

## PREPARE, TEACHING , FOSTER, FOSTER, FOSTER

養

This Kanji - *iku* - in Japanese means foster and this same character comes in the words for education, develop, bring up, support. The word *kyoiku* - education - is made up of the words *Kyo* - to teach, and *iku* - to foster. Therefore there is a strong relation between the concepts of education and fostering which Suzuki emphasises in the second chapter - 'Prepare Teach Foster' of his book 'Man and talent'. For Suzuki "*the process of gradually fostering and heightening ability until the child can act instantaneously by intuition*" was key to successful education and that "*fostering should be emphasised as the worthiest part of education and one that requires the greatest efforts. Rather than just 'prepare teach foster' I would write 'prepare teach foster foster foster.'* The word foster can not be added enough times." [S. Suzuki 1950]

What does fostering mean? Suzuki used the example of teaching a child to catch a ball to explain. *With the child's capability in mind you first calculate how strongly you can throw the ball to him to have him still catch it. Then signal him and throw - 'here it comes' - . A skilful person who does this not only succeeds in letting the child catch but also brings him joy. Education too requires this knack of cueing when the ball comes so that children are eager to receive, their bodies sufficiently ready. I call this crucial step 'preparation'.* For Suzuki it was crucial to measure the child's ability first, before beginning to teach them. "*Those who with no regard to the child's ability suddenly throw at his nose a fast ball at their own level frighten him badly can be said to have no educational sensibility. The skill of letting the child catch or of trying to give him the joy of catching eventually induces the child to enjoy catching and to practice gladly. Ability gradually grows and with growth you can change the speed of the ball and help further raise the ability.*"

For the teacher, fostering should become the focus of their teaching. It is recommended that, for example, rather than teach or explain several points to a student at one time, it is better to get the child to discover one point to improve by himself. In the following lesson the teacher can check how the pupil has progressed on this point and only then moving on to the next one. This is the nature of fostering.

Another important element of fostering, (as opposed to simply teaching), is asking the student questions during the lesson. As Suzuki wrote with reference to the Ancient Greek philosopher Socrates: "Questioning is the essence of Socratic teaching. Plato teaches that Socrates would teach without imparting information or answers, allowing students to construct their own learning.... When teacher talk dominates the lesson at best shallow learning results. Better cognitive teaching approaches like questioning foster how to think rather than what to think.", That is to think critically about their own playing rather than just following the instructions off their teacher.

Parents also play a very important role in this fostering as it is they who are with the child every day and must supervise the child's practice. The 'Suzuki triangle' of Parent, teacher child is an essential support for the musical development of the child.

One of the parents must be present all the time during lessons , to observe, to know what the teacher wants to focus on during the week, one of the parents should take notes too. (To film the lesson can be a good idea to have a record of what the teacher wanted.)

It is the parents who have the responsibility to create a strong environment for their children. Generally, parents want the best for their children. As well as immersing themselves in the Suzuki method they should give the child the ideal practicing environment.

The Suzuki method is based primarily on learning through listening. There is no exam, or audition before beginning or during the Suzuki method. Continually reviewing pieces is an important part of the method too and essential part of the daily practice. Leaving one piece and moving on to the next is not fostering - it is teaching, but does not give the child the chance to raise their ability level.

For that reason the child should be able to play all the pieces in book 1 and continue to work on them when he begins book 2. Each piece introduces a new technique and musical aspect.

A good teacher is essential for the education in music but parents must make the best environment for their child every day to help their progress. There are then three crucial elements to a successful fostering of ability:

- **Measuring the child's ability and following the child's own rhythm of development**
- **Having the right environment at home to practice**
- **Disciplined focused practice each day**

# How to help teachers, parents and child for the practice

## A STRONG ENVIRONMENT : THE KEY FOR PROGRESS



There are several steps needed to create this strong environment. It's important that this is discussed between parents and the teacher.



create at home a very good atmosphere for practice



It's important to buy a good quality piano - or to rent one - and to have a good, stable adjustable stool.

The piano must be an acoustic one (with a real action, not a digital piano) and of sufficient quality and kept tuned.

The pupil must enjoy and be in contact with the physical sound and to work always on the production of a good sound. The teacher should give advice about all these topics and about the choice of piano, to discuss about the budget of the parents for the cost of the piano and where to buy or rent it (this can be a second solution).

The piano must be in a quiet space, not near the TV, or in a noisy atmosphere.

It is important for concentration to avoid any distractions.

The placing of the piano is also important, to keep it at the right temperature (not placed under the stairs or by a radiator for example) - and if it's possible not in the main room.

Parents should supervise children and always encourage them. 😊

They should organize little concerts from the beginning (even if it's only with the bow and twinkles.)

