Defining Special Needs and Learning Disabilities

Child with a disability means a child as having an intellectual disability, a hearing impairment (including deafness), a speech or language impairment, a visual impairment (including blindness), a serious emotional disturbance (referred to in this part as “emotional disturbance”), an orthopedic impairment, autism, traumatic brain injury, another health impairment, a specific learning disability, deaf-blindness, or multiple disabilities, and who, by reason thereof, needs special education and related services.

Specific learning disability means a disorder in one or more of the basic psychological processes involved in understanding or in using language, spoken or written, that may manifest itself in the imperfect ability to listen, think, speak, read, write, spell, or to do mathematical calculations, including conditions such as perceptual disabilities, brain injury, minimal brain dysfunction, dyslexia, and developmental aphasia.

General Overview of Learning disabilities

- **Physical** — Muscular dystrophy, multiple sclerosis, chronic asthma, and epilepsy.
- **Developmental** — Down syndrome, autism, dyslexia, and processing disorders.
- **Behavioral/Emotional** — ADHD, bipolar disorder, or oppositional defiance disorder
- **Sensory Impaired** — Being blind, visually impaired, deaf, or hearing-impaired.
Survey Results

- Dyslexia
- Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder
- Processing Deficit Disorder
- Autism
- Visually and Auditory Impaired

Parent Involvement

- Parents are the expert with their child.
- Parents must be involved in the learning process.
- Ask for student’s IEP (Individualized Education Plan).
- Have conversations before first lesson as well as ongoing conversations.
- Teacher must be open and honest with struggles and accomplishments.

Piano Pedagogy Applications

1. Dyslexia/Dysgraphia
   - Be clear when describing direction.
   - Musical timing may be a struggle.
   - Be mindful of reading level.
   - Teach pieces by rote.
   - Print music on colored paper or color code notation.

2. Processing Disorders
   - Create a routine with short, clear instructions with each lesson.
   - Be prepared to teach each concept aurally, visually, and kinesthetically.
   - Be consistent with terminology.
   - Not all method books work – must have supplementary materials.
   - Use technology.

3. Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder
   - No distractions in studio e.g., clocks, phones, scented aromas.
   - Structure of lesson and make it clear to the student.
   - Behavioral boundaries.
   - Quick pace and positive attitude.
   - Cues to help with the flow of the lesson and stay on task.
   - Off the bench activities.
4. Autism

- Make sure studio is cleared of small objects.
- Say what you mean and mean what you say.
- Be aware of social cues.
- Give detailed instruction for every concept.
- Create a routine.
- Use colors for coordination when necessary.

5. Hearing Impaired

- Have faith in your students to succeed
- Limits in the music making progress (dynamics, timbre, accurate rhythms).
- Be prepared to have clear visuals for every concept.
- Use electric keyboards to be able to use headphones.
- Be able to conduct (visual cues) – show rhythms and beats by hand motions.

6. Visually Impaired: Piano Pedagogy Applications

- Tour of studio.
- Aware of tone and clarity when speaking.
- Before touching a student for physical demonstrations.
- Library of Congress to access braille music.
- Keyboard awareness exercises.
- Large symbols on sheets of paper. E.g. (sharps, flats, notes etc.).

GENERAL RESOURCES

Dyslexia/Dysgraphia

Processing Disorders


ADHD


Autism


Hearing Impaired

Visually Impaired

- The National Music Library Service

General Resources In Special Education