

Choosing A GREAT Teacher – (by Diane Stober)

A great piano teacher is as important as a great schoolteacher. If a child studies for several years, the bond he/she develops with the piano teacher can be very strong. That teacher has the capability of instilling in students a life-long love of learning and a joy in playing the piano that they couldn't imagine living without.

1 Find out about the teacher's background – the years of experience, education, membership in professional organizations, and whether he/she is certified by those groups. Does the teacher attend conferences, workshops and seminars in order to continually grow as a teacher?

2 Get a feel for the atmosphere at the teacher's studio. The teacher should demonstrate a love of teaching and a deep respect and caring for students. The studio itself should be free from distractions and if it is in the teacher's home, separated from the family's activities.

3 What is the teacher's curriculum? Are the lessons individual or group? The private lesson format allows the teacher to concentrate on specific musical and personal needs of the student. The teacher should have a music library beyond the basic lesson book series. There should be performance opportunities including recitals, community service programs and adjudication events. Additional resources could include computer and keyboard labs, recordings, and occasional classes.

4 Does the teacher provide a variety of incentives for all ages? This can include everything from stickers to certificates. Don't forget to provide your own incentives at home, too. And be an encourager! Don't let your child quit because of boredom or frustration. Talk to the teacher before this turns into a problem.

5 The right teacher is not always the most convenient one. Price, location and lesson time are not the best criteria for choosing a teacher. The teachers who are the most in demand may not have the best times available for you. It could be wise to take whatever time is available and hope that a better one will open up.