

WHY SLOW PROGRESS IS NOT A SIGN TO GIVE UP

October 10, 2017 - Christine Goodner



You probably signed your child up for lessons excited about what they would learn.

You pictured them playing their instrument with a big smile and steady progress.

You may have observed lessons or group classes and seen children playing music with ease and expected to see your child do the same.

So why is progress going so slow?

Why does it feel like you're having the same lesson over and over again many weeks in a row.

Why does it seem like you're practicing, but nothing is happening?

Here's the thing . . .

Sometimes there are reasons progress is slow that you have total control to change

You may need to listen to the music your child is learning more

You may need to practice more days each week

You may need to be sure that you're practicing in a specific way that helps your child improve their skills.

If you read any of those and thought "that's probably us" – make a plan and start doing them.

Especially with young children, how much your child listens to their recording and how many days a week they practice is dependent on **you** helping make time for it to happen.

I know it's not always easy!

Find one time of day to listen and start building a daily listening habit as a family. Find a time each day to go to the instrument and **do something**, even if it's short on some days – start building the habit of daily practice. In almost every case, when you see an advanced student playing easily and appearing to possess lots of talent and ability, what you are really seeing is years of showing up every day and working at it.

No one waves a magic wand and instantly becomes an advanced musician. This is an undertaking that takes time and lots of practice.

But what if you are doing the things I mentioned above and progress is still slow?

Sometimes despite doing **all the right things** progress is slow anyway.

It can be frustrating for everyone involved.

There are a few things that can cause this to happen and I think it's helpful to understand that they don't mean that anything is wrong.

Often there is a lot of development going on beneath the surface that we can't see and giving up is really a shame when all that is needed is more time and some patience.

In Suzuki ECE we often read a story to the students and parents called The Carrot Seed

In the story, a boy plants the carrot seed and keeps watering and weeding it even though there are no signs that any growth is happening and everyone keeps telling him he might as well give up.

In the end he is rewarded with a huge carrot that finally springs up and that no one could see growing underground.

It's a great metaphor for what we do as Suzuki parents and teachers.

Connections are being made in the brain.

Muscle memory is growing

Fine motor control is developing

Memory and cognitive skills are growing

These are things we can't see on the surface. They are things we can't measure from the outside.

When it seems like nothing is happening and you might as well give up – keep listening, keep practicing, keep going to concerts and watching performers on youtube. Keep encouraging and striving towards improvement.

Below the surface something great is happening. It doesn't matter how fast it grows to the surface – it matters that we stuck with it long enough to let it do so.

Hang in there. Keep doing the things that nurture growth.

If you see there are some things you could do to help things along (like listening and practice mentioned above) add those in to your daily routine so everything that is needed for growth to happen is there.

Trust that over time you will see it happen

Just like we knew it would.