



Contact: 630-585-6000; napervillemusicacademy@gmail.com

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

*Please feel free to call us or e-mail if we have not provided sufficient answers
and we will be more than happy to offer additional clarifications.*

1. **How to choose the instrument**
2. **Do we need to have an instrument at home and should we bring it to the class?**
3. **What instrument to buy for a beginner?**
4. **Group classes or individual lessons?**
5. **How do group classes work?**
6. **Registration and cancellations**

1. HOW TO CHOOSE THE INSTRUMENT

Is it true that all students should start their musical training with piano?

Not at all! It is true that piano provides a well rounded musical background, but if the child does not like the piano, this could become a great source of frustration: he/she would not be interested in practicing, and would put resistance when it comes to attending the classes. It is better to start with the instrument that the child is interested in, and see where it can lead. Well rounded musical background is essential for professional musicians, however, a very small number of students actually go on to make music their career. At the beginning, fun is more important than depth, and depth can come later if a student is interested in expanding or changing the instruments.

My child always pretends to play an instrument at home, should I sign him up?

There is a difference between a child being interested in producing sounds and noise as a way of playing, and the ability to focus on learning in a class and to practice deliberately at home. The parents know best if their child is ready to learn or if it is still interested in simple playing without the clear sense of direction. Once the child is interested in learning and improving, and is able to follow direction, that would be a good time to consider signing them up for lessons.

[Back to top...](#)

2. DO WE NEED TO HAVE AN INSTRUMENT AT HOME?

Yes! Music classes are more like math, not like soccer – that is why they are called lessons and classes, and not practices. Students need to practice between classes to solidify what they learned, and that way they can learn new material in their next class. It is important to practice several days per week, at least 4, so that the knowledge becomes solid. When it comes to learning music, there is no substitute for deliberate, focused repetition. Talent, which is a very small component of musical success, cannot shine without consistent practice and improvement.



Do we need to bring the instrument to our classes?

For guitar, violin, and drums, students need to bring their instruments to the class. Drum students need to bring their drum pads. We have several keyboards in each of the group piano classrooms so the students do not need to bring the keyboard to the class.

[Back to top...](#)

3. WHAT INSTRUMENT TO BUY FOR A BEGINNER STUDENT?

In general, it would be better to invest initially more into the skill building than an instrument. Once the student shows commitment to practicing and the lessons, the investment into a solid instrument would be an excellent next step and great motivation.

For piano, it is often a good idea to start with a smaller keyboard: 61-key keyboard, such as Yamaha, would be sufficient for a student who is just starting, and the student could use it for several years. For students interested in taking higher level IL state test in piano, or participating in competitions, minimum requirement is full keyboard (88 keys) with weighted keys. Decent smaller keyboard should be about \$100 and you can find good full keyboards with weighted keys for about \$400.

For violin, we suggest renting from a good rental company which provides good violins for a bit higher rate. Low end rental violins go out of tune almost immediately and the teacher spends more time in the lesson tuning the instrument than teaching the students. We believe that a few extra dollars investment in rental instruments would allow for faster learning and stronger interest.

For drums, it is a good idea to start with a drum pad, a stand, and a pair of sticks. If the student becomes really interested, then investment into a drum set would be a great idea.

For guitar, the student should have the guitar that fits her/his size. For very young students, there are affordable small size guitars in Toys R Us, and they would be a very good starting instrument and low investment. For students who are a bit older, a junior size guitar would be the right fit – your local guitar store will help you find the right size guitar for your child.

Acoustic or Electric Guitar?

For young students it is important to start from the instrument that they like in order to keep them interested. Keep in mind, though, that the investment doubles when it comes to electric guitar since buying an amp and the cables is in addition to the instrument. For adults, if you have both instruments, there is no need to limit oneself to just one choice: there are songs that sound better on one guitar than the other, and having different expressive options can be a great motivation to practice.

[Back to top...](#)

4. GROUP CLASS OR INDIVIDUAL LESSONS

Group Classes or Individual Lessons?

Our group classes, unlike any other group classes offered currently on the market, offer individual instruction in a group setting: every student is addressed individually and allowed to learn at their own pace and level. Group classes are a great starting point to find out if the child is really interested in an instrument. The student can continue group classes for several years - in our classes we have students who are able to play songs up to level 4. Both children and adults can successfully learn in a group class setting.



For voice, group classes are an excellent choice up to age 10-11. After that, the student should move into individual lessons so that the teacher can accommodate their unique vocal needs.

Individual lessons are great for students who play at a higher level, are interested in taking higher level IL state test or participating in competitions, for some adults, and for students who have a hard time focusing in a group setting. The instruction in individual lessons is of higher quality since the teacher is focused on one student for the whole class, but it also requires more practicing, and more homework. Students who are not ready to commit to almost daily practice would be better served in a group class.

[Back to top...](#)

5. HOW DO GROUP CLASSES WORK?

The teacher works with one student for a few minutes, then asks the student to practice what they just learned while she works with the next student in the group, and so on. Students are engaged with their instrument for the full duration of the class. Some theory or music history aspects are addressed with everybody as a group, but actual instrument training is tailored to fit each individual student, their needs and their learning pace, just like in individual lessons.

We have students of different ages and levels in each class. They all learn from each other, and have fun in a group setting. This unique approach combines the traditional one-on-one instruction with affordability of the group setting.

Are there levels or age groups?

NMA does not divide classes by levels or ages. We find the levels somewhat arbitrary, so we do not use them in our teaching styles. (For example, there are numerous piano and violin methods, and each method defines levels differently.) Our classes are small, up to 3 students in a 45-min class for piano, guitar, and violin, and in a 30-min class for voice and drums. The small number of students in our long classes, allow us to give each student individualized attention and take them to very high levels of learning. We have piano students playing songs from Level 4 in their classes, and we have guitar, voice, violin, and drum students who won competitions while taking group classes and diligently practicing at home. We find that mixing levels and ages allows the classes to be interesting and unpredictable, thus keeping students' attention.

[Back to top...](#)

6. REGISTRATION AND CANCELLATIONS

How do I sign up for classes or lessons?

Please call us at 630-585-6000, or e-mail at napervillemusicacademy@gmail.com to see what times we have currently available. The tuition payment is done upon signing up to ensure that the teacher is available and the slot reserved. Our teachers are independent contractors and they are not required to be at NMA unless the student has committed to a class time by paying the tuition. Because of the make ups and other possible schedule changes we do not know day-to-day teachers' schedule and we always have to clear with them if they are available on a particular day or time to start a new student.

Can I enroll my child even after the quarter has started?

Absolutely! Our lessons and group classes are designed for individualized approach to teaching, and that allows us to start new students at any time in the year. The student, beginner, or experienced, will be taught at their own level no matter when they start.

My child is often suddenly sick, should we sign him/her up and receive make ups?



Unfortunately, our schedules do not allow us to make up lessons and classes cancelled on the day of the class. In the interest of fairness we would have to offer that option to all our students, and our busy schedules would not allow for such flexibility. It might be a better idea to wait until the child's health stabilizes and then contact us again. In case of severe weather late cancellations are honored and make ups provided.

[Back to top...](#)