

INTERNATIONAL SUZUKI ASSOCIATION

FRAMEWORK FOR SUZUKI EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

ESTABLISHED BY THE ISA

SUZUKI EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION (SECE) COMMITTEE

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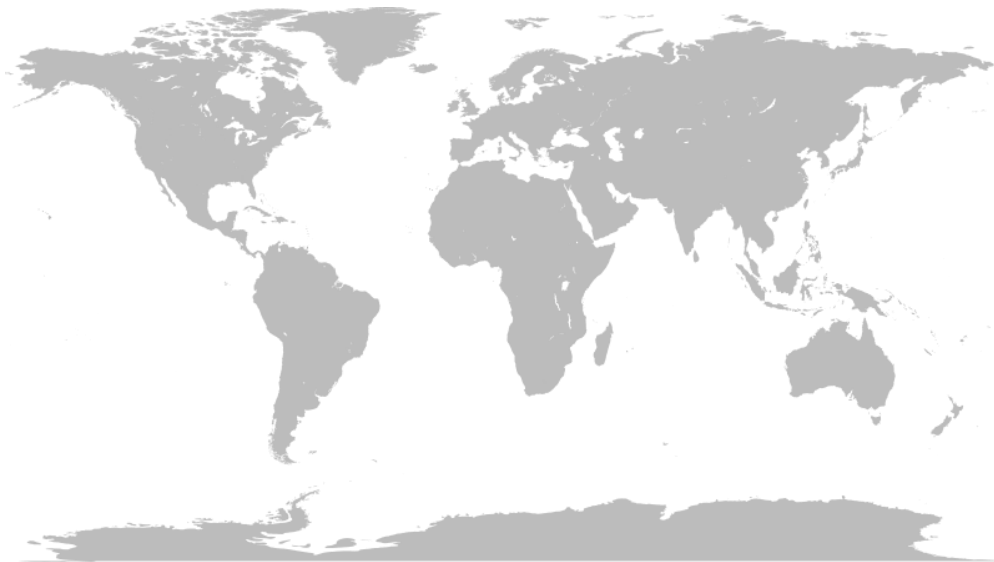
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QUOTE FROM THE WRITINGS OF DR. SHINICHI SUZUKI

“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.”

.....Dr. Shinichi Suzuki

MISSION STATEMENT

The **Suzuki Early Childhood Education (SECE)** program is fundamental to any Suzuki program. It 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 chants, 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 instrumental 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.

This is the world’s first international **Framework for Suzuki ECE Teachers and Teacher Trainers**. It exists in response to 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 Suzuki ECE curriculum¹ highlight the opportunity that exists in the **Suzuki ECE** program to take advantage of the first three years of life.

The aim of this document is to promote the development of quality **Suzuki ECE** 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. It is not intended as a prescriptive document, but rather exists as a guide for Suzuki Trainers and Teachers in the establishment and development of the ISA approved **Suzuki ECE** program in their regions.

Mindful of Dr. Suzuki’s vision of opportunities for all children, this framework 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 See Appendix A - Page 12

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SECE COMMON THREADS

The Common Threads that connect SECE teachers.

- Commitment to the Suzuki Philosophy and the 7 SECE concepts
- Belief that all children can develop amazing ability from before birth and that it depends on how we raise them
- Understanding of the way young children learn and develop given a nurturing environment and parental involvement
- Strong partnerships with parents
- Appreciation of the importance of repetition and encouragement in the development of skills, knowledge and understanding
- Sound understanding of pathways forward into the instrumental studio and beyond to formal schooling
- Respect for ongoing shared reflection with colleagues (both locally, nationally and internationally) to continually improve teaching practices and programs
- Dedication to the establishment and development of excellence in the ISA approved SECE program worldwide

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SECE IN NEW LANGUAGES

Guidelines for adapting the ISA approved SECE program for other cultures and languages²

The goal for all regions of the world is to be united as a Suzuki ECE community and still honour the true meaning of “mother tongue method”.

- There can only be one adapted version for each language in a region.
- Any SECE teacher can use the original English language version, (e.g. International schools)
- This order of the curriculum is mandatory in each region.

Regions must consider the following points in choosing appropriate songs and rhymes:

- Traditional songs and rhymes of the culture
- Good translations of the original English curriculum

Other considerations when selecting elements of the curriculum

- Energetic flow
- Length of each song
- Good quality of lyrics and activity

In the ESA region, each language curriculum will use the English version of “Wee Willie Winkie”

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.

