

**Thompson Violin Studio**  
**Emily J. Thompson, owner and instructor**  
**Policies and Practices**  
**2019-2020**

**Background and Method**

My approach to teaching is based on years of training and teaching in the Suzuki Method of violin. The Suzuki Violin School was developed by Shinichi Suzuki in Japan in the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century, and has spread worldwide to establish a community of teachers, parents and students who are dedicated to nurturing the talent in each student. The Suzuki Method is based on time-honored folk songs and classical pieces that are laid in a precise order to build skills and musicality step-by-step. Students work for mastery and can perform confidently at even the most basic level, while their music prepares them for further accomplishments down the road.

In lessons, I try to listen and observe to see where my individual students are in the journey of learning the violin, and then show them what steps are next and how to practice scales, exercises, review pieces, working pieces, and new pieces in a way that builds ease and mastery on the instrument. For younger students, I also show the parents exactly what we are working on, how it looks and sounds, and how to assist the student (depending on their age) in practicing for specific goals every day at home. It's my job to break the big picture of playing violin down into manageable steps while encouraging the student (and parents) that they are doing valuable work towards their long-term success. The questions, feedback, and experiences that you share with me help me to improve as a teacher all the time.

In addition to the Suzuki books, I also use many other technique and repertoire books that fit your specific needs and interests. Whatever background or music you bring to lesson, these are some elements of the Suzuki method that will apply:

- frequent listening to recordings to help learn and inspire great playing;
- learning by ear and playing by memory in addition to reading music;
- constant review of previous music for retaining skills and performing easily;
- emphasis on full tone and healthy posture;
- building relationships with family and friends through music.

**Lessons and Opportunities**

- Every student has a 30 minute private lesson weekly one-on-one with the teacher. Parents of students in kindergarten through sixth grade come to these lessons with their children; middle school and high school parents are welcome to come and observe any time and should communicate regularly about progress, goals, and how to support their child.

- Twice a year (December and May), there is a group class in the studio for all students to meet, play together, and play solos, one week before the recital.
- Violin recitals are held in December and May for students to perform their solo and group pieces.
- Students are also encouraged to participate in the ASTA Certificate Program (ASTACAP) each year in February as a way to receive valuable feedback, make measurable goals for their playing, and celebrate their success.

### Lesson Scheduling

- Lessons are given weekly for 30 minutes. Your time slot will be confirmed after the initial meeting and acceptance into the studio.
- Students will have an initial meeting/trial lesson to see how the teacher/student/parent relationship works and make sure it is the right fit before being accepted into regularly scheduled lessons.
- Lessons can be rescheduled in advance by student or teacher for occasional conflicts or illness. Available times can be seen in the online calendar at [Fons.app](#).
- If the scheduled lesson time is missed without notification, it cannot be rescheduled after the fact. Lesson time is not made up for late arrivals.

### Payment

- Lesson payments are collected through [Fons](#), an online scheduling and billing software. During the school year, a flat fee will be charged monthly. During the summer, the student will be charged for each lesson individually.
- The school year includes an average of four lessons per month, as well as a group lesson and recital at the end of each semester, as well as other practice program and incentives.
- Being accepted into a lesson time assumes that you will continue lessons throughout the school year. If the student must discontinue, the current month's fee is non-refundable.
- The fall semester includes 16 weeks, with two lessons in August and two weeks off in December. Payments begin in September and continue through May. There are 20 weeks of private lessons January through May. Lessons that are cancelled in advance due to sickness or conflicts need to be rescheduled by the parent by the end of the semester.
- Lessons are available and encouraged over the summer, with flexible scheduling options.
- Like any software, your Fons account will send you many updates and reminders, as well as the occasional error message. You can always text or email me with problems or questions. Any major changes in billing or scheduling will be communicated directly with you first, over phone or email.

***The current monthly rate for Thompson Violin Studio is \$100.***

## Expectations

### For Parents:

- Be present at the lesson time. For younger students (through elementary age), it is best if the parent can stay in the lesson to understand the instructions and practice assignments and assist at home. For older students, the parent should come in regularly for at least the last 5 minutes of the lesson to hear how the student is doing and discuss any goals, activities, or instrument needs.
- Provide a positive environment at home for daily practice. Before starting lessons, consider if you can have a quiet, non-rushed time period set aside during your family's daily schedule for practicing. It might be different times throughout the week, but the ideal goal is to have 6 days of practice per week for about as long as the lesson, depending on age and attention span. Beginners may build up from 15 minute sessions to 30 or 40 minute sessions as they get older and have more to work on.
- Listen to music and attend concerts as much as possible. Suzuki students have CDs that go with their books that they should listen to multiple times per week. Other great violin music is available on streaming apps—ask for recommendations. The Fort Wayne Philharmonic offers free tickets for children with paid adults at their [Masterworks Series](#) concerts. They also host special kid-friendly concerts in their [Family Series](#). If you watch their website and social media, you can also find out about free concerts in the community.

### For Students:

- Be attentive and respectful during the lesson time.
- Be willing to listen and try things in a new or different way.
- Follow practice assignments at home and write down your practice minutes. Have your practice planner open on the stand at every practice.
- Practice daily. Regular quality time with your instrument in your hands is the only way to make the progress you want. Try to concentrate on one goal at a time for each play through of a piece or practice spot.
- Listen to or watch professional recordings or videos every day.
- Be patient and use your skills to learn new pieces by clapping, counting, and naming notes. Practice music in small sections. Use the metronome often.

## Resources

### Required Books

Suzuki Violin School Book 1 with CD or equivalent book for higher levels

Musicians Practice Planner

### *Additional scales or supplemental books as assigned*

Beyond the Music Lesson: Habits of Successful Suzuki Families

Also see <https://suzukiassociation.org/about/suzuki-method/> and  
<http://www.suzukitriangle.com>

### Violins

There are a few shops in the tri-state area that have quality violin outfits to rent/buy:

In Fort Wayne: Quinlan and Fabish: 260-482-9669

Outside Fort Wayne (can ship rental instruments, but also worth driving to when purchasing upgraded instruments):

The Loft Violin Shop in Columbus: <http://www.theloftviolinshop.com>

Shar in Ann Arbor: <https://www.sharmusic.com/Rentals/>

Local repairs: David Griebel, luthier: 260-424-4245, [dwgriebel@gmail.com](mailto:dwgriebel@gmail.com)

### Accessories

Wittner Side-Mount Chinrest (recommended for most students)

Everest EZ Shoulder Rest (black), ES Shoulder Rest (colors), or Kun Shoulder Rest

Korg TM-60 Metronome/Tuner

Music stand: Peak SMS-20 or Manhasset Model #48

Thompson Violin Studio has no financial relationship with any of the vendors listed here. Please consult with the teacher before making any instrument purchases to make sure you are getting the right size and quality. It is important that you buy from a reputable instrument dealer that stands behind their instruments.