

# Parent's Guide 2023-2024



## Home listening

Suzuki calls his method the mother tongue approach. The key to learning music successfully is listening. Listening develops more than just memory of specific pieces; it improves the ability to learn by developing your overall sequencing and auditory memory, which is the ability to reproduce a series of tones in the same order that you hear them. When these skills are highly developed, you can learn to play back the example that the teacher plays much more quickly and learn new pieces faster as well as at a higher level.

Home listening must include these ideas in order to be effective:

### 1. Listening must happen frequently.

By listening to the pieces you are studying on your CD *at least* five times a day, you will learn the pieces much faster than listening a couple times per week.

### 2. Listening must occur at home.

Listening in the car can be beneficial, but it is not as helpful as listening at home. By listening at home, you also help to develop the home environment.

### 3. Consecutive repetitions

Consecutive repetitions of the same piece are much more effective than practicing or listening to different pieces one after another.

## Practice for Success

### 1. Repetition is the key to learning.

This means successful repetitions after you can play the part correctly. Repetition is most useful if you repeat a short segment many times in a row. It may take ten tries to get it correct five times, but you will probably take only five or six tries to get five more correct. These last five correct attempts are the most valuable. If you only repeat the part

five times correctly, you lose this benefit. If you practice each spot until you can do it ten times correctly each day, you will not easily forget it and you will get more benefit from review of old pieces.

### 2. Review of previous pieces.

Mastery and continued review of earlier pieces lay the foundation for more advanced pieces. Review of easier pieces helps to teach greater refinement of bowing and musical expression. This is very important in developing your child's ability to a high level.

### 3. Playing with the accompaniment CD each day to play with musical sensitivity.

The most important thing that you can get from music study is the ability to play with musical sensitivity. This means more than just playing correct notes at the right speed. It means playing with phrasing, dynamics, articulation, and expressive changes in tempo such as speeding up a little at the climax of the phrase and slowing down a little at the end. It includes a concept of the musical idea that the composer is trying to express. The meaning of music is essentially social and we play because we want to say something to someone else musically. Listening to the recordings many times each day teaches these things in a natural organic way that becomes an integral part of the child just as in their native language. Playing with the accompaniment CD daily reinforces this lesson, developing confidence and a high level of ability.

## At the Lesson

Get the most from each lesson with these ideas.

1. **Plan to arrive early** and spend a few minutes of quiet time together. Find out about your child's day at school and encourage them to share their feelings about things that happened.

2. **Review the key points** that you have been practicing. Talk about any behavioral goals that you have for the lesson and any rewards for meeting them.

3. **Let the teacher correct your child** at the lesson. Having more than one person teaching at the same time is confusing even if they are both teaching correctly.

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**4. Pay attention** to what your child is learning. Take notes at the lesson and ask questions if you do not understand what the teacher is saying. *Practice after the lesson*, it helps to review while the teaching points are still fresh in your mind.

## Lesson and Group Class Guidelines

The teacher is in charge of the lesson and class. Please show him/her courtesy and respect. One parent is asked to attend each lesson and group class unless excused in advance by the teacher. Do not drop off students at the lesson or class without a parent or responsible adult or leave them while you do errands. Please watch carefully for ideas that will help you teach your child at home. Please do not talk or read during the lesson or class; you will miss many details.

Parents are responsible for disciplining their own child. Parents should not attempt to discipline children from other families except to prevent an immediate injury. In the hallways, you can help by giving general reminders not to run or make noise.

**Please do not interrupt individual lessons.** Wait until the end of the lesson or write a note to the teacher and quietly hand it to them. When you arrive, knock on the door and wave to let them know you are there. The teacher decides when to start and end each lesson.

Criticizing your child in lessons or group class distracts the child and they soon look to the parent instead of the teacher during the class.

Parents are welcome to bring other children to class but please stay within an arm's length of them and take them into the hall if they start to make noise before they disturb the class. You can help by bringing quiet things for them to do, like coloring.

There is no chewing gum, eating, or drinking in any lesson or class. Food may be eaten in the waiting rooms before or after lessons.