Components of a curriculum

- “Eine Kleine Nachtmusik” will be used for the introduction and ball rolling activity
- The “Good morning song” of the original version can be translated into most languages
- Instruments for the curriculum are to be used as in the original version
- Activities and songs should adhere to the outcomes and goals of the original curriculum

Stories will be selected to highlight the culture of the region

² For the full document “Guideline for adapting the SECE Curriculum within the ESA” contact the European Suzuki Association

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SECE CONCEPTS AND PARENT EDUCATION

The Seven Concepts of SECE

- **Every child can learn**
 - Just as every parent knows that their child will learn and speak their native language fluently, other abilities can be developed
- **Ability develops early**
 - The earlier a child learns the satisfaction that comes with success, the earlier that child can move on to new skill development in any of the domains. (cognitive, affective kinesthetic)
- **Environment nurtures growth**
 - When parents, teachers and adults around the child are supportive and helpful, when they reward the child with positive feedback for efforts they make and when they show acceptance of the small successes that children have, the environment is nurturing and helpful for growth
- **Children learn from one another**
 - All children use their senses for learning and their senses will motivate them to imitate their peers (especially if it looks like fun). They identify readily with children who are a little older and represent a "working" model. They often look to children just a little younger to practise the social skills that they have learned from older children.
- **Success breeds success**
 - Success in any task has some implicit rewards but when the environment provides some social or physical rewards like approval or a hug, the child quickly learns to repeat the effort.
- **Parental involvement is critical**
 - When parents are supportive and actively help children, their accurate feedback helps the process of learning to focus and learning becomes thoroughly mastered. Although a child learns by experience to avoid a hot stove after touching it, the feedback for much learning is more often muted and needs to be supported by an adult
- **Encouragement is essential**
 - The social reward of a supportive parent or adult (or other child) will speed the learning and remove doubt about what constitutes success in a child's learning experience. No encouragement negates the fundamental reward of success in any learning experience. It is possible for the physical environment to provide the reward necessary but if there is no encouragement from any aspect, the learning is not complete.

These are the seven SECE concepts. Parents connect Dr. Suzuki's words with an action or behavior that their own child has just accomplished successfully.

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Parent Education

Over a three year period, parents become excellent observers of not only their own child, but keen observers of the others in the class. Teachers point out positive examples of growth during the class using Dr. Suzuki's words.

There is an implicit belief in the Suzuki Education Method that the parent is critical to the development of their own child. The best way for parents who have just had a new baby to learn how to nurture the child is to participate in a support group where they have the opportunity to learn the best ways to provide an environment for their child to grow. The one hour SECE class each week provides such an atmosphere. Parents begin to understand when a teacher utilizes the comments of Dr. Suzuki in recognizing accomplishment or growth within their child and within the children of other parents in the group.

Over three years of participation in such a group, the parents often express surprise at how much they have learned by watching listening and trying at home so many of the very practical suggestions of the class. The repetition of the Suzuki ECE concepts week after week educates the parent, who is participating with their child, to look for and provide an environment where the concepts can be observed at home as well as in the SECE class. In short, success in providing an environment for their child each week at SECE class leads to success at creating a successful environment at home for establishing habits and attitudes that result in lifelong learning.

Pictures that are frequently changed on a classroom bulletin board reinforce the concepts that are being spoken and observed in SECE classes. Photos of the children posted on a bulletin board in the classroom also serve to explain the concepts. Each parent sees their own child pictured learning and demonstrating one of the concepts.

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SECE FLOW AND BALANCE ANALYSIS AND EXPLANATION

To explain the flow and balance in any language, the sense of the environment should be consistent with the goals of each section of the program. Analyzed this way, the similarities of the program in any language will be obvious to observers familiar with the program. It would be obvious in a class in Swiss German, for example, that the sections of the program were the same overall as the English language curriculum and were achieving the same result.

To analyze the flow and balance of the SECE program, it is helpful to think in terms of 5 main sections.

- **Introduction**
- **Development 1,**
- **Creative section,**
- **Development 2,**
- **Conclusion.**

The **Introduction** section provides a quiet calm beginning, allowing each child and parent to become comfortable and aware of the background music. The activities in the section, while encouraging participation, allow the child to stay close to the parent.

This reliance on the parent continues in the **Development 1** section.

However the dance (**Creative section**) encourages the child to begin moving independently away from the parent while still interacting with their scarves/shakers.

In the **Development 2** section, the children become more confident, often leaving the parent to run to the teacher for a turn and occasionally sharing a solo.