Also keep recordings of their children from week to week - like that they will get a good view of their progress.

Some additional ideas for motivation can include taking nice pictures with the child at the piano, getting them to play often in front of friends , family and recording videos for the family.

# Practice

**Don't disturb** 🙅🏻🎹🎵

**Practice Tips and Tricks**

**Musical Time.** 🎵🥰



**tiny**  
little STEPS  
EVERY day  
THEY ADD UP.  
PROMISE

- 1 **Set aside the same time each day to ensure that you practice regularly**
- 2 **Practice when it's a quiet moment at home. Don't have any distractions during this time**
- 3 **Plan your practice . Don't always practise from the beginning of the piece. Try working on the detail first. You must remember what your teacher said to focus on . Practice slowly at first - only speed up when you know the passage . Later, practice your pieces right through and keep going even if you make a mistake.**
- 4 **Work on the passage you can't do, not just the passage you can !**
- 5 **Each time you practice, make sure you refer to the assignments and follow the comments of your teacher**
- 6 **Play for family and friends and also with other musicians, it's fun and will help you become a better musician.**
- 7 **Make sure you always listen to the CD of the books you are learning and to practice twinkle everyday and don't forget to listen to the CD during the holidays if you can't work**

Caption

It's crucial to set a routine. a daily practice routine leads to progress and keeps the child motivated. 🕒🕒

To be relaxed and rested:

- It's important to choose a good moment during the day for the practice: before or after school (maybe after a snack).
- For young pupils, it can be possible to have separate practice sessions each day . It can be 5 - 10 mn and 5 - 10 mn again at a later time.
- Avoid interrupting children during an activity for their piano practice. To make a transition between activities and the practice of the piano is recommended.
- To prepare your child for practicing, you can help him with words of encouragement - 'oh it's almost the time to practice' - or to give them the choice to practice before or after having a snack.

Practice must become a part of what your family does on a daily basis. The child will keep motivation because he will progress more. Progress leads to motivation. The lesson of the teacher will be not enough in itself.

Before the lesson and each practice the child must do the bow. they learn to get ready with the correct posture and how to be relaxed with their body before starting to play. Just as Suzuki gave the example of preparing the child to catch the ball, the teacher and parent should make it a habit to get the child to prepare themselves mentally and physically (correct posture etc) before playing. The phrase 'Ready - go' can be employed here. The following should be prepared at the start of the lesson or practice:

- chair height.
- sitting position
- mental concentration

Teachers should encourage parents to focus during each practice on two or three points of the lesson during the week. Any more and the child risks getting overstimulated or overwhelmed by too many choices and obligations which can lead to apathy. Older children and teenagers can write themselves what they should focus on during the week. For one day of practice, usually there can be one major skill to work on :

This can be

- how to make a more beautiful sound ?
- trying to focus on the different sounds
- to have more focus on the articulation
- balance between left and right hands
- to be careful with phrase endings etc ..
- to work on the review pieces ( also develops muscle memory )
- To choose pieces to play randomly - 'lucky dip' - from when Book 1 is almost done. This is an extremely important part of reviewing earlier pieces.



Lucky dip dice - for review



Form a clear plan in mind for the practice. It's important to help the child to organise their thoughts and get ready for the practice, focussing on goals and remembering the assignments of their teacher. Repetition (more than twice) of passages to be improved should be a regular part of practice. It's important to set the number of times something has to be repeated beforehand as children like to know how many times they are expected to do something (rather than just telling them "again" each time).

There can often be a difference between what the parent and child understands from the lesson and what the teacher meant so it's important that the teacher communicates this clearly, or takes a video as they explain the most important points. The teacher should also know what was done during practices during the week.

Children can make a list of what they need to accomplish. They should have their priorities set before practicing.

As an example of how to practice, the Wild Rider by Schumann in Book 3 , it is important to be aware of the 6 / 8 metre which is clearly accented in two groups of three beats and to keep the beats in-between lighter, especially the last upbeats before the next phrase. Practice this slowly. The fingertips should be energetic on the staccatos and the child can practice the Twinkle A rhythm on a few of the notes each day, after the child can repeat each note only once then single notes. But be careful not to move the position of the hand (and arm) too much. Only move the fingers (use the gravity to get the sound and think of taking a sheet of paper). Mrs Kataoka suggest practicing legato in the beginning to help with this.

The child should first work on the different articulations in the second bar where there is a slur in the right hand followed by staccato notes. You get this pattern also in the 3rd 6th and 7th bars and then occurs in the left hand in bar 10 11, 14 and 15.

In bar 2 the two Es in the right hand should have a different sound. The first is a sforzando (the child can practice Twinkle B on this note to work on ringing it more - they can also practice twinkle rhythm on C - E - C.) Then the child should practice the endings of each section to make it clear.

