

Elizabeth Skinner Studio  
Studio Policies & Tips  
October 1, 2020

Thank you for nurturing your child's interest in music! Here are a few things that will help your child succeed:

### **Listening**

Listening to the Suzuki cds and other fine classical music helps students learn repertoire and inspires them to play beautifully. The more your child listens to the cd, the faster s/he will learn the piece. Listening the the Suzuki cd can be active or passive (background music/music in the car....). Make multiple copies of the cd so you can have one in the car, house, etc and in case you lose one!

### **Review**

Suzuki students constantly review the pieces that that they have learned – this helps to reinforce memory, technical skills and musical expression. We can always play more beautifully and review pieces are a great way to apply new techniques to a familiar piece.

### **Practice**

Dr. Suzuki said “only practice on the days you eat.” I realize that this is difficult but it's probably better to practice 15 minutes a day than 30 minutes just 2–3 days/week. Rarely do students love to practice so it's normal if your child doesn't want to. We can make it easier for them (and you!) by helping them develop a good practice routine. How do you foster consistent practice?

- a. Create a consistent practice schedule (before school, after dinner, etc). Practice time should be non-negotiable and become an integral part of daily life like brushing teeth, etc.
- b. Find a dedicated practice space and make it easy to get out the instrument.
- c. Make it fun – if you need ideas, please ask me.
- d. Practice with your child – understand the weekly goals and guide your child through practice.
- e. Middle–high school students are expected to take charge of their own practicing but I encourage parents to remind students to practice and to ask what they're working on.

### **Parental Involvement**

Parents are the home teacher and are expected to be present during a student's lesson if they are under 10 years old. **Students are more successful when their parents take an active role in lessons and home practice.** When your

child is in the lesson, it's important that the focus is on the learning between the student and me. It's really tempting to interject or correct the student's posture (for example) but it's confusing to the student (who's the teacher?). I may ask for your help at times. I may focus on you to make sure you understand the teaching point. I will write down the lesson points for you but you should take notes that will help you with your child's practice. Please let me know if you ever need more information during or between lessons.

## Other

- Group classes: Group classes are extremely important in the musical development of your child and help us to prepare for upcoming concerts – plus, they're fun!. Groups are a part of the monthly bill whether or not you choose to attend them. Students who do not participate in group class cannot play on ensemble pieces but are welcome to perform a solo at the end-of-year recital. Also, I've found that students who don't participate in group are not as engaged and more likely to quit playing.
- What you'll need:
  - You will need a quality **instrument** outfit of the right size. You can rent an instrument from VT Violins but please wait to purchase an instrument until I can recommend the proper size for you. If your child seems "between" sizes, get the smaller size. Please do not purchase or rent a "VSO" (violin-shaped object!) Please don't let your child play the instrument/bow until they begin lessons.
  - You might need a different chinrest or shoulder pad or other accessories.
  - Black binder(s) for practice charts and music.
- Parking: Please park in the street and not in my driveway, if possible. My husband needs to access the driveway. Thanks!
- Tuition: For your convenience, I have broken down lesson payments into 10 equal monthly payments which will be due at the beginning of each month (September–June).
  - Tuition is due at the beginning of the month whether or not I've invoiced you. I no longer send invoices so if you absolutely need one please let me know.
  - If a check is returned by the bank, you are responsible for a \$25.00 fee (in cash) or whatever the bank charge is.

- Lesson Termination: Sometimes, families and/or I decide that it is best to move on. If the family has made that decision, please let me know at least four (4) lessons in advance so we can schedule a closure lesson and last lesson date. Tuition is due for the four (4) lessons following the date you notify me, regardless of whether or not you take those lessons.
- Missed lessons: Because of my schedule, I am unable to offer make-up lessons. Here is a link to an excellent article written by a Suzuki parent about makeup lessons. [http://ottawasuzukistrings.ca/makeuplessons/?fbclid=IwAR0IYd1crSCuwoScPv\\_NOsYg9G63KM2WRFT81d\\_Wp0hjp\\_QOISrbmcl9L7U](http://ottawasuzukistrings.ca/makeuplessons/?fbclid=IwAR0IYd1crSCuwoScPv_NOsYg9G63KM2WRFT81d_Wp0hjp_QOISrbmcl9L7U)
  - I understand last minute cancellations due to illness but I don't have room in my schedule to offer another lesson time.
  - Zoom lessons are a great way to have your lesson if you can't make it in – these are especially useful during snow days or when your student is not feeling well but is still up to a lesson.
  - You are encouraged to switch with another family if you have a conflict with an upcoming lesson.
  - If I miss a lesson, I will make it up.
  - LESSONS MISSED BY FAMILIES WILL NOT BE REFUNDED.
- Students who consistently miss lessons or are more than 21 days late with payments forfeit their lesson time slot.

Thank you for being a part of my studio! It is a privilege to teach your child!