The **Conclusion** draws everyone together for a story and a return to the calm quiet environment as at the beginning of the class. In this three year program, every child develops musical, cognitive, social/emotional, kinesthetic and critical character development skills. Also developed are a readiness for instrumental lessons, sensitivity to others and a love of learning.

Below is the SECE FLOW AND BALANCE CHART with examples taken from the founding program in Suzuki ECE, developed 1985 - 1989 in Ontario, Canada, by Dorothy Jones and Sharon Jones at the request of Dr. Shinichi Suzuki. This was approved by the International Suzuki Association in 1993.

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SECE FLOW AND BALANCE CHART

With examples from the founding program

	Goals of each class	Dynamics	Week 1	Week 2	Week 1	Week 2	Analysis
Introduction	Develops patience (waiting for turn) Learning to be calm The children self-regulate and develop social awareness and confidence	$p < f > p$	Circle Activity		Ball Rolling and Good Morning		See Appendix B Page 13
	Awareness of good tone on drum and listening skill, keeping a steady beat and gradually developing a leadership role		Circle Activity		Drum		
	Enjoy interaction with parents and gain awareness of pitches and the beautiful tone of the instrument		Circle Activity		Up and Down on Glockenspiel		
Development 1	Learning melodies, vocabulary acquisition, social awareness, learning to work together with parent, teacher and other children	$p < mf < f > p$	Nursery rhyme	Nursery rhyme	Little Tommy Tucker	Hickety Pickety	See Appendix C Page 13
			Action Song	Nursery rhyme	Pop Goes the Weasel	Pat-a-cake	
			Story Song	Circle Song	Michael Finnegan	Ring Around the Rosies	
			Nursery Rhyme (solo)	Circle Song	Humpty Dumpty	Muffin Man	
				Nursery Rhyme (solo)		Hickory Dickory Dock	

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Goals of each class	Dynamics	Week 1	Week 2	Week 1	Week 2	Analysis
Creative Vocabulary acquisition, developing social confidence, independence (moving away from parent), learning to work at home with parent, creating their own speech patterns, interactive events between child and parent that encourage working together at home, the opportunity for teachers to observe the parent and child working together, sensitivity and character development (eg. folding scarf and returning to the teacher)	<i>mf < f > mp</i>	Dance	Dance	Scarves	Shakers	See Appendix D Page 13
		Falling thirds on the Xylophone		Falling thirds on the Xylophone		
Development 2 Social skills(sharing), working with parent, solos, demonstrating for others, counting, finger plays, colour recognition, vocabulary acquisition, many interactions between parent and child, inner discipline (waiting), concentration(careful listening)	<i>mf < f – pp - mp</i>	Finger Play	Nursery Rhyme (solos)	Criss-cross	Pease Porridge Hot	See Appendix E Page 14
		Nursery Rhyme	Action Song	Wee Willie Winkie	Eency Weency Spider	
		Song with solos	Story song with actions	Bow Wow Wow	Little White Duck	
		Action Song	Nursery rhyme	Six Little Ducks	Baa Baa Black sheep	
		Circle song with solo	Nursery rhyme with solos	Mulberry Bush	Pussy Cat	
		Nursery rhyme		To Market		

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	Goals of each class	Dynamics	Week 1	Week 2	Week 1	Week 2	Analysis
Conclusion	<p>Focused concentration, inner discipline, emotional self-control, musical expression, counting in many languages, reading readiness ability, character development(helpfulness, sensitivity, listening attentively, patience)</p>	<i>Mf > f - pp - pp</i>	Song with Drums	Nursery rhyme with drums	This Old Man	One Two Tie My Show	<p>See Appendix F</p> <p>Page 14</p>
					Stories		
			<p>Board books for children to read while parents log one positive observation in a journal that is kept for each child in the classroom until graduation.</p>				

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APPENDIX A

Report on Research with Suzuki Babies

Conducted by David Gerry, Andrea Unrau and Laurel J. Trainor

Active music classes in infancy enhance musical, communicative and social development

Background of the research

In 2008 the McMaster Institute for Music and the Mind was awarded a prestigious grant from the Grammy Foundation in the United States to support research in the Suzuki Early Childhood Education Program. The research project was to explore whether the participation of parents and infants, would result in better and lasting perceptual, cognitive and social development. The Foundation highlighted the team of psychologists, neuroscientists, music educators and social workers responsible for the unique research directed at infants whose brains are most plastic, and for involving the parents as learning partners. *(News Release, McMaster University, 2008)*

Relevance to Suzuki ECE

This research, conducted by David Gerry (PhD in Music Cognition) together with Professor Laurel Trainor at the McMaster Institute for Music and the Mind (Dept. of Psychology, Neuroscience and Behavior) in Hamilton, Ontario, included evidence from children and parents participating in 6 months of weekly classes following the Baby/Toddler curriculum of Suzuki Early Childhood Music.

