

MNjcc Suzuki Music Program 2024-2025

Frequently Asked Questions

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 the home practice helper.
2. Choose an instrument: violin, viola, cello, or guitar. 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: Artistic Director - Kate Shaner email: kates@mnjcc.org or Emeritus Artistic Director - Gretchen Paxson Abberger email: gretchena@mnjcc.org.
4. Read *Nurtured by Love* by Shinichi Suzuki and *Beyond the Music Lessons* by Christine Goodner ([Audible version here](#)). For additional reading material check with your private teacher.
5. Start listening to the Volume I Suzuki CD of the instrument your child will be learning. The Suzuki recording can be found on all streaming platforms: Spotify, Amazon Music, Apple music as well as the CD in the back of your book.
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 one of our Suzuki ECE Music classes (0 to 4 years)+ parent/caregiver on Thursdays or Sunday mornings, OR consider enrolling in our **NEW SECE JUMP START TO TWINKLES (for 3 to 5 year olds)** on Tuesdays from 4:30-5:10 pm: Building on the foundational music skills learned in our Suzuki Early Childhood Education program, this weekly 40-minute class on Tuesdays is the perfect choice for students who have recently graduated from our Suzuki ECE program. Also recommended for beginners who are not ready for the full Suzuki Program, and/or have not yet chosen an instrument. More info: kates@mnjcc.org. [Register here to hold your spot](#) as the SECE program fills up quickly.
7. Attend our Parent Information Evening, for new families: **Tuesday September, 24th** from 7:00 – 8:00 pm in room 318. Registration is required on [Amilia](#). For questions, please email: kates@mnjcc.org or 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 truly no age limitation with regards to starting. Younger children need more parental guidance. Older children usually move more quickly through the repertoire. In order to know what the teacher will ask the student to practice at home during the week, parents are required to be present during lessons.

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

Usually observations of private lessons will take place either at the MNjcc and/or at the teacher's private home studio. 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 Kate kates@mnjcc.org or 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 Book 2, at which point we recommend 45 minutes. From Book 4 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 according to their studio policies, (not to the MNjcc). Most teachers are accepting e-transfer.

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" box 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 (violins, cellos, violas)
- [Long & McQuade](#) (416) 588-7886 (violins, cellos, violas, guitars). Regarding guitar rentals: Bloor & Ossington store, Acoustic guitar dept., upstairs.
- Philip Davis, luthier (416) 466-9619 (violins, cellos, violas)
- [Remenyi House of Music](#) (416) 961- 3111 (violins, cellos, violas, guitars)
- George Heintl & Co. Ltd. (416) 363-0093 (for purchase only - violins, violas, cellos)

With most stores, there is usually a rental "with the option to buy," and/or a rental 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 required. Once your child has started private lessons, your teacher will advise what level will work best, 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 Artistic Director and Suzuki faculty. Group class teachers focus on the level appropriate Suzuki repertoire that students study in their private lessons, adding to this with inventive games, improv, and various exercises to enhance playing ability, musical knowledge, and expression. All group classes will be scheduled for 40 minutes (Beginner Level- Book 7).

What are Enrichment classes?

We recommend that each child, Book 1 and above enroll in two weekly classes on Tuesday afternoons: an instrumental group repertoire class, and one other level appropriate enrichment class from the following list (string orchestra, chamber music ensemble, music theory/note reading). For more details please read our [Class Descriptions](#) below:

What is a chamber music ensemble? (Book 4 – adv. Students will be grouped by level)

Chamber music classes are for advanced students only, working in book 4 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. Our program now offers chamber music classes for adults. Adult chamber music classes will be scheduled on Tuesday evenings.

What are improvisation classes? (Book 1-advanced)

"Creative Ability Development" (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 string orchestra?

During our 2023-24 season, and during our recent summer camp, we added string orchestra to our roster of enrichment classes. This large ensemble of violinists, violists, and cellists is for students who are late Book 2 and above, who have participated in beginner and/or intermediate note reading/theory classes, are confident with their note reading skills (I Can Read Music Book 2 and beyond). Students who are part of this ensemble have demonstrated to their private teacher and/or our string orchestra director, Nancy Lokan, that they are ready for more advanced ensemble playing. If

your child is a transfer student, and our staff is not sure of their level of playing, one of the teachers will ask them to audition.

What is a music theory and/or note reading ensemble? (Late Book 1 – adv. students will be grouped by level)

Most students start in a beginning note reading ensemble when they are almost nearing the middle to end of 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 2024-25, students will be grouped by level. Students are usually in book 3 and/or early book 4 when they will have completed all levels of the note reading classes, at which point they would be able to join a chamber music ensemble described above.

