

Keyboards for kids

by Elza and Chris Lusher, Dogs and Birds

Learning to play the keyboard can benefit your child in more ways than you ever imagined. We've all read or heard about studies that show that learning to play the piano or keyboard from an early age has a tremendously positive effect on a child's development, and in particular, reading and maths. It also boosts memory and relaxation and teaches concentration, co-ordination, patience and perseverance.

Recently the BBC series "Play it Again" has revived interest in learning to play an instrument. Many people regret not having learned an instrument when they were younger. Many are now starting to learn. Why not give your children the opportunity to learn right now?

As with any other language, the language of music is best learnt from an early age. The Kodály, Dalcroze and Colourstrings methods are used to some extent in this country, and these approaches are now being adopted in some schools and nurseries. In addition there are many pre-school courses for young children with or without their parents, which provide an excellent basis for learning any instrument. In these ways some young children are given a very solid musical foundation.

We personally have found the keyboard to be an excellent

first instrument for teaching music to young beginners. Children from four years old upwards have absolutely no difficulty in learning the basics of the keyboard and they can in principle be taught (or guided) by their parents. The beauty of the electronic keyboard is that it is always in tune and it is very simple for any child to use it to produce a pleasant sound. If the children sing whilst playing they very rapidly learn to sing in tune – many young children even develop perfect pitch (or recognise pitches much more easily than we can).

Kodály emphasised that when teaching music to the very young we need to adopt a playful approach, and we should employ as many senses as possible. This is precisely what happens in keyboard study. By simultaneously singing, hearing, seeing, touching, feeling and reading the

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A New Approach to Teaching Keyboard to Four to Seven Year Olds



Dogs and Birds + friends!
Teaching music to children

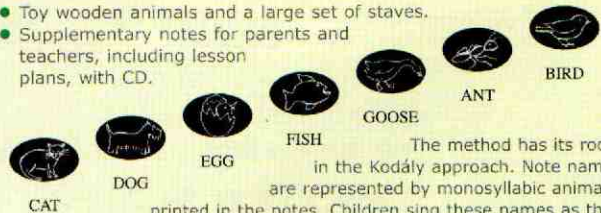


"A great pedagogical idea ... definitely an important contribution in an area not over-endowed with good things." **John York, Piano magazine**

The Dogs and Birds method allows all children, even those too young to know the alphabet, to approach the keyboard/piano in a systematic and playful way.

Resources Available:

- Two volumes of keyboard music obtainable in both animal notes and blank notes editions, by Elza and Chris Lusher, illustrated by Liz Patton.
- Toy wooden animals and a large set of staves.
- Supplementary notes for parents and teachers, including lesson plans, with CD.



The method has its roots in the Kodály approach. Note names are represented by monosyllabic animals, printed in the notes. Children sing these names as they play, thus developing their inner ear and deepening musicality.

Website: www.dogsandbirds.co.uk for more information and online orders. **Email:** info@dogsandbirds.co.uk

Enter the world of

MusicLand

In Godalming

Patrons

Lady Forbes Patricia Clark FRAM Roy Hudd OBE

A music school for babies of 3 months to children of 7 years old, based on the ColourStrings approach to teaching music to young children.

Exploring key music skills, using puppets, a see-saw, a magic box, and many more surprises, the MusicLand kindergarten leads directly to the learning of a string or keyboard instrument.

Individual instrumental tuition is now available. We also hold regular stage productions, concerts and seminars.

All classes, which are limited to 12 children, take place on the Guildford side of Godalming in our permanent premises. For more information, or to reserve a place, please contact Gail Mortley LRAM ARCM, using the contact details below.

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gail@musicland.org.uk


www.musicland.org.uk

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child becomes stimulated, successful and therefore happy.

Learning to read simple musical notation is nothing like the complex mental process of learning the written word – which involves learning twenty-six abstract symbols (at least in English) and then arranging them into almost innumerable patterns to symbolize words. Instead, if your child can learn seven simple symbols over a period of weeks or months he or she will soon be playing easy tuneful melodies on the

keyboard and singing at the same time. Additionally, this will be excellent preparation for learning to read later on.

Researchers suggest that learning to play the keyboard develops the circuits in the brain used for mathematics. It is therefore excellent preparation for schoolwork. You can obtain a three or four octave instrument relatively cheaply. This is perfectly adequate for a four to six year old. So why not consider teaching your children the keyboard? They can have enormous fun, and will learn something that will benefit them for life. 

Families enjoy Fun Day

Local mother of two, Claudia Taylor, launched Athletikids at a Family Fun Day at Sutton Arena recently. Athletikids is for pre-schoolers where they can learn and have fun doing a wide variety of sports.



Claudia managed to get the whole community involved, and raised £1000 for the NSPCC along the way as well! It was a great day with over five hundred people attending. Everyone was thrilled to see three times Commonwealth Gymnast Ross Brewer perform, and he helped to inspire the children to get active and find the bug for sport. Throughout the day there were a number of demonstrations showing how we can get toddlers involved in sport; covering athletics, tennis, football and lots more.



Everyone braved the elements on what was a windy day to go outside and watch the Emergency Services Olympic Challenge. This involved the Police, Sutton, Mitcham & Croydon

Fire Crew, Surrey Ambulance team and teams from Athletikids, Barclays Bank, Numberworks & Words, Goals, and Tinies. The teams had to race around a 400m track with various tasks that each team had to complete, including a three-legged race on a child's scooter.

Claudia believes it is easy to tackle the big issue of childhood obesity – we need to get up, get active and exercise instead of driving in the car everywhere or sitting in front of the television. And we need to encourage our children to do the same thing.

Local businesses such as Barclays Bank, NumberWorks and Words, Reed Business Information all showed their support for the community by sponsoring the event and the Metropolitan Police and Safer Neighbourhoods were also on hand to talk to people.

Call Claudia about your nearest class starting in September 07903 313304.



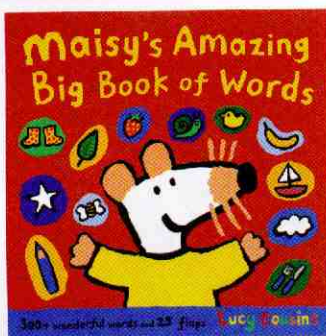
Psst!!

Is there a local service, store or restaurant that you think is family friendly?

Don't keep it a secret!

Let us know and we'll check it out and pass the good news on!

Our address is on page 1



Maisy's Amazing Big Book of Words

By Lucy Cousins

This biggest-ever Maisy book is bursting with first words and pictures for the very young. Sixty four pages, twenty five fantastic flaps and over three

hundred wonderful words combine in this colourful collection from award-winning artist Lucy Cousins. All of Maisy's favourite places and activities are featured in the book: the park, the farm, the beach, bedtime, bathtime, cooking, dressing up, and many, many more. It's simply AMAZING!

Maisy's Amazing Big Book of Words is a 'First Concepts' book, perfect for toddlers aged 1 to 3 years. Published by Walker Books the hardback is available from all good bookshops at £10.99.



WINWINWINWINWINWINWINWINWIN

We've teamed up with the publishers to offer 9 ABC readers the chance to each win this amazing Maisy book.

For your chance of winning simply tell us how many wonderful words are included throughout the sixty four pages?

Normal ABC competition rules apply and can be found together with the address on page 2.

WINWINWINWINWINWINWINWINWIN