

# The Suzuki Method

## Overview

Modeled after the way that children learn their native language, Dr. Shinichi Suzuki's renowned *Suzuki Talent Education* is an extremely effective approach to learning instruments based on the belief that musical talent is not innate but developed through a nurturing environment. As such, students work closely with their parents and teacher to progress through well-designed repertoire that reviews past skills and builds new skills through repetition and positive reinforcement—all grounded in listening and imitating by ear, yet leading ultimately to an ability to read music. Using a combination of individual lessons, group lessons, and daily practice, students unfailingly develop not only strong musical skills, but strong character and sense of community involvement as well.

## The “Mother Tongue Method”

In this method, skills of playing the instrument (“speaking”) are learned first. Once the student is fluent in playing, and when they are developmentally ready, reading is introduced—much like students hear language in the home, are read to, and learn to speak before they learn to read, write, and spell.

## “Environmental Listening”

Recordings of the repertoire are essential for daily “environmental listening.” These recordings are played daily many, many times—just as children naturally hear their native language in their home environment.

## Parent as the Home Practice Partner

The unique partnership role that parents play in this musical journey is key to a child's success. The parent will learn the beginning techniques of violin playing alongside, and slightly in advance of, their child in order to prepare them to be a successful home practice partner. The parent's role at home is to establish a daily practice routine, encourage progress, and facilitate correct practicing, while his or her role in lessons is to observe, take notes, and ask questions.

In order to provide an opportunity for Suzuki parents (prospective, new, and continuing) to learn more about the Suzuki method, discuss any questions and concerns, and learn basic violin skills, a “Parent Master Class” occurs each fall as the launch of our Suzuki program. This class is mandatory for new Suzuki parents, but highly rewarding for prospective and continuing Suzuki parents as well.

*“Music exists for the purpose of growing an admirable heart.” ~ Shinichi Suzuki*

# Suzuki Instruction at STA

## Beginning (First-Year) Students

Students who are new to Suzuki instruction will be paired with another beginner for a 30-minute semi-private lesson each week. Parents of all beginning students are **required** to attend these semi-private lessons and to be active practice partners at home. Beginners will also attend a weekly, age-based group class, which parents are welcome but not required to attend.

## Continuing Students

Students who have at least one year of experience in Suzuki training will receive their own 30-minute private lesson each week. Parents of students in grades PK-3 are **required** to attend these lessons and should be regularly involved in home practice. Based on instructor discretion, parents of students in grades 4-5 may not be required to attend lessons. Continuing students will also attend a weekly, age-based group class.

## Strings Ensemble

As an alternative to standard group classes, students in grades 4 and 5 have the opportunity to participate in a strings ensemble that incorporates a variety of instruments and includes separate instruction in reading music. This group is also open to students who have private instruction with teachers outside of STA and provides all students with an opportunity to share music within a larger community. The ensemble meets weekly during the school day, and our repertoire selection each year is selected based on its members. Students who play cello, guitar, viola and violin may take an evaluation form to their private teacher to complete. We want to work in support of the private lesson teacher, so students will only be able to participate if their private teacher confirms their readiness to participate.

*“Every Child Can Learn. It all depends on the environment” ~ Shinichi Suzuki*

# 2015-2016 Fees and policies

## Annual (30-lesson) Tuition:

- \$50 registration deposit (due by **9/2/16**)
- \$430 for first-year Suzuki students
- \$785 for continuing Suzuki students
- \$120 for ensemble only (for qualified students who take private lessons outside of STA)

## Materials:

- \$20 for beginning students
- \$15 for continuing students
- \$30 (total) for 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> graders and non-STA ensemble students

*Includes weekly practice logs, practice activities, group materials, violin boxes, foot charts, sheet music, etc.*

## Payment:

- First installment (50% tuition) is due **9/9/16**.
- Second installment (tuition remainder) is due **1/6/17**.
- Payments must be received before lessons can begin.
- Checks should be made out to **Caitlin Leffingwell** and brought to Miss L's mailbox in the STA office. Payment through the Venmo app/website (search Caitlin Leffingwell) is also accepted.

## Scheduling and Make-Up Lessons

- Lesson schedules will be determined based on registration order, age/number of children, attendance at parent meetings, and class/specials schedule.
- Miss L will pick up and drop off students for group classes, but parents are responsible for bringing students to and from private lessons (held in the Music Room).
- Lessons begin promptly—lost time generally cannot be made up at the end of a lesson.
- One week of make-up lessons will occur at the end of each semester for lessons missed due to instructor absence, school closure, holidays, verified illness, or other excused absences. Lessons missed due to unexcused absences will only be made up at the instructor's discretion.
- **Students who forget their instruments cannot participate in group or private lessons.**
- Parents may miss one lesson each semester—further absences will result in a cancelled lesson.

## Each family will be required to purchase the following:

- Suzuki Volume 1 book and recording (CD or iTunes download)
- Accessories as requested by instructor (shoulder rests, strings, rosin, music stands, metronome, etc.)
- Concert attire: white blouse/dress shirt, black pants/skirt, and black socks/shoes—no patterns!
- Quality instrument outfit (violin, bow, and case)
  - The String House (<http://www.thestringhouse.com>) offers incredibly high quality instruments and service. It is highly recommended for students demonstrating clear interest and commitment.
  - Music & Arts in West Hartford (<http://stores.musicarts.com/west-hartford>) offers a local, affordable, and flexible option for those still determining a commitment level. *Speak to Miss L regarding the discounted rates for supplies also available from Music & Arts.*