



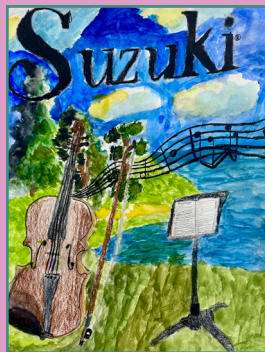
Minijournal

2025

Minijournal Cover Contest



TARA J.
TEACHER CARRIE CARUSO, AZ



CASPAR Y.
TEACHER MIN SIN, TX



SARAH H.
TEACHER DEBBIE HAMMOND, ON



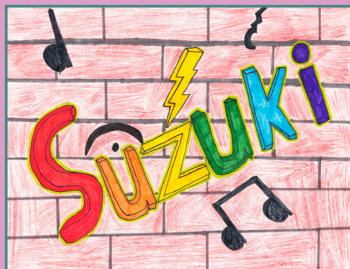
LUCY D.
TEACHER MARGY BARBER, TN

Cover Design
BY BRYNN D.
TEACHER: KIMBERLY DUNFORD, ID

Thank you to
everyone who
participated in the
2025 Minijournal
Cover Contest!



ALICE W.
TEACHER ELLEN BERRY, ON



JENNIFER L.
TEACHER ELLEN BERRY, ON

2026 Minijournal Cover Design Contest

Guidelines: Original cover design by a Suzuki student between the ages of 4 and 14. Suzuki or music-related subject matter preferred. Please do not send computer-generated artwork. One entry per child.

Deadline: February 1, 2026

Watch for a link in our Fall newsletters to submit artwork!

©2025 Minijournal published for SAA-approved Summer Institutes as an introduction and supplement to the *American Suzuki Journal*, official quarterly publication of the Suzuki Association of the Americas, Inc. SAA membership includes subscription to the *American Suzuki Journal*.

SAA | P.O. Box 17310 | Boulder, CO 80308
info@suzukiassociation.org

My Cello Journey

By Daniel Culver, age 9

I would like to begin by sharing one of my most memorable performances. A few months back, I played in the Charlottesville Music Festival in front of the judges and other cello friends. This was my third year participating in this festival. This time was different because I felt happy and excited to perform. I had fun! I played my pieces by memory, kept my poise, and held good cello posture throughout the whole performance. I also made the pieces very musical. I felt proud of my accomplishment.

I started playing cello when I was four years old. I was so small that I felt that the cello was huge. At that time, I didn't know the difference between the A string and the D string, or how to hold the cello or use my bow. Learning how to play cello felt difficult. I cried sometimes because I felt overwhelmed. Over the years, not only have I learned differences between strings, but I have advanced so much that I can play in second position now. There were definitely times when I wanted to quit, but I persevered because I really wanted to make music with the cello. I have faced many challenges as I made it to the end of Suzuki Book Two, such as holding my bow steady in a T, learning rhythm, working on dynamics, and playing harmonics. Through these challenges, I realized that the more diligently I practiced, the better I became at each of these skills. Dr. Beth Cantrell (who has been my cello teacher) gives me beads for each day I practiced at every lesson. The beads in a jar remind me of how much progress I have made so far. This also shows me all the good decisions I have made to practice every day.

Initially, practice felt boring and hard. My parents felt frustrated at times about my practice habits. We had discussions about what practice should mean for me, and my parents helped me with practice. Then, I began to practice in a way that improved my cello skills, instead of just going through the motions. I have learned to work hard in my practice, and it makes me feel

good that I did my best. I feel proud that I can do something I couldn't do before practice. I have a long path ahead of me as I continue my cello journey. I know the road will be rocky at times, but I will remain friends with my cello (as Dr. Beth would tell me). Listening to music and playing cello makes me feel like I am in a different, special world. The way the world looks depends on the way the music sounds. When I know even more about cello and look back, I will be glad that I never gave up. I can make beautiful music.



