

The Young Method™

Innovative Piano, Inc.
By Jeffrey Young

Book 1

ABA style Piano Lessons

Note to Parents, Therapists and Piano Teachers

Thank you for choosing “The Young Method™” by Innovative Piano, Inc. to help start your student or child on the path to playing the piano. While this method is intended for *all* students, Book 1 represents a starting point, which is based on many factors. Therefore, based on the player’s performance, they are allowed to proceed to more difficult manuals or ones that make the material more clear. The goal for all ‘Paths’ in this series is to help students begin to play typical sheet music. As they continue using the system, more and more distractions (i.e. illustrations, titles, and teacher directions) will be added to the pages. Please be sure to read through all the instructions and keep in mind that music is ultimately a form of expression that can lead to a life long skill, bringing joy to performers as well as audiences.

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Patent Pending

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Notes

***This book represents a step in a series of piano instruction material which is individualized to the student's performance based on several factors. Using this or any other book in The Young Method™ series without properly addressing these factors through Innovative Piano, Inc. can be counterproductive to the student's progress and is not recommended. Any behavioral modification suggested in this manual should be reviewed by the student's behavioral professional before inclusion.**

Book 1

Sailing

Only c and e on keys

Hopping

Only e, g

Round the Bend

Only c, d, e

Salt and Pepper

Only c, e, f

Tug Boat

Only d, e, f, g

Rain, Rain

Only d, f, g

All Together

Only d, e, f, g

Stars

Only c, d, e, *f, g

* These letters represent which **piano key letters** will be used in each song. The F key letter in “Stars” is the first example of a distraction, since the student will not use the F key in the song.

Teacher's Syllabus

***This section is intended to be removed by the teacher for assistance in lesson planning with Book 1**

1) The first four songs in Book 1, **Sailing, Hopping, Round the Bend** and **Salt and Pepper**, introduce keys C and E and slowly introduce keys D, F and G. Throughout this book, remember that only the **key letters** listed at the top left of the first page of each song are added to the piano for each song. To be scored correct on all of these Book 1 song pages, students can depress the piano key using either hand or any finger.

2) The song **Tug Boat** consists of 4 possible notes (D, E, F and G). While you will label four piano keys for this song, there are still, at most, two **notes** on each page. In these early stages of instruction teachers should focus on helping the student read from left to right, sit appropriately at the piano and providing abundant reinforcement for successes as well as attempts.

3) In the sixth and seventh songs of Book 1 (**Rain, Rain** and **All Together**) we are adding more notes to the song pages and more possible keys on the piano. Rain, Rain has three possible notes (D, F and G). It introduces three notes per page on the second and fifth page of the song. If repeating notes seem challenging for your student (as in the F, F combination in this song) you can prompt the student to **point** to each note and then **play**. You can also cover the second repeating note and reveal it after they are successful with the first.

4) Our final song in Book 1, **Stars**, includes key letters C through G on the piano. Each page has a combination of three notes, resulting in two key letters which act as **distracters**. For our purposes, a distracter is anything that does not correspond to the immediate task at hand. In early stages, this includes song titles, illustrations, teacher directions, student directions, notes not included in the song and yes, even page numbers. As your student meets **criterion** these are slowly added to the song pages in future books.

Background

This system was first developed in a private school setting, with a small number of students with special needs. At this time I was working as a Behavioral Therapist, focusing on positive reinforcement and helping my students with everyday challenges. While working with these children with Autism, I soon began to focus not on their challenges but on their strengths. It became clear to me that with the correct use of Applied Behavior Analysis style teaching methods and classical piano instruction these children would be able to play the piano. After meeting with overwhelming success with these students I decided to bring this to the public, and teach piano in the homes of families throughout my area. While there was, of course, some introduction of this method into the home of the school children I originally taught, I had no idea if this would be successful in the broader sense. How would a student with Autism respond to a piano teacher coming every week and placing these demands on them? Would I be able to help train the parents or teachers on how to institute this method? I'm pleased to say that with the dedication of the students' families and ABA professionals that work with these students, the progress has been phenomenal and continues to astound me. It soon became clear to me that this needed to become available on a larger scale and I was prompted by the many families around the country who expressed great interest in this program to make this accessible to them in this series.

While these materials are meant to help *any* student learn how to play the piano, keep in mind that each student is different and individualized attention is required. I have found that factors such as reinforcement, their individual rate of progress through the system and an overall acknowledgement of their special needs are paramount. After bringing this system to the public it became even clearer to me that an individualized approach was essential to my students' success at the piano. What this means is that, although every one of my student's have played the same songs you will use in this book, I have individualized them to best fit that particular student. This may mean reducing the amount of notes on a page, or withholding the introduction of certain concepts, like fingering, until the student is ready. This aspect of my teaching program has caused some concern for me, since integrating the materials and procedures I use into book form might compromise these very important factors. To compensate for this, the series will lead your student down a 'path'. The beginning lessons of this book represent a starting point at which these concepts can be introduced and taught to. As your student goes through the series, keep in mind that this represents the progression I make for each of my students. Generally speaking, there will soon be more notes on each page and fewer and fewer prompts will be needed. When your student does well, they will move on through the levels and other concepts will be introduced. If progress is hindered, my experience has been that there is one of two reasons for this: comprehension challenges or behavioral challenges. Our role as teachers is to recognize which of these factors is stopping their progress and take the proper steps to deal with these issues.

Let's start with comprehension challenges. The way we know if these materials are too difficult for a student is by taking data. I know taking data can be hard at times but take heart in the knowledge that later on data collection becomes far less of a factor. So, if your student is playing well and finding the notes they move on. If your student has trouble that's OK, because in this system we have a way to make the system clearer and remove distracters. Future books can become more difficult *or* clearer depending on your student's performance data. I have used these methods with students who need a clearer approach with very good results. So the answer to comprehension challenges is for the student to proceed to a book that is a better fit for them.

How about behavioral challenges? I have found that mirroring the therapies and procedures your student receives at school works best at the piano as well. They have a history with this and quickly see that practicing the piano is the same as all their school programs. Generally though, if you experience behavioral challenges such as not attending to the materials, leaving the piano or banging the keys, you should focus on reinforcement. Remember that, of course *we* know that learning to play the piano will be fun, enriching and an overall beneficial endeavor for your student, that doesn't mean that they will understand that right away or have that as a high priority at first. Pairing activities, snacks and anything your student really enjoys with piano will help them make this transition. This will help your student realize that it is important to play the piano and really fun things happen when they do. Therefore, if your student is displaying challenging behavior and you feel that this is the reason for low data scores, stay with the current book level and increase your level of positive reinforcement.

My main goal with this series of piano instruction books has been to format the same materials and procedures I use into an easy to follow guide for parents and teachers. Please keep in mind that every student is unique and requires your intimate knowledge of his likes and dislikes, her best time of the day and when you know it's just time to call it quits. Also keep in mind that all progress is relative. Some of my proudest moments have come when a student plays an "easier" piece well because I know that it represents so much more.