

International Suzuki Association
Suzuki Early Childhood Education

“For the sake of our children, let us educate them from the cradle to have a noble mind, a high sense of values and splendid ability.” from Nurtured by Love pg. 17by Shinichi Suzuki

MISSION STATEMENT

The Suzuki Early Childhood Education (SECE) program is fundamental to the Suzuki approach. SECE realizes, from before birth, Dr. Suzuki’s belief in the early development of ability and in the unlimited potential of every child.

Through shared, active enjoyment of nursery rhymes, songs and poetry, it supports parents in coming to understand the Suzuki philosophy and provides opportunities for cognitive, socio-emotional, linguistic, physical and creative growth for all children. It offers rich, repeated and varied musical experiences that foster development of both character and skills that lay the foundation for future study. It provides teachers with the knowledge, skills and understanding of ways to work with babies and toddlers, together with parents, in the context of the Suzuki Philosophy and in the application of the principles of the Suzuki Method.

There is mounting conclusive international evidence in reports from scientists, neurologists, pediatricians and researchers, that early childhood is a vital period in children’s learning and development. The results from a study with Suzuki Babies using the SECE curriculum¹ highlight the opportunity that exists in the SECE program to take advantage of the first three years of life.

The Committee’s aim is to promote the development of high quality SECE programs worldwide by sharing a vision and a curriculum structure that can then be taken and realized in the context of regional cultures, languages and values.

Mindful of Dr. Suzuki’s vision of opportunities for all children, SECE seeks to support and enrich the work of all Suzuki Teachers and Trainers in their belief that quality musical education can indeed begin from before birth and should continue from birth through the early childhood years and beyond into the instrumental studio

¹ **Active music classes in infancy enhance musical, communicative and social development** David Gerry, Andrea Unrau and Laurel J. Trainor. Department of Psychology, Neuroscience & Behaviour, McMaster University, Canada.

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DEFINITION OF SUZUKI EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION (SECE)

Suzuki Early Childhood Education is the realization of potential through active and reactive participation in the environment which surrounds a child from birth. It is based on the assumptions:

- every child can learn
- there are no limits to a child's potential

The uniqueness of Suzuki Early Childhood Education is the emphasis on the natural development of the child from birth and the rich and stimulating learning partnerships that are developed with parents and teachers.

The goal is to create an environment for children, free from pressure in which they can gain skills, a sense of purpose in life, an understanding of discipline and an appreciation of beauty.

Based on Suzuki concepts **Thorough Mastery** and **Mother Tongue Approach**, the Suzuki Early Childhood Educator evaluates every learning activity with the following:

- Every child can learn
- Ability develops early
- Environment nurtures growth
- Children learn from one another
- Success breeds success
- Parental involvement is critical
- Encouragement is essential

The SECE classes contain a variety of nursery rhymes, children's songs, playing on simple instruments (such as percussion and Orff instruments), listening to music and other musical and artistic activities.

The SECE class activities work specifically on musical, motor, cognitive, and social skills.

KEY FEATURES OF SECE CLASSES ARE:

- Weekly group classes for children age 0 – 3 with their parent or caregiver, in mixed-age groups
- Team-taught by two teachers (with at least one trained SECE teacher)
- Teachers, children and parents or caregivers all interact actively in all class activities
- The Mother Tongue approach is also reflected in the use of a recording at home
- The preparatory aspect is not instrument-specific
- The classes follow a set lesson structure and a set repertoire according to a Syllabus*.

*Teacher training syllabi have been established for SAA, ESA, and some parts of PPSA. Teacher training has taken place in the ARSA region by trainers from PPSA and SAA. A set repertoire and format of delivery of the SECE curriculum is already widely and successfully used in teaching and training throughout ESA, ARSA and SAA and in parts of PPSA.

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A Generic Example of the SECE Structure

	Activities (Week A/Week B)	Goals
Introduction	Gathering Activity	Arriving in a calm, familiar environment; Listening to beautiful music
	Welcome Song	Social awareness; Comfortable in a group
	Walking to Drumbeat	Awareness of good tone; listening skill, keeping a steady beat
	Up & Down	Awareness and enjoyment of beautiful tone; Listening skills; understanding concept of up and down
Development 1	Variety of Nursery Rhymes, Songs, Finger games and other musical activities	Steady pulse; appreciation of beautiful sound; learning melodies; rhythm; listening skills; language acquisition: social awareness
Creative Section	Moving/Dancing freely	Musical expression and creativity; social awareness; respect for other members and their needs in the group
	Falling thirds - Songs	Listening Skills; beautiful sound; creativity
Development 2	Variety of Nursery Rhymes, Songs, Finger games and other musical activities	Social skills such as sharing; Working together with parent, teacher and other children; Solos, demonstration for others; Counting; Finger plays; Language acquisition; Inner discipline(<i>waiting</i>), concentration (<i>careful listening</i>)
Conclusion	Closing Song with drums	Rhythm skills
	Story time	Concentration; Listening; Imagination; Observation
	Parent Journaling/children reading time	Positive Approach; Careful observation

PROCEDURE FOR NEW CURRICULA

Suzuki teachers interested in starting a new language of the SECE curriculum are advised to contact and work closely with the Regional SECE Committee.

Links to Regional Association websites: ARSA, ESA, PPSA, SAA, TERI