Results

The results were published in the *Journal of Developmental Science* 15:3 (2012), pp. 398-407. Findings have shown the interactive musical experiences of the classes to bring about positive outcomes such as facilitating 'cognitive development in the form of earlier use of pre-linguistic communicative gestures', social development, preference for western tonality, and lower stress levels 'when confronted with novel stimuli.'

David Gerry has stated that all the results are directly attributable to the program of Suzuki Early Childhood Education organized for this study and taught by Sharon Jones a co-founder of the program and her partner teacher. The features of SECE include the amount of repetition, the directed and continuous attention provided through active teacher/parent participation, and the clear structure of a small, defined repertoire of lullabies, action songs and nursery rhymes followed in each SECE class. A control musical group that did not receive the same program was used for comparison.

Conclusion

This study shows that by attending this Suzuki ECE program, parents are ensuring that their child is receiving the kinds of experiences that are incredibly helpful to development in the first 3 years of life when the brain is so open to learning. The program provides meaningful opportunities for learning through rich and structured musical experiences together with a parent which children need to grow. As Dr. Suzuki put it, it develops a noble human being with sensitivity, discipline and endurance.

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APPENDIX B

The first activity in any language can be the gathering activity with (Eine Kleine Nacht Musik by Mozart playing in the background) – ball rolling as students and parents enter. Infants, very early, recognize this piece and consider it "their Mozart". This is followed by a simple tune using the words of "Good Morning" in any language accompanied by a handshake – teachers first shaking the hand of the parent and then the child. Ultimately the children look forward to and enjoy greeting each other in this way. The song is followed by a circle activity that utilizes a drum and the game of "freeze" which is enjoyed by children and parents as the child eventually develops the skill to control the "freeze" and pace of the marching in the circle. This game is universal and needs no special interpretation for any culture or language. Listening to the glockenspiel, children participate in the up and down with a parent and listen for the ringing tone of this instrument.

APPENDIX C

The first development section begins the process of vocabulary acquisition and actions that are fun for parents to do with their own children in the class, and individually at home. With consistent listening to the SECE recording at home, the child will learn the words and phrasing of the rhymes and enjoy "playing" with a parent as they learn and develop skills. The parent begins to understand the true value of this quality time with their child as they recognize the development of their own and other children in the group. The sequence continues with a song that involves physical activity where children are lifted, hugged or everyone jumps or hops on a particular word. Children and parents learn the rhythm, melody, and timing of music and vocabulary mixed in simple tunes. The story song with many verses is more difficult for the children to learn but the actions in the song are self-explanatory and assist in learning the form and words. This presents the biggest challenge for the development #1 section of the program. The sequence continues with an inner memory, quieter game/rhyme in which the child can anticipate the rhyme when listening to just the rhythm.

APPENDIX D

During the dance with scarves or alternately with shakers, the children and parents are encouraged to move freely around the room with their scarf in an interpretive fashion. This is another opportunity for regular and repeated listening while engaging with a parent in creative whole body movement in class, and later at home. After this more active individual activity, children and parents find a place in the circle to listen to the beautiful sounds of the xylophone which they anticipate being able to play. The words are the music for children. Creative speech patterns on the descending minor third melody are accompanied by the instrument. All others in the room keep the beat on the knees. Children and parents are encouraged to create their own speech patterns at home and then share them in class.

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APPENDIX E

The Development 2 section emphasizes the interplay between parent and child. These interactions involve counting using the fingers to represent counting thus developing the connections in the brain between numbers, objects (ducks, spider legs) and numerals. Several of the songs and rhymes in this section offer opportunities for solos. Parents and children develop the ability and confidence to insert a solo rhythmically within a song or rhyme.

APPENDIX F

The conclusion centers on the only activity that uses an instrument for every child (the drum) in which the children get a chance to express themselves by accompanying the final song/rhyme of the day. This activity concludes each time with stacking and counting the drums. As confidence develops, the children leave the parents to count the drums with the teacher. Children enjoy hearing and counting in other languages and are proud to hear the language of their parent. The hour ends with at least one story. Occasionally there is a guest performance or if the mood is appropriate, a lullaby is sung by the teachers and parents. The children then read small board books while the parents write observations of their own child in a journal. The "children's Mozart music" is again played quietly in the background. Teachers circulate to discuss positive observations of each individual child with that child's parent.