

## The Value of Listening *with Some Ideas to Help Make It Happen*

*"It's easier to get there when you know where you are going"* - Ed Sprunger

Listening regularly to the Suzuki repertoire makes learning the pieces easier and becomes even more valuable as they grow in difficulty. For example, at the end of Suzuki Book Four students learn the Concerto in D Minor for Two Violins by Bach. This beautiful and complex piece is a mountain to climb. Students who have been listening to this piece regularly are able to recognize wrong notes and correct them and have no problem holding their own with the other violin part. On the other hand, a student who doesn't have the piece playing in his head while he works on it can easily get bogged down and lost.

At the beginning of your Suzuki experience, you learned of the importance of daily listening and were most likely able to establish a routine of daily listening with your child. Some of you have told me that your older child is resisting listening to the Suzuki recordings and that you need some new ideas to keep your child interested.

Don't give up! Listening is even more important as the pieces grow longer and more challenging. Click [here](#) for some ideas to renew and update the listening component of your child's violin study.

### General

- Re-establish the habit with your older child. Discuss the value of listening and create a plan together.
- Parent initiated passive listening – play the recording in the car, during meals, in the morning when children are preparing for school.
- Easy access - make sure that audio equipment is in good working order and available for use. Download the recordings onto the devices that your child uses.

### Listening to learn a specific piece

- Listen to a piece just before working on it
- Map it out  
Create a diagram of the form and have your student point to the phrase letters as they listen  
*Allegro:*            A            A            B            A
- Students who read can follow along in the sheet music as they listen  
The form of the music should be written in. Stop the recording occasionally and have the student identify the section and measure number
- Explore - find different versions of a piece on YouTube  
Compare the performances. Discuss the differences and reactions to them  
For example, a student of mine found three widely different versions of his piece:  
rock & roll, full orchestral and solo violinist

- Mix it up - Set up a playlist alternating Suzuki pieces with other songs that your child enjoys
- Listen Like a Maniac  
In this popular video from the Parents as Partners Online Series a parent describes the dramatic results when her children followed Suzuki's advice to listen to a piece all day long. Approach this as an experiment "What if you listen to your piece 20 times today – will it be easy to learn?" Try it and see what happens!

#### Activities for active listening

- Name that tune - use a game board to mark progress or make it competitive  
Extra points for naming the composer or playing the tune
- Listen and sing - play a phrase, stop the recording, sing it  
Finish the phrase – play the first half of a phrase, stop the recording and sing the end of the phrase
- Tap, march or count the beat

Spring is the season of renewal. Revive this important aspect of violin study and enjoy the resulting motivation and progress. If you have ideas for listening activities that have inspired your child, send them to me so that I can share them with other parents.

-Amy Matherly