

Your Child's Instrument to Practice on at Home: Buying a Keyboard/Piano

The Toy Piano/Keyboard: This is ~~NOT~~ an option. Although it may have the correct arrangement of keys, if you bought it in a toy store chances are the keys not full sized (your child will struggle to in class as the keys will be a different distance apart) and it will not allow your child to play multiple notes at the same time, which we will do in class eventually.



The Basic (non-weighted) Keyboard: One can buy a keyboard with non-weighted keys for about \$150 (plus an adjustable stand & bench, which are necessary for ensuring proper posture while playing). For Miss Karen's classes a keyboard with at least 5 octaves (61 full sized keys) is required. This is a good low cost, starting instrument that is useful for the initial phase of learning. Many people find it helpful to start with this sort of keyboard while they assess their child's interest level in learning to play. The Yamaha E223 keyboards that we play on in class are of this variety.



The Touch Sensitive (non-weighted) Keyboard: Although they cost a little more, this is a step up from the basic keyboard. The keys still do not have the feel of those on a real piano, but they are sensitive to the intensity with which the player touches the keys – this allows the student to play more musically, expressing varying dynamics (loudness / softness) within pieces. As with the basic keyboard, for Miss Karen's classes a keyboard with at least 5 octaves (61 full sized keys) is required.



The Digital Piano: The digital piano (\$600 - \$3000+ including stand & bench) is the electronic simulation of the true acoustic piano. The keys are weighted to give the player the authentic feel of an acoustic piano. Some actually look like a piece of furniture while taking up a lot less space. If the correct brand and model of keyboard is chosen, this should last as long as the child continues piano lessons.



The Acoustic Piano: An acoustic spinet or upright can cost \$750- \$4,500 for a used piano, and \$2400-\$8000 + range for a new piano. If you are in the market for a grand piano be prepared to spend more. This is the real thing. In addition to the cost of the instrument itself be prepared to have a piano technician come at least twice a year to tune it for you – this is just routine maintenance for your instrument; and if you've found a good used one out there be prepared to pay a piano mover to transport it to your home.



Don't let the price tag of an acoustic piano scare you – It is possible to find good deals on used instruments, but shop around - be aware that you want to go and check out the instrument first. Try it (or if you don't play find someone who does to go with you). If the instrument has been well maintained it will serve you well and be a great addition to your home.

