

MNjcc Suzuki Music Program 2022-2023

Frequently Asked Questions

(last updated 07/25/2022)



What are the program prerequisite requirements?

1. Think about whether or not your child is ready to start an instrument. Be aware of the time commitment for you, the parent as home practice time helper.
2. Choose an instrument: violin, viola, cello. If you are not sure which instrument your child is interested in, you may find out in the observation process.
3. You must come observe with your child, a combination of at least 1 group lesson, and 2 private lessons. Observations help you and the teacher know whether your child is ready to start lessons. Observations also help parents begin to understand their role as a “home teacher.” For teachers’ private lesson schedules, and group lesson schedules, please contact: Gretchen Paxson Abberger (Artistic Director, MNjcc Suzuki Program) email: gretchena@mnjcc.org cell phone: (647)-637-1530, OR (Admin Assistant) Kate Shaner email: kateshaner88@gmail.com
4. Read *Nurtured by Love* by Shinichi Suzuki and *Beyond The Music Lesson* by Christine Goodner. Available in paperback and kindle (e-reader). For additional reading material check with your private teacher.
5. Start listening to the Volume I Suzuki CD of the pieces your child will be learning.
6. If you are not sure your child is quite ready and may not yet have the focus required to learn an instrument, you may wish to consider registering for Kate Shaner’s Suzuki Early Childhood Music class (for infants – 4 years) on Thursdays from 11:15 am-12:00 pm. More information on this class is listed below under the course fees, and on the MNjcc website.
7. Attend one of our Parent Information Evenings throughout the year, for new families: **Tuesday September, 20th from 7:00 – 8:00 pm** on Zoom. Registration and/or RSVP required. Email gretchena@mnjcc.org

What age should my child be in order to start lessons?

Most children start anywhere from age 3.5 - 7 years. However, there is really no age limitation with regards to starting. Younger children need more parental guidance. Older children usually move more quickly through the repertoire.

How do I arrange a time/place to observe a private lesson?

Usually observations of private lessons will take place either online, at the MNjcc and/or at the teacher's private home studio. Regarding in person observations, much will depend on the ON guidelines and safety measures regarding the pandemic. Some teachers teach private lessons at the MNjcc if they are able to schedule them before and/or after their group-teaching schedule.

How do I select a private teacher?

During your observation time, you may have observed a teacher with whom you really "resonate," with whom you wish your child to study. Feel free to ask that particular teacher if they have an opening for your child in their studio. If so, please arrange your private lesson time with that teacher. If you need names of other teachers because the teacher you want has a full studio, please contact Gretchen gretchena@mnjcc.org We try to accommodate families by location as well, but please don't choose a teacher because of location. Choose a teacher because you know that teacher is the one you want for your child.

How long are private lessons?

Most children take a 30-minute private lesson once a week until they reach late Book 2, at which point we recommend 45 minutes. From Book 5 through advanced levels, the suggested lesson time is 60 minutes.

How do I pay for private lessons?

You arrange your private lesson payment schedule with your private lesson teacher. Private lesson payments are made directly to the private teacher, and not to the MNjcc. Most teachers are accepting e-transfer. If you have arranged to have a private lesson at the MNjcc, there will be a facilities fee charge of \$210 per year (\$70.00 per term) which must be paid directly to the MNjcc along with your registration.

How do I purchase or rent an instrument?

If your child is a beginner, please do not purchase or rent an instrument before you have spoken with your private teacher. (Violinists will not start on a "real instrument" until their private teacher says they are ready. The transition from a "pretend" instrument to a "real" instrument varies according to ability, age, and level). Families can arrange to rent instruments from various musical instrument stores in the Toronto area. The following is a list of stores where you can either purchase or rent an instrument:

- The Sound Post (416) 971-6990
- Long & McQuade (416) 588-7886
- Philip Davis, luthier (416) 466-9619
- Remenyi House of Music (416) 961- 3111
- George Heintl & Co. Ltd. (416) 363-0093

- With most stores, there is usually a rental “with the option to buy,” and/or a plan that is monthly and/or yearly. Parents of beginners should be prepared to rent a full-sized instrument for a short time (6 months to a year), in order to learn alongside their child.

