

# THE PARENTS' PLEDGE

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

1. 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.
2. 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.
3. I will try to leave siblings at home when we come to lessons. Not only does this remove distractions, but it also reassures my child about his value to me, and the value I place on his lessons.
4. 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 to be the teacher when we're home.
5. 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.
6. I will help my child mentally prepared for his lessons by talking about his pieces and what he will do at the lesson. Though I may have exactly 17 minutes and 43 seconds to get clear across town in spite of rush hour traffic, I shall 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.
7. 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.
8. I will NOT stress care and perfection to my child while I behave carelessly and accept mediocrity. My child is not stupid, and if he sees that I do not always make my best effort, neither will he. I shall try to model for my child exactly what I want him to do and become, realizing that whether or not I do this consciously, he will nevertheless imitate exactly what he sees in me.
9. 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.
10. If the teacher and I do not present a "unified front", my child will quickly become expert at playing us against each other. Therefore, I PROMISE TO TELL THE TEACHER not only when I'm HAPPY with the lessons, but particularly when I'm UNHAPPY, and why. I WILL TELL THE TEACHER not only when we're having PRACTICE PROBLEMS at home, but also when I'm delighted with my own CREATIVE SOLUTIONS to practice problems. No one knows my child better than I do, and the teacher can use my knowledge. For violin lessons to be a successful experience, the teacher and I need to understand and actively support each other.