

Tips for Suzuki Parents

- Establish a pleasant practice-time approach. Try to practice any time the child wants to. In addition, establish a regular practice time at a specific time of day when the child is at his/her best.
- The length of practice should ALWAYS be related to the attention span of your child. This can be divided into two or three, 5-10 minute sessions for a really young child. Only practice on the days that you eat!
- A complete practice should include five basic elements (at any level):
 - Warm-up or Tonalization
 - Polishing current material
 - Previewing new material
 - Reviewing
 - Posture/playing habits
- Listen to the recordings at ALL POSSIBLE opportunities. The Suzuki recordings should be played daily, multiple times. Make the music a part of your home environment, whether the child is listening attentively or not.
- Be patient! So many teaching approaches emphasize rapid accumulation of skills and competition with other students. The SUZUKI approach insists on a child-centered pacing, based on the learning style of the individual child.
- Learn how to work in very small steps. Connect one step to another and celebrate the progress.
- Love review! 80% of the skills in a new piece are gleaned from the old ones. There is a direct correlation between how well a child reviews, and how quickly they progress.
- Be present and take notes during the lesson. Save other responsibilities for another time.
- Don't be afraid to ask questions, or call/email your teacher. If you don't understand the week's assignment you'll have a wasted week at home with your child.
- Expose your child to as much music (both live and recorded) as possible. Take them to concerts or to see their teacher perform.
- Teach your child to be proud of their instrument, and to take good care of it. Rosin should be wiped off after each practice session.
- Encouragement and good sense of humor are a MUST! You are dealing with a young child learning to play a difficult instrument. Any achievement, no matter how trivial or insignificant to you, is a BIG deal to your child.
- Make practice fun, not a chore. When things get dull, ask other parents/your teacher for fun new ideas, or make up some of your own. Periodic home concerts provide a welcome break in the practice routine. Most importantly, be enthusiastic about spending this quality, one-on-one time with your child.
- Don't talk about your concerns regarding your child's progress in the presence of the child. Call your teacher or arrange a meeting without the child present.
- Don't work ahead in the repertoire without prior authorization from your teacher. They know the trajectory your child is on with their technique and have a concrete time line in mind.