



A unique program with strings attached

Any family with young children can relate to being woken up at 6:00am by a five-year-old, ready to start the day.

What's unique about Zachary's family, is that his household is waking up in the early hours to the sound of Zachary enthusiastically practising the Cello.

The Moriah College Early Learning Suzuki Strings Program is giving students the opportunity to start their instrumental journey from the age of three, and the children and parents are loving every minute!

"It was very exciting to start the Suzuki strings program at our Early Learning Centre last week," says Toby's mum Tracy. "The lesson was very engaging, and the environment created made my son feel confident and enthusiastic about learning. From the very start he was actively involved and felt a sense of achievement. We're both looking forward to the next lesson!"

Music education within a school environment is a hot topic with undeniable scientific research of the benefits to children as advocated by individuals such as the late Richard Gill, legendary conductor, teacher and tireless advocate for music education in Australia. In 2018, Musica Viva together with ABC TV and the Salvation Army launched a major national campaign to promote the importance of music in classrooms. With Guy Sebastian as spokesperson, the program encouraged donations of money and instruments so that every child within all schools can receive the benefit of learning and loving music.

The introduction of a formal Strings program at Moriah College from an Early Learning intake is a Sydney first and builds on the school's established and internationally acclaimed instrumental program in the Primary and High School.

"Starting from the age of three is the best start for children musically, as they build skills during a period of immense growth and development," said Roberta Goot, Moriah's Director of Music and Co-curricular. "Through the Suzuki Program, the children are developing fine motor skills, concentration, discipline, respect and a love of learning. These are skills that are essential for all areas of education."

Suzuki Method educator Tracy Lynch further explains the far-reaching benefits of the Program: "Dr Suzuki's guiding principle was 'Character first, ability second'. Using the same foundation as learning language from birth, the Suzuki Method combines music teaching with a philosophy, which embraces the total development of the child. It nurtures a love of music and the development of character rather than just the mastering of an instrument."

Today there are over 8000 Suzuki teachers worldwide and more than a quarter of a million children learning by the Suzuki Method.

Parents play a crucial role, including attending each lesson, taking notes and guiding children through their practice at home.

“As parents need to be involved in the process, the lessons run very smoothly and everything is explained so clearly,” said Zachary’s mum, Julie, who is also a Music educator. “It encourages and acknowledges how important it is to have a positive relationship and an environment of co-operation between the child, the teacher and the parent.”

As well as individual lessons, students participate in group lessons, which help to develop early ensemble and social skills and encourage playing with confidence, spirit and enthusiasm. As the group lessons are a mix of age groups, they also encourage friendships to be established.

With the introduction of this Suzuki Program, Moriah now offers a full instrumental program from Early Learning through to Year 12 and the students are reaping the benefits.

Most importantly, these young musicians are having bucket-loads of fun!