



What is SYSA?

Spokane Youth Suzuki Academy (SYSA) is intended for beginning violin, viola, and cello students in grades 3-5. Through the collaboration of teachers, students, and parents, most SYSA students will be prepared to audition for Spokane Youth Strings after two years in the program. Each class includes large group instruction, followed by small masterclasses for individualized instruction.

What is “Suzuki?”

The Suzuki philosophy is a method of instruction that relies on the supportive collaboration of students, teachers, and parents for the success of each student. Similar to how children learn their first language, Suzuki students will master the skills of their instrument through lots of listening and playing from memory. SYSA uses a combination of Suzuki in the Schools and traditional Suzuki instruction. Students will learn to read music; however, much of this learning will occur separately from the instrument so that students are not overwhelmed by playing technique and note-reading at the same time.

Where should I buy an instrument?

Students do not need an instrument for the first class. Please consult your masterclass teacher in finding an instrument of the appropriate size and quality to buy or rent. If you already have an instrument, please understand that your teacher may ask you to purchase or rent a different instrument.

Parent Involvement

Parent attendance and participation is expected at every class. As the parent, you are learning alongside your child and acting as their note taker, practice partner, and support person inside and outside of class. A few expectations for your role as the parent:

- You will be asked to actively participate in class. Attention should be on your child and the class, not a cellphone or other distraction.



- As the parent you are responsible for your child's attendance and home practice. Listening and practicing should be part of your child's daily routine. This will likely require reminders and help making the time in your family's schedule.
- Class is not an appropriate time for negative critiques of students or instructors. Please save this type of question or comment for a private discussion with an instructor after class. Creating a safe and supportive learning environment is of the utmost importance for the success of each student.
- Help your child mentally prepare for learning by creating a calm and unhurried atmosphere on the way to class. This could involve listening to the recording in the car or singing through the pieces your child is practicing. A snack before class can make a big difference!

Home Practice

1. The parent is responsible for getting practice started. Don't blame your child for forgetting to practice or for not wanting to stop doing something else. Be prepared to experiment with different ideas, nothing works forever!
2. Set a regular practice time, for example before school, after a snack, after dinner. Decide on the most practical time for your child, be consistent, and practice every day.
3. Practice time can be broken up into smaller 5-10 minute practice sessions, rather than one long practice session. Set one goal for each session.
4. Practice with your child. Remember that practice is lonely and children like company. Accustom your child to the fact that you are the home teacher and that your child will be practicing with your help and supervision.
5. If there is a problem, locate exactly where it is and limit the practice to two notes, the last good one and the first difficult one. Repeat until corrected five times in a row. Then go back to the beginning of that phrase and play the whole phrase correctly five times. Rolling dice to determine how many repetitions or moving a certain number of toys or snacks can be very motivating.
6. Always use the marked fingerings and bowings. Learning is much more efficient if these are consistent.





7. Become accustomed to repetition and to continued use of the same repertoire over long periods. Children usually do not tire of repetition unless others show their boredom in their remarks, manner, or tone of voice. The safest way to avoid this is to form the habit of searching for new ideas overlooked previously. Not only will you keep interested, but you will help your child to listen.
8. Be positive. Make suggestions that don't affect the self-esteem of the child. Say, "Your third finger needs to be higher," rather than "Can't you get your third finger in tune?"
9. Have home concerts where children perform for visitors and relatives.

Listening

Listening to recordings is just as important as practicing in your child's daily routine. Schedule a time for daily listening. This could occur during breakfast, while kids are getting ready for school or bedtime. Use a CD player that your child has access to or play the music from a phone or computer. If listening is not happening consistently, find a different way to make it happen. Recommended Reading Faber, Adele and Elaine Mazlish. *How to Talk So Kids Will Listen and Listen So Kids Will Talk*. Suzuki, Shinichi. *Nurtured by Love*.

Recommended Listening

Learning Together (included in book provided by SYSA) Suzuki Violin Volume 1 (available on CD, audio file, Spotify, Apple Music) Classical Kids (available to buy as a CD or audio file, or borrow from the library) Vivaldi's Ring of Mystery Mr. Bach Comes to Call Hallelujah Handel Mozart's Magic Fantasy Beethoven Lives Upstairs

Recommended Apps

Tonal Energy (tuner, tone generator, and metronome)

Flashnote Derby (note-reading game)



Materials

- Instrument (or box violin), bow, and shoulder rest safely stored in case
- Tuner (electronic tuner or phone app)
- Music books (provided by SYSA)
- 3-ring binder for practice sheets and handouts
- Notebook (optional)
- Pencils
- Foldable music stand
- Dedicated music bag to hold materials

Attendance

Regular attendance makes a huge difference in the learning success of your child and the learning environment for the rest of the students. In the case of sickness, emergency, or school/religious event, please fill out the Absence Reporting Form on the website under “Resources” in the “Members” tab.

Classes take place weekly, beginning September 8th, 6:00-7:30 pm at Manito United Methodist Church (3220 S Grand Blvd), and continuing most Monday evenings until May 11th with a final concert at the Fox Theater on May 17th. Attendance is expected at each scheduled class or performance unless there is an emergency or unavoidable schedule conflict.

Enrollment

Each student must be enrolled before participating in the SYSA class. Tuition is required. Payments may be made in full or monthly. Enrollment for the 2025-2026 class will be published in July 2025.

If you have questions, you may contact the Spokane Youth Symphony office at 509-448-4446 or info@spokaneyouthsymphony.org.