Hiruko Kataoka worked with one child on one piece for a year to perfect it. As she says: *Believe that the child can play at a the highest level. If the parent doesn't insist on high standard always the child will not attain it. Teaching is to insist on details. If a pupil plays a more difficult piece but plays it badly it's a disservice to the child to praise them - it assumes they are not capable of better. Children want to know what's right. Praising children is to have confidence in them. You can praise them for something else! But don't underestimate them by praising them unduly. Set sights on patience, health, natural body, effort, concentration and love in teaching. As a teacher have to assign hard practice they would not want to do. Under the age of 10 a child needs help from parents and must listen to them.*

## Emotional support from parents :

### Parents are the creators of the practice environment

As parents :

It's important to be present as parent and helping your child to be engaged. Parents must support the child every time, every day with positive and productive practice, to accompany them during the less enjoyable moments.

How to still be the mummy or daddy without becoming a policeman and to keep a positive practice everyday ?

To avoid conflict and to keep motivation everyday with practice !

There is no magic answer but for the practice - you must have a lot of invention, and be a psychologist for your child ...you can begin with games - or to listen to some wonderful music.

It's important to notice what is positive first.

Only make positive comments with warm sentences or ask questions that lead the child on during the practice.

It can sometimes be difficult for parents and children to find joy in the practice.

Children themselves will begin to notice their own mistakes more - help your child experience their progress.

Parents have no reasons to be worried if the child doesn't want to practice -

it's a normal reaction. Some practice however short is always better than nothing.

Practice must remain a joyful activity. Families who enjoy long-term success with the Suzuki method create this mindset: they must communicate their enthusiasm as parents.

Parents can help encourage the child with sentences like :

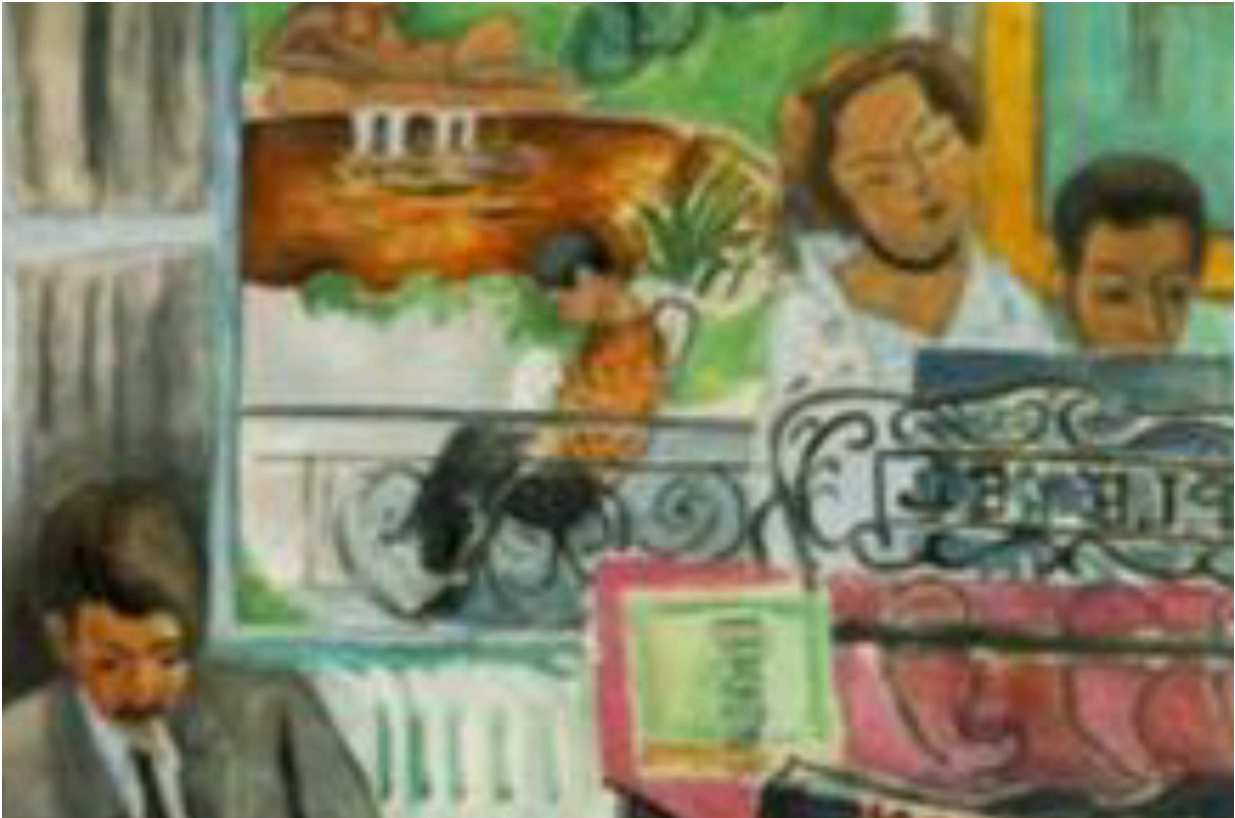
- I love your progress of today, how can you improve this section?
- Did it get better ?
- Can you see any changes you can do to make this section more better? more beautiful, fluent ?
- Or again you can say :

What does your teacher want you to work on in this piece?

