

a head start in music, math, and life

# WunderKeys Piano For Preschoolers

## *An Introduction*



**WUNDERKEYS**

PIANO FOR PRESCHOOLERS



## A head start in music, math, and life

### Welcome to WunderKeys Piano For Preschoolers!

An encouraging first experience in piano lessons is critical to your students' future musical enjoyment. Every aspect of our program has been carefully designed and tested to create an engaged, constructive, positive, and FUN learning environment.

An all-encompassing piano lesson means that your preschool students will participate in five different and unique activities during their weekly lesson time. This ensures that they remain focused, engaged, and happy.

The developmental abilities of 3-5 year olds are very different than that of 6 year olds and older... for which most other piano programs are created. There are many different concepts that your preschool students need to grasp before jumping into a "traditional" piano piece. Therefore, our preschool piano lessons are spent exploring the piano in ways in which they are capable. All lessons are geared towards having them understand everything they will need to know before being able to read notated music. It is the perfect way to lead into a mainstream book series... and a life of musical enjoyment.

The following pages will outline a typical WunderKeys piano lesson, and will give a detailed description of the skills learned in each of the 3 method books.

As always, if any questions arise while reading our guides do not hesitate to send us an email.

Happy Reading,

Andrea and Trevor Dow

*WunderKeys Piano For Preschoolers*

## WunderKeys Lesson Structure

Your weekly piano lessons will consist of five unique activities performed in a 30-minute time slot.

### **Activity 1 – Piano Patterns (3 – 5 minutes)**

Using Finger Friends Patterning Magnets, your students complete patterns created on a whiteboard. The colorful pictures of the Finger Friends help your students learn to recognize and predict patterns.

### **Activity 2 – Finger Warm-ups (3 minutes)**

Before beginning method book activities, you will introduce fun rhyming games that have accompanying finger movements. The silly poems help to build rhythmic awareness and improve fine motor control in little fingers.

### **Activity 3 – Musical Math Songs (5 minutes)**

Each character in the WunderKeys program has a fun and active counting song written specifically for them. You will choose the day's counting song, and sing and play the song as the student counts along and participates with the corresponding actions.

### **Activity 4 – Method Books (8 - 10 minutes)**

Before beginning each week's lesson, you will review the previous week's lesson and Home Activity Sheet. You will then lead your students through the story-based activities in the WunderKeys method books. The following pages contain detailed descriptions of the skills covered in each method book. After completing the day's lesson pages, practice and play a WunderKeys piano duet together.

*\*Note about WunderKeys duets...*

There are several WunderKeys duets to accompany each of the 3 method books. The WunderKeys piano duet sheets can be downloaded from our website. When you and your student choose to learn and play the duets is entirely up to you and your assessed readiness of the student. Duets do not need to be learned each and every lesson. These duets can also be used to enable your WunderKeys students to participate in your piano studio's recitals.

***Important – every once in a while, be sure to invite parents in to listen to the WunderKeys Duets.***

### **Activity 5 – WunderKeys Card Games (5 minutes)**

Depending on which book each student is working from, you will select a deck of cards, and choose one of the many games associated with that deck. Our card games encourage students to recognize and match numbers, note values and more.

## Method Book 1 – Sorting Sounds

### Scope and Sequence

Sorting Sounds is the first book in the WunderKeys program. For most preschool children, this book represents their first foray into a one-on-one piano lesson. Students gain both keyboard and aural awareness as they explore the piano for the first time. Ultimately, students will learn that piano music is produced by cognitive decisions they make as to the length and type of sound played.

#### Piano Skills

1. Symbol to Sound Recognition
2. Hand Weight Awareness
3. Keyboard Awareness
  - a. High Notes and Low Notes
  - b. Finding Black Notes
4. Aural Awareness
  - a. Long Sounds and Short Sounds
  - b. High Sounds and Low Sounds
  - c. Same Sounds and Different Sounds

#### Math Skills

1. Classification  
Children organize sounds and symbols into groups based on similar traits. This can be as simple as labeling a sound as “high” or “low”.
2. One-to-one correspondence  
Children learn that one symbol indicates that one sound should be played; two symbols means two sounds should be played etc. Understanding one-to-one correspondence is essential for preschool children learning to count.
3. Seriation  
Children compare more than two things and put them into order. Students may order a group of sounds from highest to lowest or order groups of objects from smallest to biggest.

## Method Book 2 – Predicting Patterns

### Scope and Sequence

Patterning is the shared language of music and math. To understand either discipline is contingent on one's ability to understand patterning. In music, recognizing, constructing, and predicting patterns are the fundamental skills necessary for understanding melody and rhythm... the basis of music. If math is the "science of patterns", then music is the "art of patterns".

