their studies. Another teacher should be sought when the materials are beyond the understanding of the parent or at a point when lessons create tensions that jeopardize the parent-child relationship.

Page 96 contains some frequently asked questions about teaching your child. Good luck as you begin an exciting musical journey together!

The Keyboard

The keyboard consists of white and black keys. The keys on the left side make low sounds, and the keys on the right side make high sounds. As you play the keys in the middle of the keyboard and move to the left (DOWN), you will notice that the sounds get lower. As you play the keys in the middle of the keyboard and move to the right (UP), you will notice that the sounds get higher.

Two-Black-Key Groups

Without the black keys, it would be impossible to tell which white key to play. The black keys are divided into groups of twos and threes. For now, your child will play the two-black-key groups with fingers 2 and 3 in each hand.

Introducing the Page

Discuss the information on page 11 with your child and do the suggested activities.

1. Find and play all of the two-black-key groups on the keyboard.
Use fingers 2 and 3 of either hand.
2. Find the group of two black keys in the middle of the keyboard.
Play all of the groups of two black keys going UP the keyboard.
Use fingers 2 and 3 of the right hand.
3. Find the group of two black keys in the middle of the keyboard.
Play all of the groups of two black keys going DOWN the keyboard.
Use fingers 2 and 3 of the left hand.

Practice Suggestions

1. Review #2 and #3 from above.
2. Play two-black-key groups in different areas of the keyboard—
high, middle, and low.

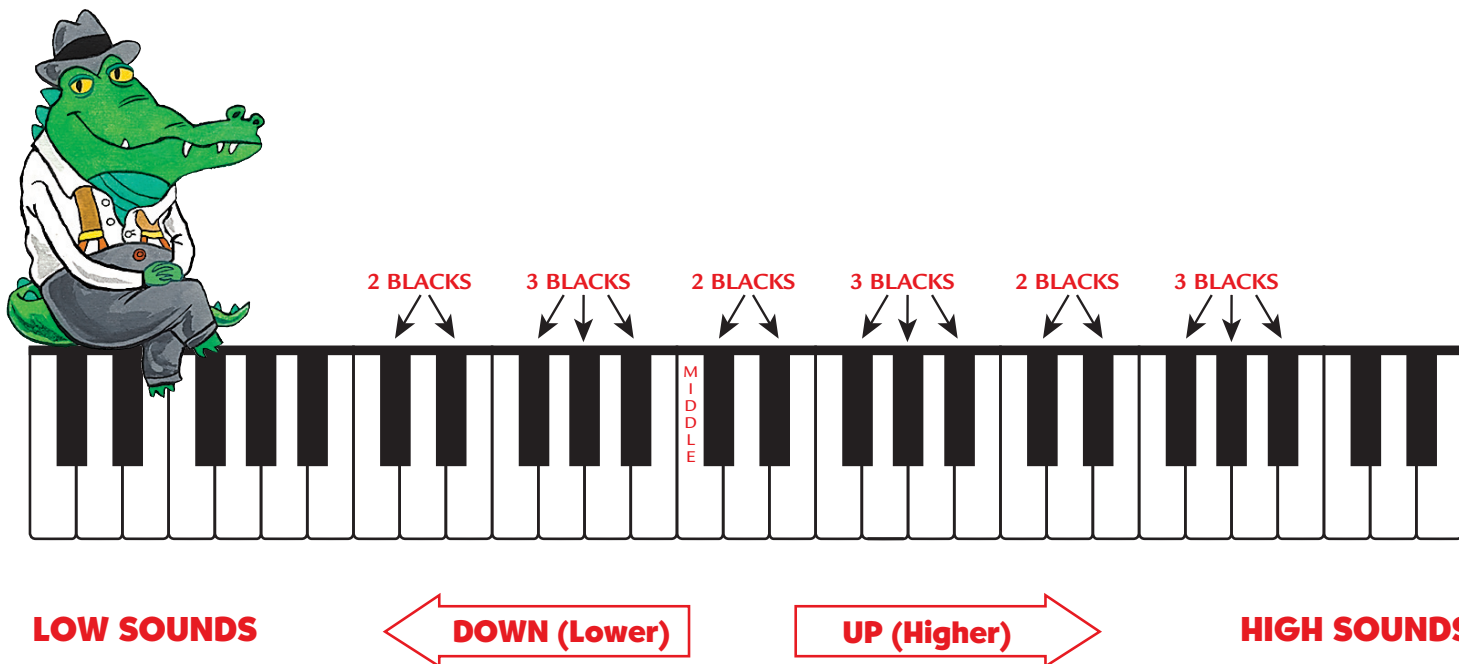
Subsequent Lessons

1. Trade places with your child. Ask him or her to close the eyes.
Play a group of two black keys anywhere on the keyboard.
Ask your child to identify whether it is high or low. Repeat several times.
2. Now play groups of two black keys going UP the keyboard.
Ask your child to identify whether they go up or down.
3. Next, play groups of two black keys going DOWN on the keyboard.
Ask your child to identify whether they go up or down.