Annette Way

By Tenaya Liao, age 10

With your gentle words in my ears

I practice every day with inspirations;

With a "Paper Source" palette before my eyes

I interpret each piece with multiple "colors";

With the imagery of Mrs. Incredible's arms

I play legato by mimicking her super elasticity
in my wrists;

With an ice cream social invitation in my mailbox

I taste the delight and excitement of new
reading pieces.

You empower me in so many ways;

I could hardly wait to start my Book Six!

When Tenaya gave her piano Book Five graduation recital this spring, she happened to live near the crossing of a street called "Annette Way." She reflected on her teacher Annette Lee's nurturing and empowering ways of piano teaching, and presented this poem to Teacher Annette as a thank-you gift at the end of her recital.



Listen to the Records More

By Shin'ichi Suzuki

The first condition for fostering your children as persons with musical sensitivity and high sensibility is to repeatedly play the records of the teaching materials. This builds ability. If in your heart you wish to bring up your child as a person of fine musical sensitivity, please let him listen to the records and tapes every day. Without fail, he will develop fine musical sensitivity. This is a new method of education—a method of education born of the most important “law of ability” of the Suzuki method. In life, before they realize it, children indiscriminately imbibe repeated outside stimuli, good or bad, and that becomes their ability. If you don't let them listen, nothing will be fostered.

Please understand that this is the same as in language education. For instance, think in terms of music about the delicate intonation of the Osaka dialect, or of the Tokyo dialect. From the fact that any child listening to the melody of the speech every day masters it and becomes a speaker of the Osaka or Tokyo dialect, you will clearly realize the importance of frequent listening in music education. I would like you to understand this well. If you love your child, if you wish to foster your child as a person of outstanding musical sensitivity, then you must do this. Please, starting today, right now, do it for your child.

If it is too complicated to play the same piece over and over again from a record, record the piece on tape. If your child is a beginner, record two or three pieces many times on one side of your half-hour tape, and have him listen plenty. Even if you don't tell him to listen, or if it is playing near him, he will imbibe it before you know it. No Osaka dialect speaker tells his child, “Listen”; yet every child listens and grows speaking Osaka dialect effortlessly. It's the same principle.



Photo by Arthur Montzka.

If your child listens well to the records, “an inner ability” growing inside of him, it becomes easy for him to play, and his progress becomes much faster. Ability to speak grows by daily speaking practice. Let your child repeatedly practice the pieces he can already play; emphasize the building of ability with familiar pieces. This fosters fine ability. (There is no need to rush ahead. If a child practices the pieces he knows over and over again so as to play them better and better, ability grows, and remarkable progress is made. This is the Suzuki method.) If you follow this method, your child will not but grow beautifully. He will also progress fast. But those who rush from piece to piece trying to play more advanced pieces will fail to foster ability and eventually drop out.

“Every child grows; it all depends on the parent,” I often say. The young child's ability grows depending on how you foster him at home. Please study how to skillfully create the desire to learn; don't fail to bring up your child with excellent musical sensitivity.

Every child grows, never fails to grow. It all depends on how you raise him. In addition, from your experience in music education, you will understand how well to foster all other abilities. When you understand fostering

ability, life will become very bright. It's not just music. It's the same in all other areas.

Since October, I have been listening to the graduation tapes from three to nine every morning. Some students have listened to the records well, and are growing up with truly fine musical sensitivity. Yet, as I listen to the tapes of those at the most important pre-elementary and elementary stages, I painfully realize how many students have not listened well. This is unsatisfactory, so I have decided to start a movement for eliminating dropouts.

If your child is three, if you let him listen daily to the records and repeatedly play the pieces he knows, he will never fail to grow beautifully, fast, and well. When I listened to the performance of a child who finally in his third year of violin playing submits his tape of the pre-elementary graduation piece, I can tell well that his parents have neglected to let him listen to the records. There is even one who played the same graduation piece in the fourth year. This is like saying "Mama Mama" for the first time at age four. An old German experiment in raising babies without exposing them to spoken language is a good example: no words came out of their mouths.

In the Suzuki method, the following two are crucial:

1. Let your child listen to the records well and often;
2. Let him play the pieces he knows over and over again so as to acquire ability.