What are Suzuki group repertoire classes?

Group repertoire classes are part of your child’s Suzuki experience, and are not considered optional. Once your child has started private lessons, your teacher will advise what level will work best for your child, and when/what level to register for group lessons. All groups are assembled according to playing level. When possible, age and social ability are also factored in. Group classes are organized and assigned by the MNjcc Suzuki artistic director and faculty. Group class teachers focus on the level appropriate Suzuki repertoire that students study in their private lessons, adding to this with inventive games and exercises to enhance playing ability, and musical knowledge and expression.

Fall term group classes will be scheduled for 30 minutes (Beginner - Twinkle level) and 40 minutes (Early Book 1- Book 5 and beyond). Given the unpredictability of the pandemic, we plan to offer an in-person/hybrid group class option for all levels.

For Winter and Spring 2023, we hope to offer the same as the above, depending on guidance from Provincial Health and the MNjcc medical advisory team. Please let us know your accommodation needs.

What are Enrichment classes?

We recommend that each child take two weekly classes on Tuesday afternoons: an instrumental group repertoire class, and another level appropriate enrichment class from the following list (bow fitness, composition, fiddling, chamber music ensemble, improvisation, music theory/note reading, and ukulele); Families will be able to select one enrichment class per 10-week term.

The following Fall term enrichment classes will be taught online only: *bow fitness, composition*. The following will be taught in person only: *chamber music ensemble, improvisation, music theory/note reading*. The following will be taught as hybrid/in-person classes: *fiddling, ukulele*.

For the Winter and Spring term we will await guidance from the Province of Ontario and the MNjcc building management staff as to when we will resume in person classes.

For Winter and Spring 2023, we hope to offer the same as the above, depending on guidance from Provincial Health and the MNjcc medical advisory team. Please let us know your accommodation needs.

For descriptions of enrichment classes: Please see our [Class Descriptions](#) document on the MNjcc website..

What are bow fitness classes? (Book 1- advanced)

This class will be centered around bow technique and scales co-taught by two teachers, a violinist and a cellist, to guide you along. We will have some fun while we examine bow holds, different bow strokes, bow placement and bow games for all levels of string

players. Class is at the perfect time for parents to leave the daily practice up to us for this one day while you make dinner! It's a win-win-win!

What is a chamber music ensemble? (Book 5 – adv. Students will be grouped by level)

Chamber music classes are for advanced students only working in book 5 or higher, who are accomplished note readers. Students will be placed into duo, trio, quartet, quintet, sextet, or octet ensembles according to age and playing level. The ensembles will study classical through 21st century works by such composers as Haydn, Mozart, Beethoven, Schubert, Dvorak, Britten, Barber, Hindemith, Glick, etc. If your child is a transfer student, and our staff is not sure of their level of playing, one of our chamber music teachers will ask them to audition.

What are composition classes? (Book 2 – advanced)

This class, to be taught by MNjcc Suzuki Program alumnus, Arie Van de Ven, will use the online site BandLab, and other platforms, focusing on improvisation as a compositional tool, and will include some games/activities that allow each student to generate their own music. Students will perform their own compositions for each other during class time, and if they are ready, at the end of term recitals.

What are fiddling classes? (Book 2 – 5. Students will be grouped by level)

Traditional fiddling is more than reading the music “off the page.” In fact, most “real” fiddle players don't read a note, having learned their repertoire aurally. Of course, it's an advantage to both be able to read music and learn by ear. The students in this class will be learning primarily by ear. Incorporating rhythm is another key aspect to great fiddle playing. Students will learn and explore Celtic, Irish, Canadian Old-Time and Traditional fiddle tunes. Students will learn arrangements of fiddle music and will have fun with ensemble skills. Classes will be determined according to Suzuki playing level.

