

# Scientific Cultivation and Joyful Enlightenment on Piano Learning in the Preschool Stage

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**Abstract:** *With the development of society, art has gradually entered people's lives and become increasingly important. Among various art forms, piano art stands out and has become the first choice for many to learn. However, the current piano teaching varies in quality. Therefore, choosing a suitable teaching method for one's child is particularly important. The age for starting piano lessons is getting younger and younger. Facing children of all kinds, their personalities and intelligence levels are diverse and vary greatly. In piano teaching, teachers should focus on children's learning interests, formulate different teaching plans for each stage of teaching, and adopt different teaching methods for different children.*

**Keywords:** Children, Piano, Cultivating learning

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## 1. Introduction

In recent years, the increasing emphasis on early childhood education has underscored the significance of integrating art into young children's developmental journey. Among various forms of art, piano education holds a prominent position, recognized not only for cultivating musical abilities but also for promoting cognitive and emotional development (Xu, 2022). As society evolves and parents become more aware of the benefits of early musical exposure, there has been a noticeable trend of children beginning piano instruction at younger ages. This shift reflects both societal aspirations for holistic education and the belief that music can serve as a foundational element in shaping well-rounded individuals (Xu, 2022). However, while the desire to nurture young talent is commendable, it is essential to acknowledge the diverse range of children's physical, cognitive, and emotional characteristics during the preschool stage. These individual differences necessitate the adoption of scientifically informed, age-appropriate, and engaging teaching strategies that align with children's developmental readiness (Gui, 2019).

The effectiveness of piano learning in early childhood largely depends on how well the teaching approach considers the physiological and psychological traits of young learners. Preschool-aged children are in a sensitive period for developing motor coordination, sensory perception, and emotional expression, making this an ideal stage for introducing them to music provided that the teaching methods are supportive and flexible (Kuang & Gao, 2020). Teachers play a critical role in this process, as they must not only deliver instruction but also cultivate children's curiosity and intrinsic motivation. Research has shown that when young learners are actively engaged and emotionally connected to their learning, their capacity to retain

information and develop skills improves significantly (Kuang & Gao, 2020). Thus, rather than imposing rigid or uniform teaching models, educators should focus on cultivating joyful learning experiences, adapting their methods to suit each child's unique personality, intelligence level, and learning pace (Pan, 2020).

Moreover, scientific understanding of child development emphasizes that physical readiness is as crucial as mental preparedness in learning to play the piano. Young children's musculoskeletal systems are still developing, which means that prolonged or improper postures may negatively impact their growth and hinder their ability to perform piano movements effectively (Pan, 2020). Hence, piano education for preschoolers must be designed with careful attention to ergonomics, ensuring that the child's comfort and health are prioritized over technical perfection. The integration of fun, creativity, and physical ease not only protects the child's well-being but also enhances their long-term enthusiasm for learning music (Pan, 2020).

In light of these considerations, this study aims to explore the scientific principles behind preschool piano education, focusing on how physical and psychological factors intersect to influence children's musical development. It advocates for a teaching approach that is not only structured and developmentally appropriate but also rich in joy and creativity an approach that aligns with the broader educational goal of nurturing lifelong learners and lovers of the arts (Pan, 2020).

## **2. Physical Analysis of Young Children's Piano Learning**

### **Characteristics of Children's Bones in Early Childhood**

During the early childhood stage, children's bones are not yet fully developed and are still in the growth phase. At this time, children's bones lack strength and do not have the ability to maintain a posture for a long time. When playing the piano, children should be allowed to relax and not be forced to perform tense movements, which would make their limbs stiff. Moreover, children should not be made to sit rigidly on the piano stool; otherwise, it would be detrimental to their bone development. Since children are not tall enough, it is recommended to appropriately lower the height of the piano stool or place something under their feet to allow their feet to touch the ground, providing a stable center of gravity. Only with the correct sitting posture and relaxed stance can children grow healthily and better engage in piano learning and training (Ling, 2022).

