

## Review: What, Why and How

By Amy Matherly

What is 'Review', why and how do we do it?

Should your child be able to play every piece that he has ever learned at any given time?

Here are my thoughts on how to incorporate review work into your home practice and how to get the most benefit from it.

At lessons and during home practice we approach our Suzuki repertoire pieces from three different places:

*New*: First exposure - learning the notes and bowings.

*Polishing*: The basics are solid and we are adding musical elements.

*Review* - reworking a previously learned piece

### Why Review?

The goal in learning to play an instrument is not to merely play a lot of different pieces but to play well. Each time a piece is reviewed we learn more from it, build a stronger technical foundation, bring it to a higher level of artistic development and improve playing overall. Read on for information about this valuable learning tool.

- Every practice session should include review work but the focus should be on quality rather than quantity.
- Choose the day's review piece or pieces from this prioritized list

Pieces assigned by your private teacher

Group class assignments

Pieces in your current Suzuki book

Favorites

Past books

- A practice session should consist of (again - in order of priority)

Warm ups to get the mind and body ready and assigned technical work

Review

Polishing

Work on a new piece

Other (reading, fiddle tunes, orchestra music)

### How to work on a review piece

- 1- Review your lesson notes from when you first learned the piece, so that you remember how your teacher first presented it, the special practice spots and her ideas on how to practice it. It is helpful to have a section in your notebook with notes on each piece so you can find them quickly.
- 2 - Listen to the recording together.
- 3 - Have your child play through the piece to see what shape it is in.
- 4 - Choose something to improve. Get your child's input. The work that day may be just re-learning the notes. If this is the case work the same piece the next day and make a musical improvement.

### How to make an improvement

- 1 - Identify the learning opportunity  
*For example: The 4<sup>th</sup> fingers in Minuet One are out of tune*
- 2 – Simplify  
*Work on matching 4<sup>th</sup> finger 'E' to 'open E'*  
*Check technique – left wrist straight and elbow under the violin*
- 3 - Work a spot until you have success  
*Play measures 5 and 6 and have your child decide if the 4<sup>th</sup> finger is 'in' or 'out' of tune*
- 4 – Repeat correctly many times
- 5 - Put back into context  
*Play the piece again to see if an improvement has been made*