

Taking Lesson Notes



There are two very important types of notes during lessons: the ones the children play and the ones the parents take during lessons. The beauty of the Suzuki Triangle is that two main adults are supporting our children's note learning, the teacher and the practice parent. As the teacher, I am incredibly blessed to spend a little slice of time with your child each week, but as a parent, you are the lucky one who spends the other six days nurturing your child at the piano. As such, I want to give you the most support to have the most success during the rest of the week.

Book 1: Ideally, the practice parent (or grandparent) brings a physical notebook to each lesson and group class, along with Suzuki Book 1. The music book is strictly for the parents' reference during the first two-thirds while we are developing the child's ear. (Reading will be started separately from the Suzuki repertoire.) During the early stage of lessons, I will give you much information about *why* we are doing specific activities as well as *how* to do them. As we progress, I will often give specific practice directions and repetitions. All of these things should go in the notebook to be reviewed before daily practice. From experience, I often think I will remember once I am back at the home instrument, but I don't. As adults, we have too many other things to keep in our brains, so if you write these things down, you don't have to try to remember! In addition, this will help you recreate the lesson at home, doing precisely the things with your child that they have done with me.

*A note about taking notes on a cellphone: I know some parents prefer to take notes on their phone. If you can at all leave your phone in your bag for the lesson, and take notes the old-fashioned way, that would be best. The child will have your full attention and you won't be distracted by an incoming text. It is such a short time and if your child sees that you can focus on them for the entire period, they will grow from that attention. You are a model! If it is handwritten, you can also keep the practice time at home device-free. The other benefit is that in a year, you will have an easily accessible record of how far your child has come during their lessons!

Book 2+: At this point, we are working to help the child become more independent. The parent should continue to take notes to help with specific technical issues, but I will begin to write their lessons down on a practice chart (available for download on the Resources page on the website.

<https://lacroix.mymusicstaff.com/Resources>)

This is a step by step guide as to what and how to practice. The order will always be:

- 1) Reading
- 2) Scales and technical exercises
- 3) Working Repertoire
- 4) Review pieces

Included in the chart are boxes for the child to check when each item is completed. This will help them keep track of exactly what they practiced. Again, the purpose is to create an efficient, focused practice. Parents will need to sit with the child and check in on a regular basis, but the child can begin to do more independent practice as they get used to reading their chart.

During Covid lessons, I will take notes on my computer that will be sent automatically to the parents. This helps when lessons are held online, as well as gives me a quick way to see what we have done the previous week. Please continue to keep your own notes of things you want to remember. Together we can ensure practice at home is as efficient as possible.