## Recitals

There are solo and group recitals in the fall and spring. The solo recital provides a positive and supportive way to build confidence and pride in

each student. The goal is to select a piece that the student can play well, with enthusiasm and confidence. This is not necessarily their most advanced piece. Review for mastery at each level means that everyone has a number of pieces that can be played very well. For young students, this may be playing a rhythm on an open string or simply taking a bow in front of the audience. Your private teacher must approve solos by the deadline listed in the newsletter.

## Graduation

Students who have completed the work at a given level (see below) are eligible to receive a certificate. Teachers recommend students for graduation and the director hears them play their pieces with the CD. Students can pass the test in stages, over a period of time if necessary. **They must be able to play all of the pieces at their level and all previous levels with the accompaniment CD** from memory without significant mistakes on the first attempt. This means that review of old pieces is a continuous process, not last-minute graduation preparation.

## Violin Graduation Levels

Level 1 string crossing exercises, A major scale  
Level 2 Twinkle (play all variations with CD).  
Level 3 Early Book 1 (up to "Perpetual Motion").  
Level 4 Book 1 (all pieces in Book 1).  
Level 5 Book 2 (all pieces in Books 1 and 2).  
Level 6 Book 3 (all pieces in Books 1–3).  
Level 7 Book 4 (all pieces in Books 1–4).

## School Policies

### Group Class

Students are grouped by age and ability for the weekly group class and Kodály/reading class, which are scheduled consecutively. All group class assignments are made through the director in consultation with the group class teacher.

### Individual Lessons

We encourage parents to discuss their child's progress with the teacher. We furnish the teachers' home telephone numbers so that this can be done *between* lessons to prepare for the next lesson. If you have concerns about your lessons, please discuss them with your individual lesson teacher first. If you still have questions that need to be resolved, please contact the director.

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Do not ask your teacher to study with them privately, because teachers are prohibited from soliciting or accepting students they teach or meet at the Suzuki Institute for lessons outside the school. This applies for one year after the teacher leaves the school. Exceptions must be discussed with the director in advance. When the director finds out later, it reflects badly on everyone and can affect the teacher's professional standing at the school. We ask all parents to follow this process..

## Makeup Lessons

In case of teacher absence or an official school cancellation due to bad weather, lessons will either be made up or a tuition credit given. **In cases of student absence, make-up lessons will not be given.** In the case of long-term illness or religious holidays, a leave of absence can be negotiated with the director. **Students who use a payment plan must pay for the weeks that they miss.** This allows us to provide a consistent professional work environment for our teachers.

## Snow Days

Classes will not be held when **Brookline** schools are closed. On Saturdays, a message will be on the Suzuki Institute answering machine at (617) 566-0002 and at [www.suzukiboston.com](http://www.suzukiboston.com) if classes are cancelled. If weather is bad, please call before coming to class. If there is no message, there will be classes.

## Tuition

**Tuition is due before the first lesson** of the semester unless other arrangements have been made in advance with the director. Students who pay weekly must pay two weeks in advance. **If you are paying monthly, your payment must be received by the school before the 1<sup>st</sup> of the month.** It is very important that tuition payments are on time. There is a non-

refundable registration and materials fee of \$100.00 each year. Students joining in mid-term pay a pro-rated fee. Additional children in the same family may attend group class for only \$220.00 per term.

Individual lesson fees for a 16-week semester including all group classes in West Roxbury.:

30 min.	\$1060.00*	45 min	\$1540.00
60 minutes	\$2020.00		

*Note: tuition is different at different programs because of differing costs and our commitment to outreach programs in Roxbury, Dorchester, Hyde Park, and Mattapan administered by those programs. Contact the director for details.*

## Withdrawal

80% of the unused tuition will be refunded if you decide to withdraw before the fourth lesson and notify the director in writing. Otherwise, no tuition refunds are given. In case of long-term illness, disability, or childbirth, a leave of absence is negotiable.

## Financial Aid

Some financial aid is available. Please call the director for information. We believe that every student who really wants to study should have the opportunity. Scholarship students are asked to pay at least part of the fee and help the school in some way.

## Photo/Video Policy

The Suzuki Institute of Boston may photograph or videotape classes or recitals for educational purposes, website, promotional and publication use. If you would prefer you or your child not be photographed or videotaped, please inform the director with a brief written statement.