What are improvisation classes? (Late Book 1-advanced)

"Creative **A**bility **D**evelopment" (CAD) is a method for developing uninhibited creativity in music performance. Through the improvisation games we play in CAD, each student is given the freedom to discover their own musical ideas and style. Each child will discover their own musical voice. With self-discovery comes renewed feelings of self-confidence, freedom of expression, and a true connection with musical creativity.

What is a music theory and/or note reading ensemble? (Book 2 – adv. students will be grouped by level)

Most students start in a beginning note reading ensemble when they are almost finished with Suzuki repertoire book 1, and have begun a note reading routine in their private lesson. Note reading classes are divided by ability to read music notation. All students who participate in note reading classes must also practice note reading during the week, and as well, follow through in their private lessons. Most of the MNjcc Suzuki teachers teach with Joanne Martin's I Can Read Music Vol. 1 & Vol. 2, and/or Carl Grissen Learn with Tunes Vol. 1, 2, & 3, or something comparable. During 2021-22, students will be grouped by level. Students are usually in late book 4 and/or early book 5 when they have completed all levels of the note reading classes, at which point they are ready to join a chamber music group described above.

What are Ukulele classes? (Book 1 – 3. Students will be grouped by level)

Our program offers beginner – intermediate ukulele classes, usually to our younger students not yet ready to participate in a note-reading ensemble. These students will have had at least one or more seasons of musicianship classes. Our ukulele teachers teach melody, harmony, and rhythm by ear much as we do in our Suzuki lessons. They reinforce the concepts of the Suzuki method by applying them on a new instrument, while incorporating self-accompaniment. The ukulele is an ideal instrument for all musicians, and one can achieve a lot very quickly. Singing is also an important part of learning to play the ukulele, and self-accompaniment is extremely satisfying. In class students work on singing, and learn to play ukulele while singing at the same time.

When & where are group classes/enrichment classes/recitals?

The group classes, enrichment classes and recitals are scheduled on Tuesday afternoons starting at 4:00 pm through early evening. **A calendar of classes and special events will be created for each term and sent to all registrants.** We have outlined above in the group/enrichment class descriptions how our group and enrichment classes will run, both online and using MNjcc rooms and classrooms on floors 2, 3, and 4. **Solo recitals and enrichment class recitals are scheduled for fall and spring terms. On solo recital days, regularly scheduled group classes will not run.**

Registration: How do I pay for the classes and what is the cost?

Payment for group and enrichment classes is done per term, through the MNjcc online registration portal, and is separate from the private lesson payment.

Families must register for group and/or enrichment classes (fall, winter, spring) before the start of each term, unless trying a class as a transfer student (please read below).

Class Fees:

Our program offers three separate options per term on Tuesdays. **Please register online:**

- **Option 1 - Violin and/or Cello Beginner to Book 8 (Group and Enrichment)** \$295 per 10-week term.
- **Option 2 - Violin and/or Cello Beginner to Book 8 (Group Class ONLY)** \$150.00 per 10-week term.
- **Option 3 - Violin and/or Cello Beginner to Book 8 (Enrichment Class ONLY)** \$150.00 per 10-week
- **Sibling discount for families registering more than 1 child** - 10% per term for each extra child.
- **Faculty discount** - 25%

Are there any other Suzuki fees?

1. Theory expenses - all students enrolled in Theory Classes will be responsible for the costs of books (estimated - under \$30.00 per year).

2. Private Lessons Facilities Fee \$210.00 per year. (Pertains to students taking private lessons at the MNjcc).
3. What if my child is transferring from another Suzuki Program or already has Suzuki experience?

If you are not sure what class level your child fits into, he/she can come and “try out” 2 classes before registering. You can also come and observe classes with your child, to get an idea of the level and pace for your child. If you need to find a new private teacher for your child, it would be best to observe private lessons of several teachers to find the teacher that best suits your child’s needs.

