

# Suzuki Parent Information Sheet

In order for the Suzuki method of instruction to be successful there are a few key points of the ideology that you, as parent, should be made aware of. Please familiarize yourself with the information found on these pages and, if you are so inclined, ask for or search out further material to educate yourself and solidify your understanding of the process. I truly wish you the best of luck on this fantastic musical journey that your family is embarking on. I also hope to accurately prepare you for the lifelong skills, memories and personal growth that you are now on a course to discover both in your child, and yourself.

Thank you for your time!

Joshua Agar

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## Suzuki's Vision

“Teaching music is not my main purpose. I want to make good citizens. If children hear fine music from the day of their birth and learn to play it, they develop discipline, sensitivity, and endurance. They get a beautiful heart.” - Dr. Shinichi Suzuki

Shinichi Suzuki was an educator born in Japan in 1898 who dedicated his life to the philosophy of talent education. He looked at playing the instrument as the means for reaching many other goals, and envisioned that what is learned through music will benefit children in whatever career they choose. It was his belief that the nurturing of children's hearts will gradually change the world.



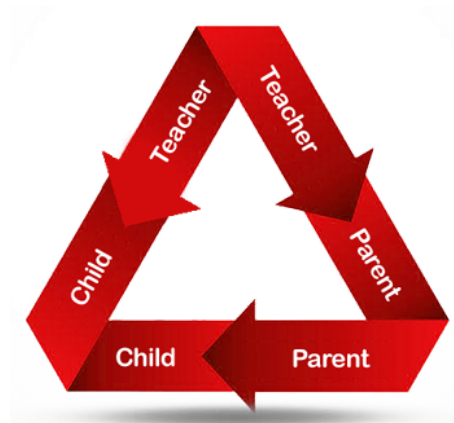
## The Mother Tongue Method

The Suzuki method is historically based off of the 'discovery' of the Mother Tongue theory by Dr. Shinichi Suzuki, which was his own practical analysis of the ways in which all children, universally, learn their native language. He managed to break the process down to this list of contributing factors:

- 1) Environment and Listening (From birth)
- 2) Learning In a Positive Environment
- 3) Repetition and Accumulation
- 4) Learning With Parents
- 5) Learning From Other Children
- 6) Small Steps and Learning by Speaking a Shared Language
- 7) Learning To Read

By applying these observations of language acquisition to the concept of learning music, as a language, Suzuki himself and the eventual Suzuki world community has seen widespread success in the development of not only extremely talented youngsters but also the growth of individuals with outstanding moral character.

## The Suzuki Triangle



The relationship between child, parent and teacher, which we refer to as the 'Suzuki triangle', is the glue that holds this entire process together. A combination of mutual

respect, communication and the assigned responsibilities within each role allow this to be a very efficient and effective way of nurturing growth. It is my responsibility to provide you, the parent, with the skills required to become the at-home coach, as well as to make appropriate practicing and listening suggestions.

Your responsibility as parent to the student will include:

1) To develop a routine of listening to appropriate music (Suzuki recordings, instrumental role models, etc) each day, as often as possible. This builds an appropriate model for sound in the ear of the student and helps to provides them with internal understanding of music form, tonality and a set of repertoire.

2) Attending lessons and taking detailed notes.

3) Practicing with your child, being the at-home teacher.

4) Become aware of how your child learns best.

5) Learn at least the basic skills/concepts of the instrument.

6) Set up a healthy learning environment while practicing at home.



# Josh's Tips and Tricks for Success using the Suzuki

## Method

- Establish a routine! Do your best to provide consistent opportunities both for music listening and playing the instrument (or mouthpiece) every day.
- Be in a good mood, tone matters! Setting the tone of a practice session or a lesson is extremely important and will directly impact the success or failure of the lesson or practice session. The space should be void of distractions such as outside electronics or loud conversations as well as planned around other negative stimulus such as hunger or fatigue. You must make time for your student to practice to show that it is important to you. If you, as the coach, are constantly watching the clock, or barely squishing practice time in between other appointments, you would be effectively demonstrating that practicing is a low priority, which is then internalized very quickly and a difficult mindset to break. We always plan for more time than we would need to complete the practice session.
- Guide by asking questions, rather than using direct instruction. When we ask the right questions it will peak their attention, and by guiding the student to the right answers we see **personal understanding** take place. This establishes very effective critical thinking skills within our students from a young age! The questions that we use should engage the learning in the process, and will typically require more than a one or two word response, providing a vehicle for focused attention. Some examples of quality questions could be:

**Could you describe to me what you heard?**

**(In practice session) Can you express your goal today, in your own words?**

**How can you improve that sound?**

**What kind of story do you think is being told with this song?**

**What do you hear that you already know how to do? Or NOT to do?**

- Play the CD's or recordings and listen/sing/play WITH the student, and with genuine excitement!

- Communicate frequently both with your child and your teacher to establish that everyone holds realistic expectations. Every student learns and progresses at their own rate.
- Using positive reinforcement we try to ensure that the majority of the emphasis is not placed on what they did wrong, but rather what they did well. Phrases like “No stop! You’re doing it wrong! Why can’t you do this, it’s so easy!” do not encourage learning to say the least. When we repeatedly TELL someone what to do there is a tendency to close their mind, incite arguments and set up the potential to become associated with anger or negative feelings that makes all further learning nearly impossible. As the practice coach at home you must involve your children in the learning process, and encourage them to solve many problems on their own.
- Keep curiosity alive: ask them questions!
- Children like to do what YOU want to do, peak their interest instead of forcing and idea onto them.
- Ensure that your child knows that you believe in them and their ability.
- Sit down at the instrument out of the blue and play. They will come to you and want to emulate naturally.
- Lead by example. Be a role model that solves problems efficiently and effectively. Show the effort required to pursue through hardships. Allow your child some hardships to work through or obstacles to overcome without direct intervention from yourself.



- Have fun!