Notes:

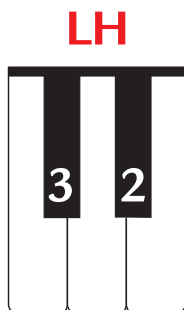
The Keyboard

The keyboard has white keys and black keys.
The keys on the left side of the keyboard make low sounds.
The keys on the right make high sounds.



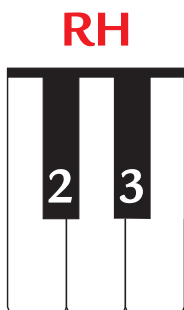
Two-Black-Key Groups

Two-black-key groups are easy to find.
Count the number of two-black-key groups on your keyboard.



Using LH fingers 2 and 3 together, begin at the middle of the keyboard and play both notes of each two-black-key group going down to the bottom of the keyboard.

Do the sounds get **higher** or **lower**?



Using RH fingers 2 and 3 together, begin at the middle of the keyboard and play both notes of each two-black-key group going up to the top of the keyboard.

Do the sounds get **higher** or **lower**?

The Grand Staff

The Grand Staff is created by joining the treble staff and bass staff together with a *brace*. The grand staff is used to show notes for both the right and left hand. A *leger line* between the staves is used for Middle C.

Middle C Position on the Grand Staff

When placing both thumbs on Middle C and placing consecutive fingers on consecutive keys, the hands are in Middle C Position.

The thumbs share the same note—Middle C. Review finding Middle C just below the center two-black-key group.

Introducing the Page

Discuss the information on page 69 with your child.

1. Place both thumbs on Middle C.
2. Place the remaining right-hand fingers on D, E, F, and G.
3. Place the remaining left-hand fingers on B, A, G, and F.
4. Point to the notes on the staff and have your child name and play them while the hands are in Middle C position.

Practice Directions

Practice naming and playing the notes on the staff.

Subsequent Lessons

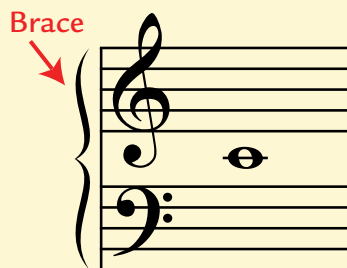
1. Review the notes as needed.
2. Review steps and skips with the music alphabet flash cards.

Notes:

The Grand Staff

When the treble staff and bass staff are joined together with a *brace*, it is called the *grand staff*. The grand staff is used to show notes for both the right and left hands.

A short line between the two staves is used for **middle C**.



Middle C Position on the Grand Staff

When playing in middle C position, either thumb can play middle C.

A large diagram illustrating the middle C position on a grand staff. At the top, two hands are shown with fingers numbered 1-5. The left hand (LH) has the thumb (1) on the C key, and the right hand (RH) has the thumb (1) on the C key. Below this is a piano keyboard with keys labeled F, G, A, B, C, D, E, F, G. The C key is labeled "MIDDLE" vertically. Below the keyboard is a grand staff with a treble clef on top and a bass clef on bottom. The treble staff has notes G, D, E, F, G. The bass staff has notes F, G, A, B, C. Red dashed lines connect the notes on the grand staff to the corresponding keys on the keyboard. To the left of the grand staff are two small hand diagrams: the top one is labeled "RH" and the bottom one is labeled "LH". To the right of the grand staff is a cartoon dog character wearing a yellow suit, a red tie, and glasses, pointing towards the music.

Just for You

This is the first piece that is written on the grand staff.
Just for You is written in Middle C position and uses steps, skips, and repeated notes.

Introducing the Page

1. Point to the notes in *Just for You* and have your child name them.
2. Put the hands in Middle C position.
Point to each note and have your child name and play it.
3. Clap and count the rhythm aloud.
4. Play and name the steps, skips, and repeats.
5. Play and name the notes.
6. Play and sing the words.

Practice Directions

1. Clap (or tap) and count aloud evenly.
2. Point to the notes and rests and count aloud evenly.
3. Say the finger numbers aloud while playing the notes in the air.
4. Play and say the finger numbers.
5. Play and say the note names.
6. Play and sing the words.

Subsequent Lessons

1. Review the notes on the staff.
2. Review steps and skips with the alphabet cards.
3. Review *Just for You* as needed.
4. Play *Just for You* with the CD.

Notes:

Practice Directions

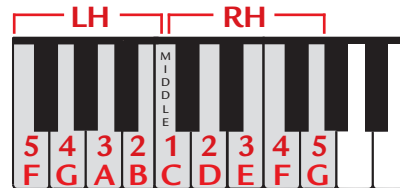
1. Clap (or tap) and count aloud evenly.
2. Point to the notes and rests and count aloud evenly.
3. Say the finger numbers aloud while playing the notes in the air.
4. Play and say the finger numbers.
5. Play and say the note names.
6. Play and sing the words.



Just for You Track 32 (76)

Both hands of “Just for You” play steps, skips, and repeated notes.

Middle C Position



mf Hear the mu - sic I wrote just for you.

1 5 3

5

Now you know I think you're spe - cial, too!

1 5 3