

THE PARENT'S PLEDGE

A light-hearted look at some ideas Suzuki parents should take seriously.

I will play the Suzuki record every day, even though 'Twinkle' starts coming out of my ears, and I find myself whistling 'Lightly Row' at executive board meetings. My child will learn how to play the pieces only if he listens to them regularly, so I will gracefully suffer 'Go Tell Aunt Rhody' for 1,947 times, if necessary.

I shall do my best to be alert and attentive at lessons, resisting the temptation to sew, read, or yawn. I realize how sensitive my child is to my attitude, and if he or she suspects that I am not 100% involved, his own attitude will be poor.

I will either leave siblings at home when we come to lessons or be sure to provide quiet activities to do during the lesson times.

I will control the impulse to prompt my child during lessons, though I may have to literally bite my tongue. I know that my child cannot pay attention to two teachers at the same time, and that it is my turn when we're home.

Likewise, I will refrain from exclamations, groans, or facial expressions of dismay and embarrassment; they are distracting, and tend to destroy my child's confidence. I will even hold back praise until after he is finished playing so that I do not interrupt his train of thought.

I will help my child mentally prepare for his lessons by talking about his pieces and what he will do at the lesson, and make every attempt to create a restful, calm, and unhurried atmosphere in the car so that my child arrives at the lesson in a receptive state.

I will try to be creative in practice sessions, making them as pleasant for both my child and myself as I can. I will try to approach practicing as a challenge to my ingenuity, and not as another chore that must be done.

I shall resist the temptation to compare my child with others. Each child learns only as he is ready to learn, and if I try to push him, we will both become frustrated. The times that he needs my belief in him the most are precisely those times when I begin to fear that he is about to reach (and pass) the world's record for Length of Time Spent Learning a Single Piece. Suzuki says every child can learn if given enough time and encouragement; I shall not give up prematurely.

The teacher and I will present a unified front. and we will freely share successes, problems, and solutions so that we actively understand and support each other.