

Time for

MORE SONGS!

**Anybody Can Play Piano
Teaching suggestions for more songs
in a studio, preschool or home
setting using the
Anybody Can Play Piano app
for the patient practice tutor:)**

RAIN RAIN GO AWAY HOT CROSS BUNS etc.

Rain Rain Go Away uses only the fingers not used in Tick Tock. Some students - especially very young ones - have quite a bit of difficulty using their right hand 4th finger, so I tend to skip over this song and go to Hot Cross Buns, a real favorite of the kids.

Always check to make sure the children are able to use and understand the app well. Suggest they look at the songs in SHOW ME and if someone is around that can read those words in the upper left hand corner of the screen, they can sing along while the song is being played.

Also remind them that they can have a songs played more slowly by touching or clicking on that **light brown box**.

This is a time when color coding the whole hand is important and there are activity sheets to download online. All these downloadable sheets have instructions for use.

This is also a good time to introduce (or review) quarter notes, half notes and eighth notes. Flashcards and those shoe step cards work really well as game/activities.

Tapping through the song on the giant keys color coded for Hot Cross Buns also works well at this time. Sing the colors, sing the words. Mention that the keys for the words Hot Cross Buns are the same everytime we sing those words!

Our fingers get used to playing those keys so it gets easy and we call that muscle memory! WOW! The 1,1,1,1 and the 2,2,2,2 are easy to find and then the WHOLE song is easy!

If you want to make laminated credit card flashcards for the children, cut out the info about each and glue to the back of the card before laminating because many of these children have parents with no music training and know nothing about notes.

PATTERNING...KEY STRIPS

Finding the 2 and 3 black keys on the activity sheet is quite an easy game for the children. However, they tend to have a difficult time looking at the computer screen and placing their hand in the proper position on a keyboard. This is where the key strips help.

Some of the key strips are already color coded with the song icon in the upper left corner so all the child needs to learn to do is place the keystrip in the proper place on the keyboard. If the keystrip is pulled forward to the front of the black keys it is easy to see the color coding.

When the children are better at seeing and translating the color coding on the screen to the keyboard, then a good patterning exercise is color coding the blank keystrip to match the song they are playing. Busy Buzzy shows the hand position for every song on a screen that freezes until "Continue" is touched.

KEY NAMES

At the beginning of lessons some children know the names of letters and others do not, so key names need to be learned. I always tell the children that it is much easier to call them by name rather than have to describe them like "the girl with the pink ribbon in her hair or the boy with the batman tee shirt".

So, we play games until the names of those notes are internalized. Colorful plastic clothes pins work really well. Just put on colored clothes pin on a key, then have the students place a same colored clothes pin on all the keys that look alike. Then name that key.

As they progress, tell them to put a clothes pin on all the "x" keys. Then, "Touch a C key....touch a G key..."etc.

Even before the students are able to name and find keys by name we concentrate on the location of the hand position keys that Busy Buzzy shows us.

Hot Cross Buns has an easy hand position to find. We concentrate on using the proper fingers on the keys - by color coding with young children. Playing a song with the proper fingers in the proper order each time it is played trains muscle memory in the hands and that is what makes it easy to play the song after it has been practiced.

When a student misplaces his/her hand I always would say something like "Your green finger is supposed to be on E, not F so you have to move over one key with that finger." Then I gently move the child's finger if key names are not yet internalized.

EASY

When working with young students, stay on a song until it is "easy" for them to play. By this time it is probably memorized, so play games like turning off the arrows that point to the keys and maybe even turning off those cartoon notes. And....play the song without the help of the computer! WOW!

Students with the app tend to play other songs independently so I ask if they have been playing something else. I check to make sure they are following the color coding, etc. However, we keep playing the songs generally in order until they are all "easy".

Most of the time I begin with the right hand versions of a song unless I have an obvious left handed student. When that happens the children in shared lessons are introduced to both hands from the beginning even if individually they use their primary hand.

WHEN TWO HANDS IN UNISON?

After learning 3 or 4 songs, start the activity game of “Walking Up to G and down to C”. There are different activity sheets with this game - some just words with color coded boxes for tapping on a tabletop. Others have keys drawn so students can practice tapping on the correct keys.

There are activity sheets for each hand alone and hands together to use when you feel it is appropriate

Once students start understanding how their hands work in unison, start playing the songs that are “easy” with both hands in unison. When a song is memorized students put their hands in position with ease, then tend to look at their right hand, then left hand, then play together on same name notes. Some, who already know the “feel” of both hands in unison from playing the games, look at the screen.

WHEN HANDS IN CONTRARY?

Some children try Level 3 songs independently (and find Indian Drums to be one of their favorite). As in 2 hands in unison, just “play by ear” as to the proper time to start also including some contrary versions to learn.

PRACTICING PARTS

When songs become longer or more complicated it becomes quite critical to practice in parts. Teach the children to click on one of those little green numbered boxes at the top of the screen, then “turn on” with the funny looking box farthest to the right and the computer will stay at the part of the song until you switch boxes, or turn off. This makes is really “easy” to learn a longer song!