#### Piano Skills

1. Playing simple patterns (high sound/low sound, loud sound/soft sound etc.)
2. Off-the-staff symbol reading
3. Playing patterns on groups of two black notes
4. Playing patterns on groups of three black notes

#### Math Skills

1. One-to-one correspondence  
Children continue to learn that one symbol indicates that one sound should be played; two symbols means two sounds should be played. Understanding one-to-one correspondence is essential for preschool children learning to count.
2. Comparing  
Children compare numbers, symbols and sounds, and order and classify them based on particular comparisons.
3. Counting  
Children learn to count sets of sounds, symbols, and pictures containing up to 10 items.
4. Patterning Recognition  
Children learn to recognize simple alternating patterns and predict "what comes next".

## Method Book 3 – Recognizing Rhythm

### Scope and Sequence

Recognizing Rhythm is the final book in the WunderKeys program. If patterning is the heart of music, then rhythm is the heart's beat. Being able to understand rhythm is a challenging task for young children, as they must compare and contrast sounds, measure beats, and recognize note duration. Fortunately, children who work through the WunderKeys program have no problems understanding rhythm because of their strong musical math foundation.

#### Piano Skills

1. Off-the-staff rhythmic notation recognition
2. Recognize and play quarter notes, half notes, and whole notes
3. Clap and play rhythms using quarter notes, half notes, and whole notes
4. Learn to incorporate rhythmic notation into simple piano pieces

#### Math Skills

1. One-to-one correspondence  
Children continue to learn that one symbol indicates that one sound should be played; two symbols means two sounds should be played. Understanding one-to-one correspondence is essential for preschool children learning to count.
2. Classification  
Children organize sounds and symbols into groups based on similar traits. This can be as simple as labeling a sound as “high” or “low”.
3. Counting  
Children continue to learn to count sets of sounds, symbols, and pictures containing up to 10 items.
4. Patterning Recognition  
Children continue to learn to recognize simple alternating patterns and predict “what comes next”.

## Frequently Asked Questions

*Here are answers to commonly asked questions when parents inquire about WunderKeys Piano For Preschoolers.*

### **Are WunderKeys lessons group lessons?**

The WunderKeys program is specifically designed to be offered as a one-on-one lesson. For many preschoolers this is their first experience in a non-group setting. This arrangement allows the instructor to personalize the lessons to each individual child's needs as well as ensuring that your child is an active participant for the entire lesson duration.

### **How long are they? How often?**

WunderKeys lessons are 30 minutes and take place once a week.

### **Do I need a piano at home?**

Your child will need an instrument to practice on at home. This can be an acoustic piano, a digital piano or even a keyboard.

### **My little one is really active – I'm not sure they can sit for 30 minutes.**

WunderKeys has been designed with preschoolers' needs in mind. They will not be expected to sit patiently at the piano bench for 30 minutes! We incorporate five different activities into each lesson to ensure your child is always focused, engaged, and active – each activity is designed to reinforce concepts learned in their books. Our priority is to ensure that your child is enjoying every single minute of their lessons!

## **What is the deal with the math?**

WunderKeys is primarily a program designed to teach beginning piano skills. However, it is a well-known fact that music and math are closely related. As a bonus to this program, the WunderKeys books highlight this relationship and give your child a head-start on kindergarten math concepts and a positive first exposure to math. WunderKeys students learn sorting, ordering, counting, comparison, classification, and pattern recognition.

## **When will they play songs?**

The developmental abilities of 3-5 year olds are very different than that of 6 year olds and older... for which most other piano programs are created. There are many different concepts that your preschooler will need to grasp before jumping into a “traditional” piano piece. Therefore, our preschool piano lessons are spent exploring the piano in ways in which they are capable. All lessons are geared towards having them understand everything they will need to know before being able to read notated music. It is the perfect way to lead into a mainstream book series... and a life of musical enjoyment.

WunderKeys Duets allow students to play “real pieces” along with their teacher, ensuring success and enjoyment.

## **I have no musical background at all. How can I help my child at home?**

After each lesson in the book is a Home Activity Sheet that can be completed with your child during practice time at home. The books are designed to allow all parents to help with home practice, regardless of prior musical knowledge. At this age “practicing” should be approximately 10-15 minutes every day and is spent reinforcing what was learned in the lesson, and building finger strength and coordination. The intent is for home practice to provide you with some “bonding on the bench” time with your child, sharing in the fun of music.

## **Do I need to purchase the books?**

There are three books in the WunderKeys series. Each book costs \$17.95 and can be purchased directly from your teacher. The books include both lesson activities and homework sheets. There are no other material fees involved.