### **Characteristics of Children's Muscles**

During the early childhood stage, children's muscle development is relatively slow. Because they are in the process of development, they are very active and often start moving their bodies after sitting for only a few minutes. Moreover, their muscles are not yet mature and lack stability. If they are forced to perform for too long, they will become bored with what they are learning and it will not be conducive to their physical and mental development. Therefore, it is recommended that the duration of piano playing not be too long; it should be appropriate. To allow children to fully move, some basic movements such as raising hands and clapping hands can be performed. This enables children to learn knowledge through movement and also serves as a training for rhythm sense (Ling, 2022).

### **Characteristics of Children's Neurological Reflexes**

During the early childhood stage, children's neurological reflexes are not yet fully developed. They have a strong sense of novelty towards things. However, their attention is difficult to concentrate. The so-called three-minute enthusiasm is quite appropriate for children. Due to

children's excellent memory and fast forgetting, we should utilize their own advantages to shape them and avoid their weaknesses in learning. Therefore, it is recommended that class duration not be too long. Repeatedly memorizing key knowledge allows children to fully understand it (Ling, 2022).

### **3. Psychological Analysis of Young Children's Piano Learning**

#### **The Curiosity of Young Children in Learning Piano**

Curiosity is one of the most prominent psychological characteristics of young children. It is an innate driving force that motivates children to explore, observe, and engage with their surroundings. At the preschool stage, children's understanding of the world is primarily built through direct experience and sensory perception. The piano, as a musical instrument that integrates sound, touch, and visual elements, naturally attracts children's attention. The black and white keys, varied tones, and the ability to create music through simple actions stimulate children's exploratory instincts and awaken their curiosity toward music learning (Ling, 2022).

In piano education for young children, curiosity plays a decisive role in determining whether children are willing to participate actively in learning activities. Unlike older learners, young children lack strong self-discipline and long-term goal awareness. Their learning motivation largely depends on whether the learning process itself is interesting and engaging. If piano lessons are overly rigid, repetitive, or focused excessively on technical drills, children's curiosity may quickly fade, leading to boredom or even resistance. Therefore, teachers should consciously design teaching activities that align with children's curiosity-driven learning patterns.

Guiding curiosity does not mean allowing children to explore aimlessly. On the contrary, effective piano teaching should channel children's curiosity in a structured yet flexible way. For example, teachers can introduce piano sounds through storytelling, associating different pitches or rhythms with animals, natural phenomena, or characters that children are familiar with. This approach transforms abstract musical concepts into vivid and concrete images, helping children build intuitive connections with music. When children feel that piano learning is an extension of their imaginative world, their curiosity is naturally sustained.

Additionally, curiosity is closely linked to emotional experience. When children encounter new and interesting musical content, they experience excitement and pleasure, which enhances positive emotional responses toward learning. Over time, repeated positive experiences gradually develop into stable learning interest. As psychological studies suggest, interest is not merely an innate trait but can be cultivated through appropriate educational guidance and emotional reinforcement. Teachers' facial expressions, tone of voice, body language, and encouragement all play an important role in shaping children's emotional attitudes toward piano learning.

Moreover, curiosity encourages children to take initiative in learning. When children are curious, they are more likely to ask questions, experiment with sounds, and explore different playing methods. Teachers should respect and protect this initiative by allowing children a certain degree of freedom during lessons. For instance, giving children time to freely press keys and listen to sounds before formal instruction helps satisfy their exploratory needs. Once curiosity is fulfilled rather than suppressed, children become more receptive to guided learning.

In this sense, curiosity is not only the starting point of piano learning but also a continuous source of motivation throughout the learning process. Preschool piano education should emphasize nurturing curiosity as a long-term educational goal. By creating a relaxed, interesting, and emotionally supportive learning environment, teachers can transform children's natural curiosity into a lasting love for piano and music.

