



I thought we just needed a piano? Now an iPad, too?



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The iPad and engaging apps can assist piano teachers to successfully teach your child. If you are skeptical about how an iPad can help your young pianist or wondering if the investment is necessary, check out the answers to the most frequently asked questions provided below.

● Parent: Why do you recommend an iPad along with a piano for my child?

It will help your budding pianist progress at the piano.

● Parent: How?

1) Feedback

Unless you are a fine pianist yourself, it may be difficult for you to serve as a tutor for your child. You may find your job is limited to reminding your budding musician to practice. This means your child is ultimately responsible for progress between lessons. Without proper guidance, this can lead to frustration and a dislike of practicing.

It can be extremely difficult to know if a rhythm is accurate or if a note is correct if no one is there to give your child adequate feedback. The app called *Piano Maestro* which builds sight reading skills, has the ability to hear your pianist play, let him or her know when mistakes have been made and offer rewards for achievements. It can even guide your child through successful practice strategies!

Using an app like *Piano Maestro* that supplies feedback between lessons will help your child practice, which will make practice more appealing which may result in more practice time which means **progress between lessons**.

2) Fun

Studies show that having fun is directly linked to learning. Eye-catching and engaging apps like *Flashnote Derby* or *Note Squish* offer drills and games based on music concepts that challenge your child to play and compete until a win is achieved. The elements of game-playing like moving up in levels and aiming for the highest score combined with educational content is a win-win

situation. This process coined gamification, is a brilliant method for your child to learn the difficult language of reading and playing music because gaming apps require mindful repetition. This same mindful repetition rubs off at the keys when practicing—an essential component for **making progress**.

3) Creativity

Playing music of other composers is a traditional part of piano lessons. Encouraging creativity of original ideas at the keys and beyond the page in addition to playing notated pieces develops a life-long, well-balanced musician.

Unlocking musical imaginations is boosted when your child experiences and plays with apps like *Tin Pan Rhythm*, *Garage Band*, *Loopimal* and many more. Integrating creativity like improvisation and composing helps your child get under the hood of music making which builds enthusiasm for music comprehension which **leads to more progress**.

4) Future

The iPad supports more than apps that resemble glorified flash cards and arcade-like games. Professional musicians regularly use iPads and numerous powerful apps such as *forScore*, *iReal Pro*, *Tonara* and many more. Using the iPad in lessons and at home practice is definitely preparing your child for what is to come: reading digital scores on the iPad and creating original works using the device. Integrating the device into lessons will help your child grow accustomed to working with mobile technology at the keys—the new normal. Your child will be **inspired to progress** using today's relevant tools.

● Parent: Why do you recommend an iPad? Can't we use the tablet we already own?

Apple's operating system, known as iOS, is the top choice for developers creating music apps. This is because the iOS is ideal for educational content and reliable regardless of the device or model.

Android devices vary in screen size and hardware capabilities which make it difficult and expensive for developers to suit the needs of each brand and device. Budget considerations usually keep developers generating apps for the stable iOS platform first because it promises loyal, repeat customers.

To be clear: the variety and quality of well-supported apps for the iPad FAR out number those available for other tablets. Your child will feel disappointed learning that many favorite apps used at lessons are not available on your android tablet at home.

● **Parent: Excess screen time is a concern and that's why we want our child to play piano and not *Xbox* or *Angry Birds*. Now you are asking us to allow more screen time. Why?**

The benefits of using today's available and mobile technology to engage pianists and reinforce learning are stronger than ever before. In short, it works!

Limiting screen time is understandable. Allow your child to play apps that have both appeal AND music educational value first before any other apps or games. Your child will be thrilled with the screen time and you'll be pleased that the time is used to reinforce concepts introduced at lessons. With this set up, everyone wins.

● **Parent: Which iPad should I purchase?**

Some things to consider:

- 1) There's no need to get the latest iPad Pro. It's way too big and expensive for your needs.
- 2) Don't splurge for the cellular option. Buy the model with Wi-Fi only.
- 3) Only purchase a model with 64G or maybe 32G if you get a refurbished model. Never consider a 16G as you'll be disappointed with the lack of space for all your child's favorite apps.
- 4) All the apps work on the iPad Mini. If budget is a concern and you don't have a preference for screen size, get the iPad Mini.
- 5) When in doubt: buy the latest model with the most memory you can afford.

● **Parent: With all these “amazing apps” for the iPad, why does my child need a teacher?**

The iPad can substantially impact the progress of students, especially beginners, but it never takes the place of a teacher, it's only a tool. Teachers will always hold an essential role because success at the keys requires a nurturing relationship with an expert who guides and cares for your child's curriculum and progress. In addition, only a teacher can truly develop your child's technique, theory comprehension, repertoire choices, performance preparation and SO much more.

● Parent: Once we get the iPad, what apps should we get?

Below is a SHORT list of “starter apps.” The app names are hyper-linked to their websites. Prices are not included as they can change.

Note: Consult with your teacher before purchasing an app as preferences vary between studios.

Camera (A native app to the iPad but worth a reminder to use it: build and track progress with videos.)

Send videos to your teacher and ask for feedback between lessons.

If your child catches a cold, use FaceTime to connect with your teacher without spreading germs. Celebrate recitals with plenty of photo and video paparazzi!

Metronome (A metronome sets “ticks” at various speeds which aids pianists in building a steady inner pulse.)

[Petronome](#)

[Practice+](#)

[SuperMetronome](#) [GrooveBox](#)

Sight Reading (Read new music for the first time as accurately as possible.)

[Piano Maestro](#)

Note: make sure to connect with your teacher’s account as all verified teachers and their students can download the app for free!

Pitch Recognition (Master the names of the pitches on the grand staff and their location on the keyboard.)

[Flashnote Derby](#)

Rhythm (Recognize note values and play rhythm patterns correctly with a steady pulse.)

[Rhythm Swing](#)

[Rhythm Solitaire](#)

Creativity (Improvise and compose original music.)

[Tin Pan Rhythm](#)

Composition (Notate an original piece.)

[Noteflight](#)

Technique (Master fingering of scales and exercises to build finger strength.)

[Piano Maestro](#)

Worksheets (Annotate and complete theory worksheets on the iPad without printing them first.)

Notability

Sproutbeat

Just Plain Fun (Some apps require no right answer, they just require imaginations.)

Isle of Tune

Jelly Band

Loopimal

Musical Paint

Leila Viss owns a creative-based piano studio in Centennial, Colorado. Viss blogs at 88pianokeys.me, writes a regular column entitled “Teaching with Apps” for **Clavier Companion**, a respected magazine devoted to piano teachers and authored **The iPad Piano Studio: Keys to Unlocking the Power of Apps.**

