



A Child's Journey Begins...

SMITHSONIAN EARLY ENRICHMENT CENTER



Smithsonian Institution

SEEC ... A Model Program



Nestled in the nation's capital in the richest museum complex in the world is the Smithsonian Early Enrichment Center, a model early childhood program that places children at the center of every experience. The vast collections are the foundation for the culturally diverse curriculum which offers a rare opportunity for learning.

A Museum-Based Experience

The museum community

is an integral part of SEEC's educational program. "Museum Magic," an innovative curriculum that focuses on learning through collections and exhibits, is based on themes that explore topics such as real and pretend, ecology, transportation, buildings, and architecture. Each unit offers global concepts followed by suggestions for related classroom, community, and museum-based activities. The concepts are expanded beyond exhibitions to include personal treasures from children and staff.

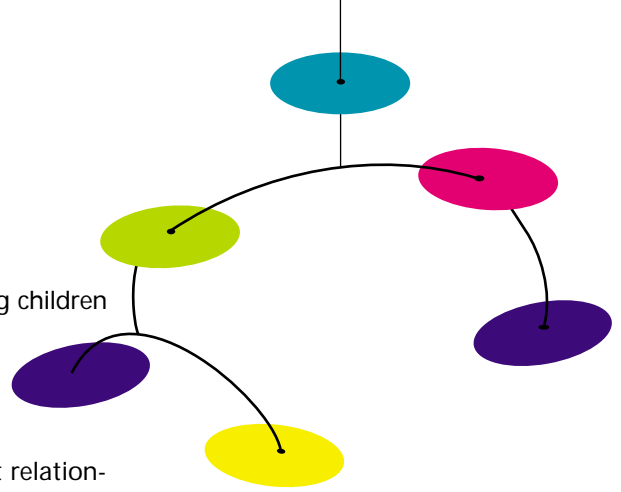
Children are natural scientists, eager to explore and learn about their world. Museums and gardens offer multiple venues that encourage children to observe, explore, classify, predict, and experiment as they develop formative scientific concepts. A visit to the Insect Zoo provides an "up close and personal" look at some of the smaller creatures that share our environment.

By visiting the Butterfly Garden adjacent to the Natural History

Museum, our young children engage in multi-sensory activities that teach about the interdependent relationships so important in our world. Learning is exciting when children see themselves as scientific investigators.

Artists as people, artistic techniques and styles, and works of art enrich the preschool and kindergarten experience. Children are introduced to Faith Ringgold and her beautiful quilt-like creations during a unit on clothing. They come to know Alexander Calder as their friend "Sandy" when they explore mobiles and stabiles and the relationships of these works of art to the concept of balance. They see nature from a new perspective when introduced to Georgia O'Keeffe during a unit on ecology. The children explore creative movement as a means of communication and become dancers for a moment when viewing Degas' sculpture of the Little Dancer.

Children at SEEC learn about their world through the richness of the arts.



Children learn by building upon past knowledge and experience. Teachers help young children make meaningful connections between objects that are familiar and unknown objects. In a visit to the Sackler Gallery during a study of clothing, SEEC children see padukahs, sandals worn by clerics in ancient India. The padukahs, an unfamiliar museum artifact, become familiar when compared to shoes that the children wear. In a visit to the National Museum of African Art, students view a ceremonial crown and compare this unknown article of clothing with other types of crowns and hats worn for special occasions. The children then thread beads in the classroom to develop an appreciation for the intricate and time-consuming task of creating the beaded ceremonial crown.



A Community of Partnerships

Community is the essence of the Smithsonian Early Enrichment Center... parents and staff working together to create an environment that will inspire and nurture the growth of young children. All families are welcome members of the SEEC community. Our cultural and ethnic diversity enriches

the experience for children, parents, and staff.

SEEC works in partnership with the Smithsonian Institution and its many talented professionals, sharing the wonders of the world through their expertise as well as the rich resources of the Smithsonian collections.

Partnerships go beyond the walls of the Smithsonian and include a diverse group of individuals and organizations. SEEC collaborates with museums, schools, professional organizations, and universities to share knowledge about museum-based education for the very young.



