

# Choosing a Piano

**The joy of taking piano lessons** is a special part of a person's life experience regardless of age. The first year is the most crucial point. This can be an extremely rewarding time as the student is beginning to start reading and actually playing for the first time in their lives.

**The parents are the student's support factor.** Parents are more influential in the student's success than many realize. If your child wanted to play baseball, would you purchase a warped bat or a glove that's worn out? 'Of course not.' The coach would require that this child have the *proper equipment* so he or she can be *properly trained*. This point is often lost among parents of piano students. The piano teacher is just like a baseball coach. It is imperative that you **get the proper equipment so your child has a chance** to realize his or her full potential.

In interest if "not making a financial mistake," many parents opt to buy a lesser instrument to see if the student will remain true to the task. This is the most common mistake parents make. They will unintentionally sabotage the student's ability to have a realistic chance of success by buying a marginal quality piano. The Student then gets frustrated at his/her *inability to duplicate the teacher's piano technique/tone* and often loses interest in lessons altogether. It was not the student... it was the improper tool.

There are too many students struggling with non-piano type digital keyboards or substandard acoustic pianos. The time may come when they just give up.

Here are some suggestions regarding what to look for in purchasing a piano for lessons:

**Make the initial decision... do you wish to make an once-in-a-lifetime purchase, or do you wish to purchase an instrument that will be a good investment for future trade?**

**Do you want traditional acoustic or non-traditional digital?**

### **Guidelines applicable for digital purchases:**

1. If you want a digital piano, it should have **88 weighted hammer action keys** -- just like a piano.
2. Digital pianos should **sound as close as possible to an acoustic piano**-- you may need your teacher's assistance on this.
3. A digital piano should have at least a **piano type sustain pedal**.
4. When purchasing digital pianos, if possible, get a keyboard with **real wood action**- plastic works, but wood actions are more expressive.
5. Find a **manufacturer that specializes in pianos only**- many electronics companies don't understand the machine and sound of a true piano. Trust the sound quality from a specialist. (this is a good rule of thumb on whether you're looking at acoustic or digital pianos).

### **Guidelines applicable for acoustic pianos:**

1. A premium piano has a life span of 80-100 years when **well maintained and kept tuned**.
2. Look for performance features such as **weighted keys** and **Royal George felt hammers**.
3. Look for stability features such as **metal action rail, composite action components, properly cured wood** and **hardwood key buttons**.
4. Don't buy a piano you don't like the looks of; you will be looking at it for years to come.
5. Avoid the really short pianos since **string length** and **soundboard area** is critical for good tone.

### **Guidelines applicable for all purchases:**

1. Choose a dealer who has a proven track record and verifiable references-- many can only give you a few names that are hard to check out.
2. Make sure the warranty is with the factory and not the dealer-- this can be very tricky. Many shops sell "store brands" that look like name brands. **Always go to a factory-authorized dealer** for your protections after the sale.
3. Find a dealer who is **not afraid to open the piano**- they should give you a detailed explanation on how this piano works and why certain features are desirable. You should understand what you're purchasing.
4. The dealer should be a **factory-authorized service center**- this means they do not contract the work; they do it themselves. The dealer should have a good reputation on this regard.
5. Don't be afraid to make a decision- with **full trade back policy** you can always upgrade.

**Quality dealers often offer orientation classes to assist you in determining what level of product to select.**

**You may copy and use this info sheet to pass out to your students or friends.**