When & where are group classes/enrichment classes/solo and large group recitals?

The group classes, enrichment classes and recitals are scheduled on Tuesday afternoons starting at 4:30 pm through early evening. [A calendar of classes and special events is on our website.](#) We have outlined above in the group/enrichment class descriptions how our classes will run using MNjcc rooms and classrooms on floors 2 and 3.

Solo recitals are scheduled for fall and spring terms. Large group and Enrichment class concerts are scheduled for winter and spring terms. On solo recital days, regularly scheduled group classes will not run.

Fees & Registration for the 2024-25 Suzuki Program:

Group, enrichment and ensemble class registration is through the [Amilia portal](#). Payment is through the MNjcc and is separate from the private lesson payment. Registration can be paid either once or twice per year.

We recommend a group class and ensemble for all children book 1+ and up. We have three options to select from. Parents, please consult with your private teacher regarding the best choice for your child prior to registering. All classes, concerts and special events are scheduled on Tuesdays between 4:30-6:30pm from Sept 17, 2024 - June 10, 2025.

We recommend the following registration choices for violin, viola, cello, guitar:

1. **Group Class & Ensemble** - \$1,140 per 30-week school year (includes 1 group class and 1 ensemble class).
2. **Group Class ONLY** – \$570 per 30-week school year (choice of 1 class)
3. **Ensemble/Enrichment Class ONLY** – \$570 per 30-week school year (choice of 1 class)

Sibling Discount - 10% (for each child)

Faculty discount - 25% (for each 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. 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](#).

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” one class before registering at no charge. 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:

NEW - Suzuki Guitar:

We will be adding Suzuki guitar to our program this year. Lenny Ranallo is an excellent teacher, as well as a performer/composer, and we are excited to have him joining our faculty. If you know of anyone looking for Suzuki guitar lessons (children or adults) Please send them our way as we start to build this amazing program. Email: kates@mnjcc.org for more info and to sign-up for a trial lesson.

Suzuki Early Childhood Music Classes (0-4 year olds):

SECE classes will be offered on Sundays from 11:15am-12:00 pm and Thursdays from 9:15am-10:00am (0-4 years old). Parent/guardian and child (age 0-4) will participate in a weekly music class. Parents will enjoy watching their children develop rhythmic and melodic awareness, memory, and social skills. Teachers work with parents to build a repertoire of lullabies, action songs and nursery rhymes. The SECE program provides a wonderful foundation before starting an instrument. For more info and to sign up for a free trial class, please email kates@mnjcc.org. [Click here to register](#).

- Thursdays from 9:15-10:00 am
- Class fee: \$205 per 8-week term
- Starts Sept 26, 2024

- Sundays from 11:15am-12:00pm
- Class Fee: \$205 per 8-week term

- Starts Sept 29, 2024

NEW- SECE Jump Start to Twinkles (3-5 year olds):

This year we are offering a new SECE class called Jump Start to Twinkles on Tuesdays from 4:30-5:10pm for children 3-5 years old + parent/caregiver. Building on the foundational music skills learned in our Suzuki Early Childhood Education program, this weekly 40-minute class on Tuesdays is the perfect choice for students who have recently graduated from our Suzuki ECE program. Also recommended for beginners who are not ready for the full Suzuki Program, and/or have not yet chosen an instrument. More info: kates@mnjcc.org. [Register here to hold your spot](#) as the SECE program fills up quickly.

- Tuesdays from 4:30-5:10pm
- Class fee: \$205 per 8-week term
- Starts Oct 1, 2024

Adult String Ensemble:

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). For more info email: gretchena@mnjcc.org or kates@mnjcc.org

- (Intermediate level) \$190 per 8-week term.
- Wednesday evenings 7:30-8:45 pm.
- Starts Oct. 9, 2024

Suzuki Music & Arts Camp:

2025 will mark our 14th in-person camp! July 7-11, 2025. For more information and program description, please check our website in late January 2025, or email kates@mnjcc.org or gretchena@mnjcc.org

Adult Summer String Ensemble:

July 7-11, 2025 and will run in coordination with the Suzuki Music and Arts Camp. Info available late January 2025. For more information and program description, please check our website, email kates@mnjcc.org or gretchena@mnjcc.org

Special Needs:

We want everyone to experience the joy of music. Please contact Artistic Director, Kate Shaner kates@mnjcc.org or Artistic Director Emeritus, Gretchen Paxson-Abberger gretchena@mnjcc.org to discuss how we can best accommodate your child.

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

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

- **Tuesday September 24, 2024, 7:00 – 8:00 pm** in room 318

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. [Click Here to Register.](#)