### **The Desire for Performance of Young Children**

Another significant psychological characteristic of young children is their strong desire for performance and recognition. At the preschool stage, children are in the process of forming self-awareness and social identity. They are eager to be noticed, affirmed, and praised by adults and peers. This desire is not driven by vanity, but rather by a developmental need for emotional security and self-worth affirmation. In piano learning, performance opportunities provide an effective channel for meeting this psychological need.

When children play the piano, they often hope that their efforts will be recognized by teachers, parents, and classmates. Simple praise such as "You played very well today" or "Your rhythm has improved" can significantly boost children's confidence and motivation. Positive feedback reinforces children's perception that their efforts are meaningful, encouraging them to continue practicing and learning. Conversely, excessive criticism or lack of acknowledgment may weaken children's enthusiasm and lead to self-doubt (Gao, 2018).

From a pedagogical perspective, the desire for performance can be transformed into a powerful learning motivation if used appropriately. Teachers can organize regular small-scale performances, such as in-class demonstrations, parent-child concerts, or informal recitals. These activities provide children with opportunities to showcase their learning achievements in a relaxed and supportive atmosphere. Unlike professional performances, preschool piano recitals should emphasize participation and enjoyment rather than technical perfection. The goal is to allow children to experience the joy of sharing music, rather than the pressure of competition.

Performance experiences also help children develop important psychological qualities. Standing in front of an audience, even a small one, helps children gradually overcome shyness and build confidence. Through repeated performance experiences, children learn to manage nervousness, focus their attention, and express emotions through music. These skills are not only beneficial for piano learning but also contribute to children's overall personality development and social adaptability.

Furthermore, performance activities promote social interaction and peer learning. When children watch others perform, they learn to appreciate different playing styles and musical expressions. This process enhances their aesthetic awareness and broadens their musical horizons. At the same time, observing peers' performances may inspire children to practice more actively, forming a positive learning atmosphere based on mutual encouragement rather than unhealthy comparison.

It is important to note that the desire for performance should be guided carefully to avoid excessive pressure. Teachers and parents should avoid setting unrealistic expectations or comparing children with others. Each child's developmental pace and learning ability are different, and performance evaluation should focus on individual progress rather than uniform standards. When children feel that performances are opportunities for enjoyment rather than judgment, their desire to perform will continue to serve as a positive motivational force.

In summary, the desire for performance is a natural psychological need of young children and an essential component of preschool piano education. By providing appropriate performance platforms and emotional support, teachers can help children experience achievement, build confidence, and deepen their interest in piano learning.

### **The Imitative Nature of Young Children**

Imitation is one of the most fundamental learning mechanisms in early childhood. Young children acquire knowledge and skills primarily through observing and imitating the behaviors of adults and peers. This imitative nature is closely related to children's cognitive development level. At the preschool stage, children's abstract thinking ability is still limited, while their ability to learn through observation and action is particularly strong. Therefore, imitation plays a crucial role in piano learning during this period.

In piano teaching, imitation is especially important for establishing correct playing habits. Basic elements such as sitting posture, hand shape, finger movement, and playing techniques are difficult to explain verbally to young children. However, when teachers demonstrate these actions clearly and repeatedly, children can quickly grasp the essentials through imitation. This learning method aligns with children's natural tendencies and reduces cognitive burden, making learning more efficient and enjoyable.

Teachers' demonstration quality directly affects children's learning outcomes. Young children tend to imitate not only technical movements but also teachers' expressions, attitudes, and emotional states. If a teacher demonstrates piano playing with relaxed posture, expressive tone, and positive emotion, children are more likely to internalize these qualities. Conversely, if demonstrations are rigid or emotionally detached, children may unconsciously adopt similar habits. Therefore, teachers should maintain professional and expressive demonstrations, serving as positive role models in both technique and musical expression.

Imitation in piano learning is not limited to teacher-student interaction. Peer imitation also plays a significant role. In group lessons, children often observe and imitate their classmates' playing behaviors. This peer learning process fosters a sense of belonging and collective participation. Teachers can encourage this by organizing group activities where children take turns demonstrating short musical phrases. Such activities not only strengthen imitation skills but also enhance listening ability and musical sensitivity.

