

GROUP PIANO LESSONS OVERVIEW

By Prelude Music Program



Welcome

Welcome to Prelude Music Program! We are thrilled to be a part of your child's musical journey. This overview provides a snapshot of our teaching philosophy and the methods we use to foster a lifelong connection with music. It also provides details about class logistics to ensure a smooth and enjoyable learning experience.

Teaching Philosophy: The Importance of Audiation

At Prelude Music Program, our primary goal is to cultivate a deep connection with music that our students can carry with them throughout their lives. A key aspect of this philosophy is the development of audiation skills—a term coined by Edwin Gordon, an influential American music educator. Audiation refers to the ability to play and listen to music with true understanding, allowing musicians to hear and process music in their minds, even when no sound is physically present.

Starting with the Ears. Music is fundamentally an aural/oral (listening and performing) art form. Unlike traditional music education, which often starts with reading notes on a page, our approach begins with the ears. We believe that listening is the foundation of musical learning.

Teaching Approach

Our teaching method is based on the theories of Edwin Gordon who spent his life researching how people learn music. According to Gordon's research, music learning follows a process similar to language acquisition:

1. **Listen**
2. **Audiate**
3. **Perform/Improvise**
4. **Read/Write**

Lesson Structure

Each lesson is divided into six key components:

1. **Rhythm:** Understanding and feeling the beat, meter, and rhythmic patterns.
2. **Singing:** Developing pitch recognition and vocal skills.
3. **Moving:** Using movement to internalize rhythm and musical form.
4. **Playing and Piano Technique:** Focusing on proper technique and expressive playing at the piano.
5. **Improvising:** Encouraging creativity and spontaneous musical expression.
6. **Reading and Writing:** Introducing music notation and theory in a way that connects with the aural skills developed.

Music Moves for Piano and Keyboard Games

We begin our lessons with the [Keyboard Games](#) books (A & B), which introduce young students to the fundamentals of piano playing through engaging activities that familiarize them with the full keyboard, develop balanced playing techniques, and encourage active participation. As students progress to the [Music Moves for Piano](#) series, the curriculum becomes more complex, gradually introducing reading and writing music. By the time students reach Book 2, they are ready to start engaging with music notation and theory, building on the strong auditory and technical foundation they've developed.

Benefits of Group Lessons

Group lessons provide a unique and enriching environment where students can learn from one another and motivate each other. The group dynamic fosters a sense of community, where students can share their musical journey, celebrate each other's progress, and develop a healthy sense of competition. We believe that learning music in a group is one of the most effective and enjoyable ways to develop musical skills.

Class Size and Learning Structure

Each group class will have a maximum of 6 students to ensure individual attention and a collaborative learning environment. Classes will be held with 1 or 2 pianos, and students will take turns playing or sometimes play together. This structure encourages teamwork, active listening, and participation, helping students develop musical skills both individually and as part of a group.

Transition to Private Instruction

We encourage remaining in the group lesson setting for up to 2 years, where we work on Keyboard Games A and B books. During this time, students will build a strong foundation in music through interaction with their peers. After this period, they may benefit from private instruction in addition to their group lessons. This combination allows them to receive more personalized attention while continuing to enjoy the benefits of learning alongside their peers.

Practicing

Regular practice is key to making progress in music, but it should not be forced. A gentle encouragement goes a long way in making practice a part of your routine. In the beginning, 10-15 minutes of practice a day is sufficient. After a few years, this can extend to about 30 minutes a day. Parents should be engaged and present during practice sessions, even if they do not play the piano themselves. Your involvement helps reinforce the importance of practice and supports your child's learning.

Instrument

Having the right instrument is vital for effective learning. We recommend that students have access to either an acoustic piano or a digital piano. If you choose a digital piano, it should have 88 weighted keys to simulate the feel of an acoustic piano. The bench should be adjustable to ensure that the arm is aligned with the surface of the white keys. Additionally, if a student's feet are dangling, a footrest should be added to provide proper support.

Performance and Recital Opportunities

Students will have the chance to showcase their progress to family and friends once or twice a year during our recitals. These events provide an excellent opportunity for students to experience performing in front of an audience, building confidence and celebrating their achievements. The date and location of these recitals will be determined and communicated in advance.

Photos and Videos

We occasionally take photos and videos during our classes to showcase the progress our students make. These may be shared on our social media platforms to highlight our programs and celebrate our students' achievements. If you have any concerns or prefer that your child not be included in these photos or videos, please let us know, and we will respect your wishes.

Liability Disclaimer

Please note that while we take great care to ensure a safe and supportive environment during our lessons, the studio is not responsible for any incidents or accidents that may occur.

Attendance

Consistency is key to successful music education. Regular attendance and commitment to lessons contribute significantly to progress and skill development. Since the class will proceed as scheduled regardless of individual absences, it's important that students attend each lesson to maintain the flow of their learning and to contribute to the group dynamic. Please note that there will be no refunds for missed classes.

Semesters

Our classes are semester-based, and you can choose to attend one semester or all three semesters throughout the year. Our academic year is divided into three semesters:

- **Fall Semester:** September to December
- **Spring Semester:** January to June
- **Summer Semester:** July to August

Holiday Breaks

No classes will be held during Thanksgiving, Christmas, Spring break (exact dates TBD), Independence Day, and Labor Day weekend.

Tuition Payment

Tuition fees are due at the beginning of each semester. Payments can be made through Venmo, Zelle, or PayPal. It is the responsibility of the parent to ensure timely payments to maintain uninterrupted lessons.

Refund Policy

If a student decides to discontinue lessons at any point during the semester, they will receive a refund for the remaining classes. The refund will be calculated based on the number of unused lessons at the time of discontinuation.