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Top 4 Guilt-Free Reasons to Make Your Child Practice their Piano Lessons by [Larry King](#)

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I hated taking the piano lesson as a kid. A lot of kids say that, and it's no doubt true, but I loathed them. Every Wednesday between the ages of eight and eleven I'd be driven to my tutor's house (a woman named Mrs. Gillespie, who at the time seemed like the crypt keeper but I'm sure can't have been as bad as my memory makes her out to be), and I'd sit there for an hour and a half, idly pressing keys and promising her that, yes, I'd done the amount of practicing she'd set and no, I had no idea why I wasn't hitting the notes properly. After three years of her sighing at me despondently, I'd had enough. I all but begged my mother not to make me go back there, and eventually she relented. The relief I felt knowing that I never had to set foot in that house again was magnificent.

When I was twenty-five, however, I took up the piano again and took piano lessons for beginners. I'd moved to an entirely different city by this point, got a degree, had a relatively successful job for someone in their mid-twenties... and now, after all the fuss I'd kicked up over a decade before, I'd somehow managed to drift back to an instrument I'd sworn I'd never touch again as long as I lived. So what happened? What could possibly have possessed me to go back on my word like that? Well, I realized that there are advantages to learning the piano that I just hadn't noticed when I was in my pre-teen phase -- advantages that went well beyond the instrument itself. Advantages only my parents could've seen.

Reason 1: Mastering the Piano Builds Confidence for a Lifetime

I was bad at playing the piano. There's no point hiding the fact. I was progressing more slowly than Mrs. Gillespie's other students, and I realized it. Strangely, though, when I was playing it was a massive boost to my confidence. Even though I was no Liberace, I was secure that I had some skill, some ability that other people didn't have, and it felt good. When I was playing relatively simple pieces at recitals, I was still proud to be able to get through it -- and to do so in front of dozens of people. Later in life, when it came to giving speeches and presentations at the office, I'd often find myself thinking back to those days struggling through Fur Elise -- and how I still managed to finish it, stand up and take a bow with everyone else. For the years I didn't quit my private piano lessons, it was an incredible feeling. When I finally did quit, I sort-of felt like I'd failed.

Reason 2: Musical Ability is Lasting and Transferable

The fact that I hated playing piano doesn't mean I hated music...far from it, in fact. Like a lot of teenagers, I figured guitar was more my style. I first picked up an acoustic six-string when I was about fourteen, and by sixteen I found myself in a band with some friends at school. Sure, we didn't exactly set the Billboard charts alight with our songs, but it was fun -- and the best part was, I managed to get to grips with it far more easily than friends who'd never picked up an instrument in their lives. And why shouldn't I? I'd had three years of musical theory pushed on me, and it all came flooding back. Even the finger dexterity and strength I'd got from my piano lessons hadn't abandoned me, and it was relatively easy to pick up even fairly complicated ideas on an instrument I found better suited to my abilities -- so much so that I kept up with guitar to this day.

Reason 3: Discipline is Required Throughout Life - Learning Early Saves Pain

You might say I got enough routine at school, but having a definite commitment every week really helps you to structure your time. Even things like practice time would have to be built into my day, and the end result of this extra regimentation was better time management skills that are still useful

today. Piano lesson? Homework? Paper route? Practice time? Get it done, and move on. If you have less time to fill, procrastination really ceases to be an option. And free time really becomes free.

Reason 4: Appreciation for Art - Not Just Gaming Graphics

I don't think any ten year old really appreciates classical music -- I know I didn't -- but now I'm a little older, it's much easier to really see the hours of dedication and patience it takes to master an instrument. Even going back to music like The Beatles and The Rolling Stones, knowing how hard it is to learn to play like that adds a richness to the songs that I'd never previously realized (and that really affected my choice of music during my teenage years). While everyone else would be out listening to the latest bit of pop fluff, I'd be scouring record shops for people who really knew how to jam. And, I think in the long run, it has made me a more interesting person to know.

My Parents Tried, But They Didn't See it Through

My parents didn't know that I'd be getting these life benefits when they signed me up for private piano lessons nearly twenty-five years ago, but it's obvious now that there are benefits to an education in piano that go well beyond being able to play that single instrument. Imagine if they'd only had me stick to it a little longer? It's not as though my daily complaining ever got me out of schoolâ€!. Thank goodness! Make them stick it out - they'll thank you later.

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Joann Paige is the author of this article about taking the a [piano lesson](#) as a way to benefit life. She is a retired piano music teacher from New York and now teaches private a [piano lessons for beginners](#).

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