As children's learning progresses, imitation gradually evolves into independent expression. Initially, children rely heavily on imitation to learn basic skills. Over time, with accumulated experience and guidance, they begin to understand musical patterns and express emotions more independently. Teachers should recognize this developmental process and adjust teaching strategies accordingly. Excessive reliance on imitation without encouraging creativity may limit children's musical imagination. Therefore, while emphasizing imitation at the early stage, teachers should also provide opportunities for children to explore and express their own musical ideas.

In addition, imitation contributes to emotional bonding between teachers and students (Gao, L. 2018). When children imitate teachers' actions and expressions, they establish a sense of connection and trust. This emotional bond creates a safe learning environment where children feel comfortable making mistakes and trying new things. Such an environment is essential for sustained learning and psychological well-being.

Overall, the imitative nature of young children is a valuable psychological resource in preschool piano education. By leveraging imitation through effective demonstrations, peer learning, and supportive interaction, teachers can help children build solid technical foundations while fostering positive emotional and social development.

#### **4. Regarding Early Piano Education Materials for Children**

The textbooks serve as the basis for teachers' lessons and are indispensable for students' classes. They are not only the basic materials for teachers to conduct teaching but also the media for students to understand the world. The quality of the textbooks directly affects whether children can pursue piano learning for a long and solid period. The quality and level of the materials directly influence the quality of learning outcomes. Therefore, the selection of textbooks must be done carefully (Gao, 2018).

##### **In the early days of the founding of the People's Republic of China**

In the early days of the founding of the People's Republic of China, the textbooks that students studied were very limited, and the content taught by teachers was also very restricted. Because at that time, the country was in a period of rebuilding and did not have certain teaching equipment or audio-visual materials and other media, students merely relied on the content in the textbooks and what the teachers explained to conduct their studies. They mainly learned a series of contents such as "Beethoven" and "Hanon", mainly from Soviet textbooks. The learning content was not very comprehensive (Zhao, 2020).

##### **During the reform and opening-up period**

During this period, the country began to attach great importance to the piano education cause. Students and teachers could obtain more learning content and audio-visual materials. The students' learning scope was greatly expanded, and the piano playing methods were also rich and diverse. The teaching methods of teachers changed significantly, and students could learn different piano playing styles, as well as different playing methods such as four-handed playing and double piano. Students could also play and sing by themselves to enhance their understanding and interest in music. At the same time, they also obtained a lot of foreign performance video materials, which greatly improved the teaching level and was more conducive to students' learning. During this period, many talents emerged and were known to those who would later study music. Since the reform and opening-up, the early piano education materials for children mainly include "Children's Hanon", "Thompson Piano Tutorial", "Little Universe Piano Tutorial", "Piano Daily Practice", "Bastian Piano Basic Tutorial", "Clark Piano Tutorial", etc.

#### **5. Content and Classification of Teaching Materials**

Piano teaching materials can be classified into many types, all based on different levels of difficulty. These include advanced, intermediate, and beginner-level materials (Zhao, S. 2020).

##### **Finger Exercises and Etudes**

For children who are just starting to learn the piano, the elbow joint should be naturally relaxed and raised to avoid the occurrence of tense and clamped elbow. During the piano playing process, the only thing the child needs to do with their shoulders is to "relax". Relaxing the shoulders will make the upper body relaxed, and conversely, tense shoulders will also make it difficult for the upper body to relax, resulting in the child feeling tired when playing the piano. The correct duration of the notes is very important. And when counting beats, it is the best time

to adjust the hand shape, and it is possible to correct the wrong hand shape without moving the hands. Many beginners hope that the sound they play will be as loud as the teacher's when they first play the piano. However, in most cases, it is difficult to achieve this. The piano should be placed in the center of the piano, parallel to it. The distance between the piano and the piano stool should be adjusted by the child's arm, requiring the child to naturally and relaxedly place their arm on the piano. If the child's arm is too straight, it indicates that the distance between the piano and the piano stool is too far; conversely, if the arm is too bent, it indicates that the distance is too close. These are all incorrect. The standard distance is that the child's arm is naturally bent when placed on the piano, and the distance is the appropriate one (Zhao, 2020).