- oh! I like how you play today the melody... I want to sing along!

Everyday, with love ,patience, repetition, repetition of learning, the Suzuki method follows this same process.

“Where love is deep much can be accomplished”



Caption

### Learning by listening 🎧 🎹 🎵 🎵 🎵 🎹 🎧

This is the key to succeeding with the method.

There is no note-reading in the beginning but rather a focus on listening, learning immediately how to listen critically to the sound.

From day one we work on a good tone and posture beginning with learning the melody and variations on twinkle.

From twinkles onward, the child works to improve their sound and work on producing a nice legato, he works on different articulations, long, short notes and to always pay closet attention to the posture and the positions of all the body.



Listening to the CD everyday must become a regular daily habit. At home, during the playtime of your child in the background, or during travel in the car. To listen with good speakers can be a great advantage. 👍

Maybe you can set challenges for the child, to listen each day for 30 days. They could have a colouring-book with a page for each day they listen and can colour in at the same time.





Colouring book for 30 day listening challenge

Singing and memorising melodies is also important - the child should be able to sing the melodies in the Suzuki book, and others.

During holidays, it's important to continue to listen the CD not to forget songs. (Also there is usually no access to a piano during this break.)

### **Nourishment**

The child should learn the habit of listening to great artists and go regularly to live concerts.

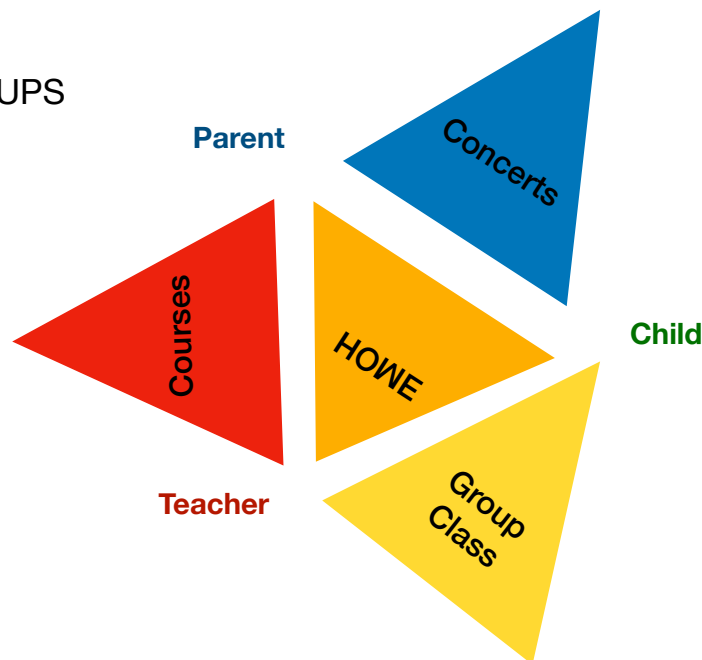
It's important to absorb from the beginning the culture of great classical music (and also other styles like jazz), to develop a love of listening music, of various styles - to develop the taste of the music of today. All this will motivate the child further.

Participation in the wider Suzuki community is the last essential element of the method. Success comes not only from practice at home and lessons. It's also important to be an active part of the Suzuki community, not only in your teacher's studio but to attend group events, concerts, workshops and summer camps as well.

If the teacher organises lessons so they sometimes overlap - one pupil arrives during the previous pupils lesson, pupils then have the opportunity to hear others play, sometimes the same pieces as they are working on. This makes for a stronger learning environment, the pupil may be motivated to raise their level and can make friendships.

The diagram below illustrates this relationship ; at the centre is the Suzuki triangle between parent, teacher and student. Around you have this triangle expanding in different directions to encompass the wider Suzuki and musical community, which is equally important for the student's musical development.

## SUZUKI GROUPS



To practice piano properly every day is quite a job for parents. Whether a child starts at three or six years old, if you try as hard as you can for ten years you will be giving that child an invaluable gift: a lifetime of deep appreciation and love for music. This is a gift which cannot be bought anywhere with any amount of money.

**It's the time, you've passed on your rose 🌹 that makes your rose important.**