Please never fail to carry out these two things. Then no child will fail to grow well, and all will be filled with the desire to practice. As the saying goes, "The knack of fostering is the parent's skill," in fact "the parent's smile is the child's smile." Education while scolding and clashing is the least skillful way. I would like you to think as a parent about "how one can be skillful or clumsy at inspiring the desire to learn."

My experience of over forty years in child education has taught me that any and every child grows depending upon the way of fostering. I

have come to know the great power and function of a newborn's life. And I have discovered the "law of ability." Five- and six-year-old children including yours grow up with the ability to speak Japanese fluently. Please recognize this fact. Every year I listen to the graduation tapes of five- or six-year-olds who play Bach's concerto neatly and well; that does not impress me. I am merely pleased thinking that they were fostered well and correctly so they grew. It's my present common sense that all children grow beautifully, if they are fostered as in the mother tongue.

Originally published in English in the Talent Education Journal, no. 3, Summer/Autumn 1979. Reprinted with kind permission from the International Suzuki Association.



RESOURCES FOR FAMILIES



Family studio memberships are a great way to enrich your student's Suzuki education! Studio membership includes a subscription to the *American Suzuki Journal*.



Scan to purchase Associate Membership

Is your family attending an institute?
Use the code below to receive
\$10 off!

SAAINSTITUTE2025

An Education of the Heart: A Parent's Lessons from Suzuki's *Nurtured by Love*

By Justyna Braun

Film footage of Suzuki children from around the world attests to the effectiveness of the Suzuki Method. Sceptics express concern, convinced that children who reach such levels of proficiency must endure a wretchedly rigid upbringing. Both kinds of responses miss the essential point that Suzuki laid out in his autobiographical book *Nurtured by Love* and which I have grasped over the course of my family's participation in a Suzuki program. If the purpose of learning an instrument is to become a famous soloist, then most children would certainly labor under unreasonable expectations. On the other hand, if the aim is to help children develop their aptitude and mature personally, then music represents a singular opportunity. Suzuki's stated goal was "not to turn out geniuses but through violin playing to extend the child's ability." Our foray into music has not only taught me to appreciate the heart of Suzuki's pedagogy, but has also made me a wiser parent.

When we first entered the world of Suzuki education, I harbored secret visions of my children standing up to dazzle with their performances of Vivaldi and Bach. We were fortunate to study at the Buffalo Suzuki Strings school founded by Mary Cay Neal. The mother tongue approach, which Mary Cay explained to us, felt like second nature. Thanks to my Polish upbringing, my children grew up bilingual, speaking both English and Polish interchangeably. Music, too, has always been a part of our family culture. With the help of a local radio station and the Internet, we became well-versed in the classical repertoire. One of the first "films" I showed my four-year-old was a video recording of the Bach double (yes, the concerto she now plays with her Suzuki friends). I also read Amy Chua's *Battle Hymn of the Tiger Mother*, in which the author describes her family's journey

through Suzuki piano and violin. While no tiger mother myself, I sympathized with Chua's firm belief in setting high standards of excellence for one's children.

Equipped with much background information and confidence in my family's artistic bent, I launched our family into music lessons. But before long, my motherly ambition suffered a sharp reality check. The demands of actually learning an instrument proved frustratingly difficult. Every new piece and aspect of technique stretched our capacity for perseverance, patience, and self-control. It quickly became apparent that we were not on a highway to violin stardom. We were making progress, but not enough to commit to Zoom lessons, mandatory masking, and temperature checks when the pandemic brought the world to a scary halt. We quit.

But music wouldn't let us go. The radio kept feeding us melodies from the Suzuki playlists. Guiltily, we avoided looking at the instruments tucked away in a corner. Even schoolwork offered reminders of music. Andrew Pudewa, whose writing program we were pursuing at home, turned out to be a former Suzuki teacher who incorporates many of Suzuki's insights into his writing methodology. Music had infiltrated our world.

Somewhere along the way, we sheepishly resumed lessons. After the lifting of Covid restrictions, we breathed with relief and, casting about for a way to celebrate, we headed to the Philharmonic. Augustin Hadelich was playing Tchaikovsky, and the music and the performance had worked their inexorable magic. We were back for good.

