



Academic Success Could Involve Music To Your Ears

(NAPSA)—Here's an idea many families may be wise to note: Research shows letting your kids learn music can help them do better in other subjects and enhances skills they'll need in other areas.

Lend An Ear To Expert Advice

"The development of language over time tends to enhance parts of the brain that help process music," explains Dr. Kyle Pruett, clinical professor of child psychiatry at Yale School of Medicine. "Language competence is at the root of social competence. Musical experience strengthens the capacity to be verbally competent."

What's more, a study by E. Glenn Schellenberg at the University of Toronto at Mississauga, as published in *Psychological Science*, found an increase in the IQs of 6-year-olds who were given weekly voice and piano lessons.

Another study, led by Ellen Winner, professor of psychology at Boston College, and Gottfried Schlaug, professor of neurology at Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center and Harvard Medical School, found children who had just 15 months of weekly music instruction and practice had improved sound discrimination and fine motor tasks.

According to many music teachers, the piano can be a great first instrument. There are several reasons. First, pianos are simple to play; children can begin their music studies as soon as their fingers can reach all the keys. In addition, a piano can help students learn to read music because it's easy to see the relationships between pitches in both melodies and chords and the way they look written out on the staff.

Regular piano playing sharpens fine motor skills and improves hand-eye coordination in the young. Plus, studying piano has been shown to improve memory and build good habits such as focus and perseverance, diligence and creativity.

Keys to Piano Success

If you're considering investing in music education for your child and purchasing a piano, there are three things you should learn first.

1. Invest in a good acoustic piano. Look for a high-quality tone, not tinny or shallow, but round and warm that fills the room with vibrations. An acous-



For families looking to buy a piano, experts advise: Get the best one you can afford—it'll sound better, longer.

tic piano can last longer, have more aesthetic appeal, and provide a better music educational experience. For example, touch sensitivity of an acoustic piano lets you play the more subtle musical expressions and dynamics required in most musical genres.

As one professional music teacher put it: "Learning to play on an acoustic instrument offers a range of dynamics, responsiveness, tone color and action that a digital piano cannot match."

Although acoustic pianos tend to be more expensive than digital, the Boston and Essex piano models designed by Steinway bring the world-class tone within financial reach. Furthermore, should your child become more serious about his or her piano studies, you can trade in the instrument toward a more expensive Steinway piano. If you think you can't afford a piano at this time or you're not sure you and your child want to commit to the instrument, consider renting a piano—a smart option provided by authorized Steinway dealers.

2. Even more important than the quality of the piano is the quality of the teacher. It's important to find someone who is the right fit for your child and willing wholeheartedly to invest in your child's success. One way to find a good teacher is to reach out to your Steinway dealer for suggestions.

3. Finally, the best teacher and the best piano can't help your child learn to play if he or she doesn't practice. Consistency is key, and a daily routine is by far the most effective practice structure.

You can learn more about affordable piano rental options at www.steinway.com/rental.