



# SUZUKI CELLO PROGRAM WITH DR. ERIN ELLIS



A BRIEF  
GUIDE TO  
THE SUZUKI  
METHOD  
(FAQ PDF)

[WWW.MUSIC.WVU.EDU/CMP](http://www.music.wvu.edu/cmp)

# A BRIEF GUIDE TO THE SUZUKI METHOD, THE LEARNING EXPERIENCE, AND ITS BENEFITS

Document provided by Dr. Erin Ellis and the WVU Community Music Program

## *What is the Suzuki Method?*

In the aftermath of world conflict over 50 years ago, Dr. Suzuki saw children and music education as a way forward. Dr. Suzuki believed that every child has the ability to learn and flourish in the right environment. It is a holistic, community-oriented approach to learning and mastering a stringed instrument. The student, parent, and teacher all form the “Suzuki Triangle,” where each person has an equally as important role in the learning process. Suzuki families typically learn by ear at first (called the “mother-tongue” approach) to master the basics of simply playing the instrument, similar to how children learn a language. Consistently listening to beautiful playing (both from the teacher and through recordings) and receiving encouragement from the Suzuki Triangle are key to the approach. Music reading is incorporated at the earliest appropriate time. Singing, clapping, and musical games are often part of the lesson curriculum.

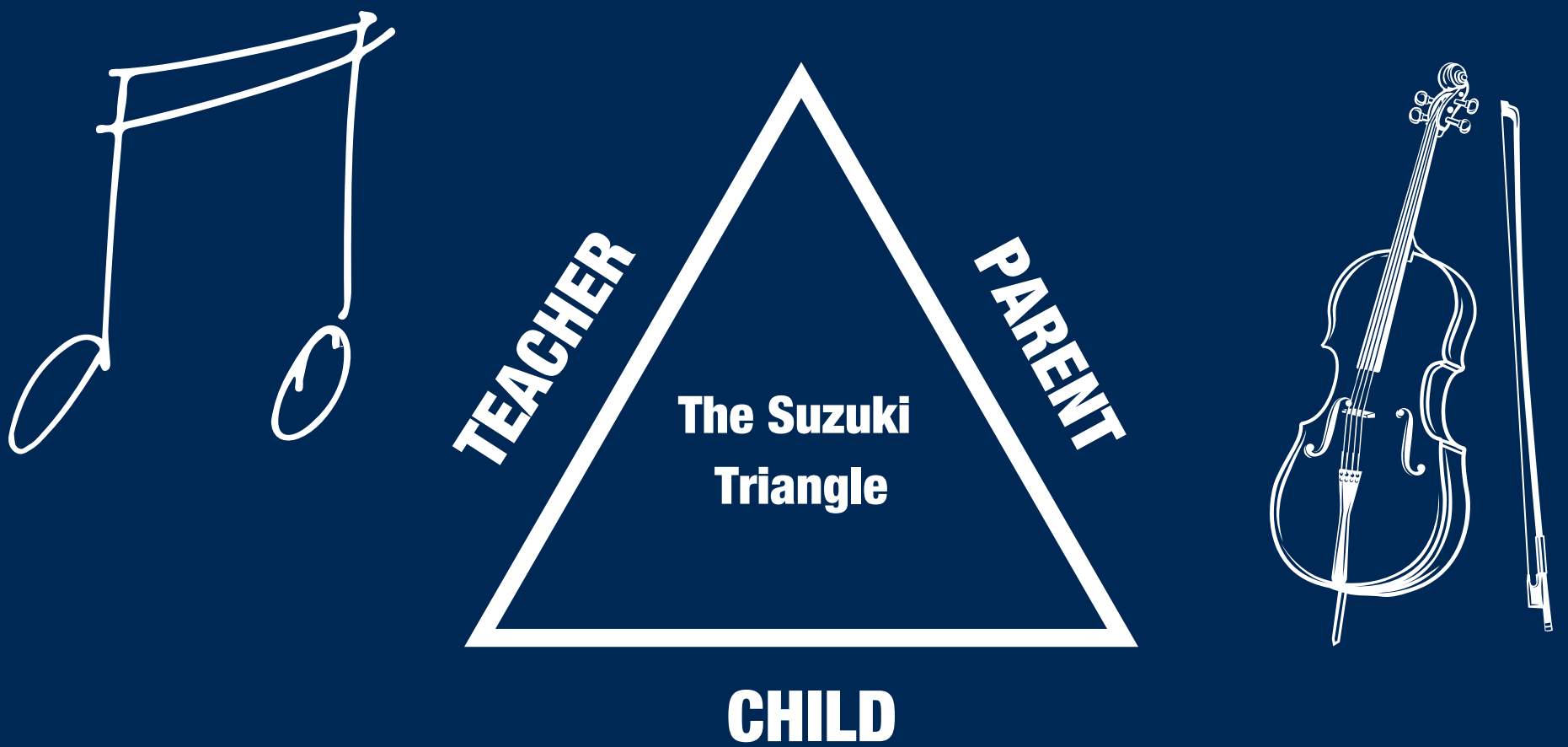
More than just one-on-one instruction, all Suzuki students attend a weekly group class in addition to the private lesson. There is an emphasis on social connection, community music-making, and integration of skills learned in the private lesson. The Suzuki Method aims to develop not just beautiful music-making, but also beautiful characters and hearts. Working with a Suzuki-trained teacher develops “talent,” builds strong character and relationships, and instills a love for the cello and making music. In other words, Suzuki lessons cultivate connection with the self, the other, and creative pursuit in a disconnected world.

## *Private Lessons*

Students and parents prepare assignments at home and bring them to the lesson to play for the teacher. The lesson tends to be structured similarly to an at-home practice session. Parents typically take notes during the lesson and are frequently asked to assist with the learning process. It is also common for the teacher to demonstrate concepts with the parent, or to teach the parent for ease of understanding during at-home practice. The goal is to introduce small, manageable ideas in the lesson that are then repeated in infinite variation to build and then refine a skill. Thus, continuous review of concepts and pieces is a foundation of this approach. Review pieces are often used to introduce a new skill while learning a new piece.

## *The Home Teacher*

Parents are considered the “home teacher.” After all, children only get to spend 1-2 hrs a week with the “lesson teacher!” It is expected that practice sessions become incorporated into the daily family routine. A Suzuki teacher will work closely with the parent to guide practice and provide successful strategies during the lesson.



## Group Classes

The group lesson incorporates ensemble skills, develops focus, cultivates social skills, and generally assists with the integration of skills from the private lesson. Because all children typically learn the same pieces, technical and musical concepts are reinforced and reviewed with peers. Activities might include reviewing pieces together, parent education, ensemble games, and music theory activities.

## Community

Continuing education and community are cornerstones of the Suzuki Method. The Suzuki Association of the Americas is a national organization that represents Suzuki teachers in the United States. It serves to organize events like parent education and summer institutes and workshops. These types of workshops are a typical part of the Suzuki education. The network and resources of Suzuki are quite large in the US! [Suzukiassociation.org](http://Suzukiassociation.org)