Sharing the Model

As a model program in museum-based education for young children, the Smithsonian Early Enrichment Center provides leadership within the educational community and extends its expertise through national seminars, conferences, curriculum licensing, and consulting. SEEC supports initiatives that help establish programs for young children that link schools and museums within communities. Museums and

schools profit from the guidance of experienced SEEC professionals as they work to create innovative programs for young children that reflect the specific needs of the community.

SEEC's premier training seminar, "Learning Through Objects: Museums and Young Children," is designed to help museum educators forge more creative encounters with young

museum-goers and to introduce early childhood professionals to the magic of museums. Through visits to galleries and classroom discussions, new strategies are introduced that make museum education a reality for educators. Through a variety of programs, SEEC shares its expertise with the broader educational community.





Complementary to the rich museum environment, SEEC's educational philosophy encourages respect for the child and recognizes the unique nature of the individual. Hands-on exploration and discovery, both in the classroom and the museum, offer a chance to construct knowledge from personal experience. Through the comprehensive collections housed in the Washington community, children develop an understanding of the diverse nature of the world. For a young child, learning is a part of each and every moment of every day. Children learn about social relationships and about new ideas. At SEEC, professional staff nurture, encourage, guide, and support the child on his personal journey of learning. Dedication to young children is visible in all aspects of SEEC,

from classroom activities to meaningful relationships. Just as the Smithsonian Institution is known for its commitment to excellence, so is the Smithsonian Early Enrichment Center. SEEC is a leader in the early childhood field and has developed educational strategies that support learning through objects. Through a series of seminars, SEEC shares its innovative practices emphasizing the power of teaching through objects and works of art. Early childhood educators learn how to enrich their programs through cultural institutions within their communities. Museum professionals expand their expertise to use objects and collections more effectively with young children.



The Early Years of Learning



In recent years, researchers have discovered what early childhood educators have known for a long time ... that the early years of life are the most critical for learning. We now know that brain development is directly related to early experience, and we understand that any learning which is sensory in nature promotes optimal growth and development. SEEC recognizes this critical period for young children and emphasizes interactive, multi-sensory learning in everyday activities. SEEC's teachers encourage exploration and discovery, placing objects and works of art at the center of a child's day. Integrating the rich resources of the community into the curriculum enhances learning.

Mission Statement

The mission of the Smithsonian Early Enrichment Center (SEEC) is two-fold: to provide a model, high-quality educational program for young children, and to advance educational opportunities for all children by sharing SEEC's expertise on a national level, thereby furthering the educational mandate of the Smithsonian Institution.

SEEC is an educational program with multiple sites, located directly within the Smithsonian museum complex. SEEC serves children between the ages of 3 months and 6 years of age through its child development center, preschool program, and kindergarten.

The Smithsonian Early Enrichment Center is a 501(c)3, non-profit organization governed by an independent Board of Directors in the District of Columbia. The Smithsonian Institution provides space, utilities, and limited administrative services.

The SEEC program is dedicated to a multicultural approach to education and does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, creed, sex, or national origin.

For further information, please contact:

**Smithsonian Early Enrichment Center
National Museum of Natural History**

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Tuition & Fees 2004-2005

- ***Weekly Tuition Rates***

Infants	\$275	Threes	\$215
Toddlers	\$260	Fours	\$215
Twos	\$235	Kindergarten	\$250

- ***Tuition***

Tuition is paid bi-weekly; a payment schedule is provided to parents each school year. Scholarship applications are available.

- ***Registration Fee***

The registration fee is a nonrefundable fee of \$100. The initial Application Fee is \$25.

- ***Emergency Drop-In Fee***

The emergency drop-in fee is \$55/Day for Smithsonian employees' children, \$65/Day for Non-Smithsonians. These rates also apply to part-time SEEC children when adding days. Drop-in days are possible for children older than two, and are scheduled at the discretion of the site Director.

- ***Activity/Materials Fee***

The activity/materials fee is an annual fee supporting additional activities such as Discovery Theater, Vision/Hearing Screening, Skills Testing, Transportation Costs, and Materials/ Equipment Replacement, membership in the SEEC Parents' Association, and special events.

