

Edmonton Suzuki

PIANO SCHOOL

Parent Handbook ---

Introduction

This handbook has been prepared by Edmonton Suzuki Piano School (ESPS) to present an outline of the program to our Suzuki families. We hope that as you read the following pages, you will share our feelings of excitement and enthusiasm for the program offered.

So you want to be a Suzuki Parent?

Congratulations! Dr. Shinichi Suzuki believes that the fate of our children lies in the hands of parents. What a wonderful idea that, as parents, you wish to enjoy and understand your relationship with your child better through the world of music. The Suzuki approach is more than just music lessons. It explores areas of home practice, and how to encourage continuous enthusiastic support for the progress of learning to play an instrument. The Suzuki approach relies strongly on the cooperative relationship of teacher, parent, and child in a pleasant, yet disciplined environment. It is a philosophy, a technique, and a program of parent education.

The parent's role involves the following:

- Participating in an orientation program introducing the basic ideas of the Suzuki philosophy and method.
- Attending each lesson with the student, taking notes, and practicing with the student at home daily.
- Playing the recordings (CDs) frequently at home each day.
- Helping create not only a musical environment for the child, but also a total environment of affection, support, encouragement and understanding.
- Participating in special events like the annual Fall Institute and Spring Festival.
- Serve as a volunteer when necessary to help enhance the success of ESPS and its programming.

Finally, the most important part of being a Suzuki family is the commitment to devote regular time to your child and to work closely with the teacher, and other parents, in building a strong relationship for the sake of the child's growth and development.

The Suzuki Approach

Shinichi Suzuki (1898 – 1998), a Japanese violinist and teacher, observed and studied how children learn throughout his life. Encouraged by their ability to assimilate the mother tongue, he saw great opportunity to enrich children’s lives through music. His primary goal was not only to teach young people how to play musical instruments. Rather, he championed the unique contribution music can make in the total learning process.

The Suzuki approach deals with much more than just teaching a child how to play an instrument. It seeks to develop the whole child, to help reveal one’s natural potential to learn and become a good and happy person. The purpose of Suzuki training is not to produce great artists, but to help every child find the joy that comes through music-making. Through the Suzuki growing process, children thrive in an environment of support. Suzuki students develop confidence and self-esteem, determination to try different things, self-discipline, and concentration. As well, they acquire a lasting enjoyment of music and the sensitivity and skill for making music.

EDMONTON SUZUKI PIANO SCHOOL- STRUCTURE, PROGRAM AND PROCEDURES

Edmonton Suzuki Piano School is a charitable corporation established to provide piano instruction in the Suzuki approach. Upon registration with Edmonton Suzuki Piano School, parents become participating members of the society.

Edmonton Suzuki Piano School is governed by a Board of Directors comprised of parent volunteers who hold the positions of President, Vice President, Secretary, and Treasurer. Members-at-large also serve on the Board of Directors. By providing direction to the Administrator, the Board of Directors governs the affairs of the school. There is also a Teacher Representative, who attends each Board meeting and provides input from the teachers.

To communicate with the Administrator, or with members of the Board of Directors:

Phone 780.488.0548

Email office@edmontonsuzukipiano.ca

Mandate

- To promote and encourage an overall appreciation of music for all participating members.
- To develop and explore a better understanding of the Suzuki philosophy of music education.
- To motivate and stimulate growth in children's musical skills registered in the Edmonton Suzuki Piano School program.
- To encourage and provide varied parent education opportunities.
- To support teacher training programs.
- To communicate to the general public the aims and objectives of the organization.

Mission

The Edmonton Suzuki Piano School provides piano lessons to children throughout Edmonton and surrounding communities. Using the Suzuki Method, we seek to create a learning community, which embraces excellence and nurtures the human spirit.

Vision

Edmonton Suzuki Piano School strives to achieve excellence in musical education by enriching and nurturing the human spirit.

Core Values

- Every child can
"Abilities are developed: they are not inborn. Let us, with perseverance, search for the best ways to develop ability."
- Excellence from the beginning
"Always seek finer music, finer performance. Eventually, this will change from a learning attitude to a joyful quest which will last throughout our lives."
- Nurturing hearts and minds
"First foster the heart, then help the child acquire ability."
- Enriching relationships by building community
"The heart that feels music will feel people."
- Promoting lifelong learning
"Don't hurry, don't rest. Without stopping, without haste, carefully taking one step at a time will surely get you there."

The Program at Edmonton Suzuki Piano School

Lessons

Individual Lessons

There are 37 weeks of programming during the school term. Your teacher will determine the appropriate lesson length for your student. When possible, observation of other children's individual lessons is recommended to enhance the learning experience.

Group Lessons

Group lessons are an important component of the Suzuki program, and they enhance the learning experience significantly. Failure to attend group classes regularly not only minimizes the optimal learning environment of the student, but it also negatively impacts the group dynamic, team spirit, performance level and the teacher.

Performance

The Suzuki approach encourages regular performance participation. Regular recitals will include larger formal gatherings. Additionally, performance opportunities could include more informal concerts organized by the teacher or community outreach recitals at local nursing homes or hospitals.

Recitals benefit both performer and listener. A performer is given the opportunity to play their best in front of an attentive audience and to practice stage presence. Students in the audience have a chance to hear a variety of music that is played well and to practice good audience behaviour. The recital length is planned so that families will enjoy the entire program.

