

Practice Instruments

To get the most out of piano lessons, your child needs to be practicing at home, and to do this they need something to practice on. I know the different types of pianos and keyboards available can be confusing so here's a break down of the different terms used and what they mean. Manufacturers may stray from these terms occasionally, but these are the most commonly used and are a helpful starting point.

Touch Sensitive Keyboard

(AKA Touch response or velocity sensitive)



This is the absolute minimum level of keyboard, any level below this is just a toy. The “touch sensitive” term means that you can get loud and soft sounds from the keyboard by pressing the key faster or slower. A touch sensitive keyboard is far from ideal. Although it does respond to different touch to some degree, there is no weight behind the keys. This means that it can't be used to effectively practice any kind of technique since it doesn't feel like a piano.

Semi-weighted Keyboard

(AKA Hammer action or stage piano)



This type of keyboard has weighted keys meaning it not only responds to the touch with a louder or softer sound, but the keys feel more like piano keys too. This can be a sufficient practice instrument for the first while, but keep in mind you may need an upgrade in a 1-2 years.

Digital Piano



Usually a digital piano refers to a semi-weighted or fully weighted keyboard with a more “piano-like” stand. The stand will be much sturdier than the ‘X’ stand given with most keyboards, and a pedal unit is normally integrated too. If you can't get an acoustic piano right now, a high end digital piano is the next best thing.

Acoustic Piano



This is of course the best option. An upright or grand piano is the best investment for your child's musical education. If you're looking at buying second hand it's worth getting a technician to check it over before you buy. You will need to tune an acoustic piano every year or two depending on the piano and the climate.