



Parent Handbook

2014–2015



OXFORD COMMUNITY SCHOOLS

Quick History of Dr. Suzuki and the Suzuki Method

- Dr. Suzuki was born on October 17, 1898 in Nagoya, Japan
- At age 17, Suzuki taught himself to play the violin by listening to recordings and imitating what he heard and later studied in Germany with the famous teacher Karl Klunger.
- While studying in Germany, Suzuki became friends with Albert Einstein.
- Suzuki developed his Mother Tongue approach to learning, which later developed, into the Talent Education Method.
- In 1945 Suzuki opened the Talent Education Institute in Matsumoto Japan.
- The famous cellist Pablo Casals visited the Institute in 1961 for a mass student performance and after being deeply moved declared, "Perhaps it is music that will save the world".
- In 1958 America is introduced to the Suzuki Method at Oberlin College.
- The Suzuki Method officially came to North America in the early 1960's.
- In 1972 the Suzuki Association of America was founded.
- Dr. Suzuki died on January 26, 1998 in Matsumoto, Japan. He was 99 years old.

Reflections on the Suzuki Philosophy:

A Review of *Nurtured By Love* by a Suzuki Mother, Psychologist, and Education Specialist

Nurtured by Love, authored by Dr.

Shinichi Suzuki, is a book imbued with a philosophy of educating young children that is of benefit to everyone who has influence over their development. While Dr. Suzuki's work has focused on music education, his philosophy is relevant to every area of learning. He refers to his ideas as an approach to "talent education." This is because of his firm belief that talent is developed, rather than inborn. He does not deny the difference in human beings, but he holds firm to the idea that it is through early exposure, repetition, slow and steady effort, focus on the development of patience and other parts of the whole child, and through the loving support of significant adults that every child can develop ability. These seem like common sense ideas, but I am convinced that returning our thoughts to the possibilities present in every child at birth and directing our efforts to their development in a manner consistent with Dr. Suzuki's approach is the only method by which we can truly reach every child. As a school psychologist who is presented with the issues that arise from current educational systems, I cannot help imagining the possibilities for children if this approach were faithfully applied to reading education.

In his writing, Dr. Suzuki describes children he has worked with including a child suffering from infantile paralysis in one arm as well as a child without sight. Through creative instruction, realistic "small steps" goal setting, repetition/practice to achieve mastery at each goal level, patience, expectations, and creating a learning teaching triad of parent, child, and teacher, these children learned to play their instruments with undeniable ability.

His philosophy of teaching meshes with the research literature and best practices in the fields of education and psychology. Begin with an expectation that the child can learn, the earlier you reach the child, the better, determine what the child "can do" and where he/she may have weaknesses to establish a starting point, set sequenced goals the child can meet, teach each step to mastery, and collaborate with parents.

A cornerstone of Suzuki philosophy is that by teaching a child to achieve through slow and steady effort, he/she will come to see that the combination of effort and patience opens up a world of possibilities. The development of these characteristics in the child is the broader goal. Those of us who work with children would do well to realize that our goal is not just to teach the child to read, write, or play an instrument, but to help develop in the child the characteristics that will enable them to face challenges, believe in their ability, and realize their unlimited potential.

The strength of this philosophy is that it brings a perspective of hope and belief in the ability of all children to learn. It causes one to reconsider notions of intelligence or other "inborn" ability, and replaces such notions with the belief that ability can be developed. It says that differences between us exist at birth, but they are not so great as to supersede a supportive environment. Effort and patience will produce ability!

Suzuki Method Information Resources

Online Resources and Stores

Suzuki Association of the Americas: suzukiassociation.org

This site contains a wealth of information including, news, events, services, and ways to participate in the Suzuki community. You can also access their quarterly journal the "American Suzuki Journal." Additionally, a store is available to purchase practice aids and reference materials.

McCourt's Music: mccourtsmusic.com

McCourt's is the closest music store that carries many things for the general musician and a fair amount of Suzuki materials like CDs and music.

Shar Music: sharmusic.com

Located in Ann Arbor, Shar is another store that carries Suzuki materials.

Books and Journals

Nurtured by Love,

Suzuki, Shinichi: Exposition Press, Smithtown, New York

Ability Development from Age Zero

Suzuki, Shinichi: Exposition Press, Smithtown, New York

To Learn with Love

Star, William, and Constance Star: Kingston/Ellis Press, Knoxville, Tennessee

"American Suzuki Journal" (*ASJ*)

Available quarterly through the Suzuki Association of the Americas, the *ASJ* shares stories from parents and students as well as provides tips for teachers and families.

DVDs and COs

Nurtured by Love DVD

"*Nurtured by Love* is an intimate journey through the life of one of the world's most influential music educators, Dr. Shinichi Suzuki. Told in his own words and through the reflections of those closest to him, the story of Suzuki is an inspirational celebration of the life and potential within all of us."
(suzukiassociation.org)

Suzuki Violin and Guitar COs, volumes 1-9

The Value of Music by Frank Longay

The importance of self-enrichment in the long term development, music is a medium through which a child may develop:

Personal discipline –mastery of one's self-

- Responsibility to commitment
- Understanding "cause and effect"
- Following directions

Cognitive abilities –music and the brain

- Focused attention and concentration
- Ability to perceive components and patterns
- Prioritization
- Creative problem solving
- Sequencing and timing
- Perceptual capabilities
- Understanding the limitation and capabilities of the body

Awareness of value

- Recognition and appreciation of higher (Universal) values
- Desire to elevate others
- Broadening and deepening the understanding of one's emotional life
- Revelation of finer emotions through music of the masters

Sense of accomplishment and self esteem

- Affecting one's environment
- Sense of making a contribution – pleasing others
- Goal setting (achievement)- process orientation
- Self-acceptance –it is okay to make mistakes

Social awareness

- Appreciation of other cultures and other times
- Awareness of and sensitivity to others
- Appreciation of non-threatening and close, working relationships
- Working with others to achieve common goals
- Reinforcing a sense of belonging
- Cooperation –not competition
- Promote appreciation for family

Appropriate Instruments are Required:

Our vendors provide the instruments that are most appropriate for the students. Sizing and instrument set-up are the most important things to address as a student begins Suzuki training. The majority of young string players do not grow into a full sized instrument until as early as fifth grade. As a result, our preferred vendors are able to upgrade their instruments as the child grows with no extra charge to our families. What's more, using Oxford approved vendors ensures participating families free repairs and instrument maintenance.