### **Contrapuntal Works**

What is meant by contrapuntal works is that while one melody is proceeding, other parts enter simultaneously or sequentially, and form a whole. The representative figure of contrapuntal works is Bach. Students can improve their playing ability through his works, which can make students' thinking more meticulous and piano playing more carefully. Developing the child's right brain and making the left and right brains work simultaneously. Every detail in the contrapuntal works is very important, and it has very strict requirements for the control of notes. There can be no slightest carelessness. Therefore, in playing, if one wants to present the work, one must practice seriously and concentrate (Xu, 2022).

### **Pieces**

Pieces are very popular among children because of their beautiful melodies and distinct rhythms. Each piece of music can be self-tested by the child. The pleasant melody can stimulate students' interest in playing, make them practice very enthusiastically, and increase their enthusiasm for learning, thereby making them love the piano more (Xu, 2022).

By cultivating and deepening the child's interest and confidence in learning, stimulating children's love for music, their ability to perceive the inner beauty of music, and improving their ability to imitate, remember, express beauty and create beauty. Thus, it can be seen that early piano education for children is an especially important part of piano education (Pan Shasha, 2020).

## **6. Conclusion**

Early childhood is a critical stage for laying the foundation of musical learning, and piano education during this period offers immense potential for nurturing not only technical skills but also cognitive, emotional, and physical development. This study highlights that scientifically guided and joyfully oriented piano instruction is essential to maximize the benefits of music education in preschool-aged children (Kuang & Gao, 2020). As evidenced through the physical analysis, young learners are still in a stage of rapid growth and development, making it crucial for piano teaching methods to be adapted to their skeletal, muscular, and neurological characteristics. A rigid or overly demanding approach may not only compromise their physical well-being but also deter their enthusiasm and motivation for learning. Proper posture, comfortable seating, and short, engaging practice sessions must be emphasized to align with their developmental readiness and to foster long-term musical interest.

Psychologically, children's natural curiosity, desire for affirmation, and imitative tendencies serve as vital levers for effective piano teaching. As Liu and Zhang (2021) observe, musical engagement in early childhood must be emotionally resonant and socially supportive to yield lasting educational outcomes. Teachers should therefore act not only as instructors but also as

facilitators of joy, confidence, and creativity, shaping environments where children feel motivated to explore and express themselves through music. Encouraging performances, playful imitation, and interactive activities can deepen their connection to the instrument and strengthen their musical identity from a young age.

Moreover, the evolution of piano education materials in China spanning from the limited resources of the early days of the People's Republic to the diverse, accessible, and pedagogically rich textbooks available today demonstrates how curriculum development directly impacts educational quality and outcomes (Zong, 2019). Selecting appropriate materials tailored to children's technical abilities and emotional sensitivities is pivotal. Whether using fundamental finger exercises, contrapuntal works to enhance cognitive control, or melodious pieces to ignite emotional response, a well-balanced and child-centric curriculum ensures a holistic and sustained engagement with piano learning (Zong, 2019).

Ultimately, early piano education must be viewed not merely as skill acquisition but as a developmental experience that harmonizes the body, mind, and soul of a child. When teaching is grounded in scientific understanding, delivered with sensitivity, and enriched by joy and creativity, piano learning becomes an enlightening journey one that cultivates a lifelong appreciation for music and enhances broader learning capacities. As music psychologist Liu (2022) asserts, the power of music lies not only in the sounds it produces but also in its transformative effect on the learner's intellectual and emotional world. Therefore, embracing a holistic, responsive, and joyful teaching philosophy is the most effective way to ensure that piano education in the preschool stage fulfills its true educational and developmental promise.

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### **Conflict of Interest Statement**

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest regarding the publication of this study.

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