Additional classes offered within our Suzuki Program Community:

Suzuki Early Childhood Music Classes: (Please register online)

- **Suzuki Early Childhood Music classes with Kate Shaner** 45 minutes of music and movement. Incorporating Kate’s extensive Suzuki Early Childhood training and passions for creativity with children and music. Parent/caregiver participation is required. Previous music class experience not required. Infant to 4 years old.
- Thursday mornings: 11:15 am-12:00 pm in-person. Masks Required.
- **Fee:** \$200 per 8-week term (Fall term starts Thursday Oct. 6).
- **Info:** email: kateshaner88@gmail.com

Suzuki Music & Arts Camp: (Registration will be online)

2023 will mark our 12th in-person camp! July 2023 dates to be confirmed. Info available late January 2023. For more information please check our website, or email gretchena@mnjcc.org

Adult Summer String Ensemble: (Registration will be online)

July 2023 dates to be confirmed and will run in coordination with the Suzuki Music and Arts Camp. Info available late January 2023. For more information please check our website, or email gretchena@mnjcc.org

Jump Start to Twinkles Camp for Beginners: (Registration will be online)

August 2023 dates to be confirmed. Info available late January 2023. For more information please check our website, or email kateshaner88@gmail.com

Adult Mixed String Group Class: (Please register online)

- Adult Mixed String Group Class (Intermediate level) \$190 per 10-week term.
- Wednesday evenings 7:30-8:30 pm.
- In-person. Adult players will explore intermediate string playing techniques, using ideas/concepts taught in Suzuki group classes. Instructor will use compatible repertoire for cello, viola and violin, oftentimes referring to the Suzuki repertoire books, and/or RCM repertoire (grade 3 level and beyond).

Adult Beginner Ukulele Class: (Please register online)

Are you a total beginner or someone who needs to refresh your basic skills? In this course, you will learn the basics of how to play the ukulele including: posture, tuning, how to play foundational chords, and how to strum. This course will prepare you to participate in Ukulele Beginner Plus through Intermediate level.

- Tuesday evenings: 7:30 pm-9:00 pm
- **Fee:** \$160 per 8-week term (Fall term starts Oct. 25, 2022)
- More information: gretchena@mnjcc.org or nhmnorthyork@gmail.com

Adult Combined Ukulele Class, Beginner Plus through Intermediate level: (Please register online)

In this class, players will refine basic playing skills learned in the Beginner class and will be joining forces with the Intermediate class. Ongoing focus points will include playing posture, tuning, foundational chords, strumming, singing while strumming, etc., moving into understanding and trying out more complicated techniques all the while, sharing with the Intermediate level players.

- Wednesday mornings: 10:30 am-12:00 pm
- **Fee:** \$180 per 10-week term (starts Sept. 28, 2022)
- More information: gretchena@mnjcc.org or nhmnorthyork@gmail.com

Special Needs:

We want everyone to experience the joy of music. Please contact Suzuki Artistic Director Gretchen Paxson-Abberger at 647-637-1530 or email gretchena@mnjcc.org to discuss how we can best accommodate your child.

Music Innovation Fund Scholarship

This fund helps make innovative and dynamic music programs accessible to everyone, regardless of financial status or circumstances. There is availability for financial assistance towards all music programming. If your family's finances have been affected during this pandemic time, please don't hesitate to reach out. All applications are kept confidential. To apply for a music scholarship, contact Wendy Moss at wendym@mnjcc.org. If you would like to make a donation to this fund to help support members of our Suzuki community, please click here to make a tax-deductible donation to the [Music Scholarship Fund](#).

When & where can I meet the teachers and get more info?

We will hold two Parent Information Evenings for new and inquiring families, specifically for families interested in enrolling in the Tuesday Suzuki Program:

- Tuesday **September 20, 2022** on Zoom, 7:00 – 8:00 pm
- Tuesday **January 17, 2023** on Zoom 7:00 – 8:00 pm

At these evenings, we will present an overview of how our program runs, and a brief synopsis about learning by the Suzuki method. Several teachers will be available to answer your questions. All are welcome. Please RSVP: gretchena@mnjcc.org OR register online.