Formal Recitals

ESPS holds formal recitals twice a year (usually February and June) for all students. The piece to be performed is decided by the teacher and student together and is never the piece most recently learned. Rather, the performance piece is one that has been perfected by frequent repetitions so that it has been thoroughly mastered. This helps to ensure that the student is comfortable with their piece and has a successful performance.

Graduation Recitals

Graduation recitals are held several times a year. Once a teacher determines that a volume has been successfully completed, the student will perform three polished pieces from that volume at the graduation recital. A plaque and certificate are presented to each of the graduating students at the end of the recital.

Parent Education

Because the Suzuki approach relies so strongly on parent participation, it is important that parents be actively involved in their child's learning. Teachers can assist parents in gaining confidence in their important role as home helper.

The Edmonton Suzuki Piano School provides opportunities for parent education, supplementing the ongoing learning that parents experience through the weekly lessons with their children.

Parents must attend the Parent Orientation Workshop as an introduction to the approach and an exploration of the parent's role and effectiveness as a Suzuki parent. This workshop is generally offered twice a year, in spring and fall. Your teacher will inform you of the nearest date when you register.

Each year, the Fall Workshop features a parent education component. It is a motivational and informative session that is an opportunity for new parents to become better oriented to the program and for returning parents to refuel for the new term.

Additionally, ESPS periodically offers other parent education sessions. Parents will be informed of parent education events throughout the year.

Teacher Training

ESPS believes in providing a variety of professional development opportunities for teachers. Teacher training courses and regular professional workshops are your teacher's way of staying in touch with the latest developments in Suzuki pedagogy. It is to your advantage to study with teachers who continually search for the best ways to teach. Teachers with ESPS must be involved with ongoing training with qualified teacher trainers.

Publications

Website

ESPS maintains a website at edmontonsuzukipiano.ca. The site contains information about the program at ESPS, a calendar of upcoming events, group class schedules, the latest news and updates, registration information for the program and special events, and a comprehensive library of practice aids and activities.

Social Media

ESPS is active on Facebook and Instagram, and regularly updates with news about upcoming events, interesting links, and photographs about our students, parents, and teachers in action.

Fund-Raising

Edmonton Suzuki Piano School relies on a casino as its sole fundraiser. ESPS is committed to providing volunteer staffing from its parent membership for the two-day events, on dates assigned by the AGLC. The two-day casino requires the efforts of about 45 parent volunteers to operate. Parent participation in the casino is expected.

Procedures at Edmonton Suzuki Piano School

Registration Fee

Each family is required to pay an annual registration fee to Edmonton Suzuki Piano School. This fee will help cover the costs associated with special events, facility rentals, repertoire, equipment maintenance, teacher training, and operational expenses. This amount is non-refundable. At registration, each family will complete registration forms that will include basic contact information.

Studio Policies

Individual Lessons

Weekly lessons are attended by the student and the parent (who then practices daily with the child).

Scheduling

There are 37 weeks of programming in the teaching year (September – June). Generally, lessons begin around Labour Day. Typically, teachers do not offer lessons over the December and March school breaks.

Missing Individual Lessons

The lesson times agreed upon by the teacher, parent and child is a mutual commitment. *There will be no make-up lessons for lessons missed by a family.* If the teacher cancels a lesson, the lesson will be made up at a time that is convenient to the teacher, parent and student, or a refund for the cancelled lesson will be issued.

Length of Individual Lessons

Lesson times vary, depending on the child's concentration and level of study.

Tuition Fee

The annual tuition fee covers individual music instruction. The fee is typically paid in ten monthly installments on the first of each month by automatic payment. Parents also have the option of paying by lump sum. Payment information must be provided to the teacher at the same time as the registration form.

Withdrawal from ESPS Classes

Parents wishing to withdraw a child from the ESPS program must notify their teacher and the ESPS Administrator at least one month in advance, so that another student on the

waiting list can be prepared to begin lessons. In lieu of proper notice, one month's tuition will be due. Any unused tuition payments will be refunded to the parent.

Communication with Teachers

Parents with brief technical questions regarding an individual piece or home practice can pose them at a lesson. Parents with broader questions or concerns should email or telephone during non-teaching hours to discuss the problem. Teachers would prefer not to discuss broader issues in front of the student.

Edmonton Suzuki Piano School recognizes that, for a variety of reasons, a parent may wish to change teachers. Should you find yourself in the position where you are contemplating such a change, certain guidelines to help the process work more smoothly for all concerned have been formulated:

- If a problem arises, please advise your teacher. Hopefully, this will enable communication and resolution of the problem.
- If the problem is not resolved, parents should contact the Administrator to discuss the issue.
- If it is determined that resolution is not possible, the parent can contact other teachers to inquire about transferring to a new studio.
- The parent will provide the original teacher with one month's notice before transferring.

If possible, it is recommended that teaching changes be made at the end of the school year.

Equipment

Providing the proper physical environment is part of the parent's role. It is essential to have an acoustic piano, in good condition and regularly tuned, an adjustable bench or chair and an appropriate footstool, and an ability to play the recordings that accompany each Suzuki book of repertoire. You will also need to have copies of the current Suzuki repertoire and the matching piano music scores. Additionally, it is important to work with your teacher to determine optimal positioning and posture for your child at your own piano.