Suzuki's pedagogy has led us to a deeper understanding of the purpose of music education.

Suzuki admits that, having picked up the instrument late in life, he knew he would never become a first-class musician. I imagine that, were it not for other fortuitous circumstances, the violin would have remained for him a cherished hobby and his time in Germany a sentimental memory of youth. Providentially, a broader horizon and different aspirations began to emerge.

In Germany, Suzuki met other musicians: a young violinist who improvised virtuosic miniatures in a friend's living room, a medical doctor who also turned out to be a splendid pianist, and even Albert Einstein, whom he heard play the violin at private gatherings. These encounters revealed to Suzuki a reality more far-reaching than the most advanced musical skills: the example of exceptional people, generous and well-mannered, who not only excelled at their respective occupations but, more importantly, captivated his heart. Suzuki realized that "if a musician wants to become a fine artist, he must first become a finer person." It was not achievement that fascinated him, but the profound humanity of the people themselves.

Through these encounters, Suzuki began to discern the outlines of what would eventually become his life's work. Years later, when a pupil's mother asked if her child would ever amount to anything, Suzuki laughed forbearingly. A child is not a "thing," he replied. If music helps to form and nurture the child's heart, then a noble path will continue to unfold before him.

Like that Japanese mother decades ago, I've learned that my insistence on achievement had been misplaced. What I'd considered the purpose of music education, namely, superior violin playing, would only come about as an expression of the child's authentic personal development. My emphasis, therefore, has changed from demanding a flawless performance to cultivating the hearts of my children. If today we persist at the difficult task of learning the violin, it's because we finally grasp this aspect of Suzuki's pedagogy.

Music now also brings our family true joy. My girls recently got together with some friends who wanted to learn more about string instruments.

Invited to introduce their instruments and explain the motivation to play, each teenager offered a different answer. The cellist joked that she likes to parade with her large instrument. The violist fell in love with the warm timbre of the alto clef instrument. My older daughter delivered a poetic discourse on the lyrical sound of the violin. That evening, the amateur quartet played in their buddies' living room.

Unlike these homegrown musicians, some of Suzuki students have indeed become renowned artists. Yet, I have also heard ordinary Suzuki kids play and been moved to tears. I'm glad of our progress. I also look beyond it. I haven't let go of my parenting standards, yet I've learned that music is not just an accomplishment but an education in the full sense of the word. Derived from the Latin *ducere*, to educate means to lead, guide, develop. Or to paraphrase Suzuki, it is the calling forth of one's whole personality, sensibility, and ability. If such is the goal of education, then I am grateful to have found the right path.



Justyna Braun holds a PhD in comparative literature. She teaches literature, writes, and accompanies her daughters on their exciting musical adventures.

Photo by Terry Tomczyk.

Premier Business Members

**Alfred Music
Make Music, Inc.**



Clarion Associates, Inc.



Shar Music



Thomastik-Infeld



**For more information please visit:
suzukiassociation.org**



Suzuki Summer Fun

WORD SEARCH

Find the words listed below and circle them.

I	H	B	E	T	U	T	I	T	S	N	I	T	R
E	K	U	A	B	Q	V	S	I	U	F	L	A	P
P	Z	U	G	S	I	R	S	M	N	V	T	E	I
U	R	C	Z	O	S	E	A	A	V	I	O	L	A
G	K	A	L	U	N	C	R	M	U	M	A	T	N
E	K	I	H	T	S	O	B	G	F	X	T	R	O
C	N	V	Q	A	V	R	O	O	L	L	E	C	C
I	V	S	Z	B	R	D	D	F	K	K	U	M	O
O	O	R	G	A	N	E	R	F	U	X	E	T	A
V	L	A	C	C	O	R	D	I	O	N	Z	P	E
A	P	Z	Q	G	T	W	B	S	R	C	K	S	D

Accordion
Bass
Brass
Cello
Dr. Suzuki

Flute
Fun
Guitar
Harp
Institute

Organ
Piano
Recorder
Sun
Viola

Violin
Voice