Infants	\$50	Threes	\$210
Toddlers	\$60	Fours	\$230
Twos	\$150	Kindergarten	\$240

- ***Non-Smithsonian Fee***

The non-Smithsonian fee is \$1500 per child per year, and is paid by all parents who are not employees of the Smithsonian Institution. This fee acknowledges the generous support given to SEEC by the Smithsonian as an intended benefit to their employees.

Scholarship Program

“Without the scholarship, we simply would not have been able to afford a quality program like SEEC ... When I see my children playing with other children that are different, it is like a dream come true.”

A Scholarship Parent

The Smithsonian Early Enrichment Center embraces all children equally. Recognizing that many families have financial limitations, SEEC established a scholarship program to assist families with identified need and continues to build upon these funds yearly.

- The Scholarship Fund is open to all families offered enrollment in the SEEC program.
- Scholarships are based upon the financial need of the family.
- Factors that contribute to determining the amount of scholarship awarded:
 - Family income (includes both parents, even if not married)
 - Place of employment
 - Grade level
 - Total assets and liabilities (savings, property, debt)
- A family can apply for scholarship at the time a space is offered to their child. Applications are available from any of the SEEC offices and must be completed for consideration of financial aid.
- Applying for scholarship does not guarantee an award.
- An independent organization, School and Student Service for Financial Aid (SSS), provides guidance for determining scholarship awards.
- All information is confidential.
- Applicants must submit a new application each year to participate in the scholarship program.
- Parents are notified of the scholarship award before a final commitment to the program is required by SEEC.

Scholarship Contributions

The Smithsonian Early Enrichment Center welcomes contributions to the Scholarship Fund at any time. SEEC is responsible for raising funds to support all awards. We strongly encourage every family, including those receiving awards, to participate in SEEC events specified to raise money for the scholarship program.

Parents' Association

Caring and involved parents constantly work to provide the best for their children. SEEC strives to build a foundation for future learning by putting students at the center of every experience. Part of this effort includes creating an atmosphere in which everyone feels welcome and offering opportunities for the entire SEEC family to contribute to the program's success. Some of these opportunities come through the SEEC Parents' Association.

The mission of the Parents' Association is to support SEEC by providing organizational support, coordinating classroom and field trip volunteers, conducting fundraising activities, and facilitating communication. Four elected officers - President, President Elect, Secretary, and Treasurer - provide leadership to the Association; the President, President Elect, and Past President also serve as members of the SEEC Board of Directors.

The SEEC Lending Library and the Sally Foster wrapping paper drive are two examples of activities coordinated by the Parents' Association each year. The Parents' Association also organizes "Classroom Coordinators" who serve in the role of liaison by connecting teachers and parents. They coordinate volunteer activities in their respective classrooms, assist with teacher appreciation events, and provide support for fundraising initiatives.

SEEC's Benefit Auction is the main fundraising activity conducted by the Parents' Association and the single most important source of income for the scholarship program. First held in 1994, it consists of both a silent auction and live auction, and is held each spring in one of the Smithsonian museums. It features unique behind-the-scenes events and activities at the Smithsonian, such as curator-led exhibit or collection tours; tickets to preview receptions and Smithsonian events; lunches with senior officials and museum directors; and special tours of behind-the-scenes areas.

▪ *Membership*

Every parent of a child enrolled in the Smithsonian Early Enrichment Center is automatically a member of the Parents' Association and is invited to take an active role in the organization. Opportunities for participation abound and range from nap watching in classrooms while teachers attend meetings to leadership roles within the organization. In addition to the Parents' Association officers, individuals are welcome to run for open board positions during the June election.

Educational Outreach

- ***Seminars***

The Smithsonian Early Enrichment Center offers innovative training programs for early childhood and museum professionals interested in using objects and works of art to teach young children.

Learning Through Objects . . . Museums and Young Children is a two-day program that features discussion based upon a theoretical framework and practical application of those ideas in museum experiences. Educators learn how to create museum visits that link objects, children's literature, and works of art in meaningful context for the young child. Participants are encouraged to think expansively and recognize possible cultural resources within their own communities.

Children are natural born collectors. In *Creating Collections with Young Children*, educators examine how collecting and collections contribute to a child's understanding of his world. This one-day seminar highlights the role of collections in helping children develop sorting, classification, focused observation, and analytic skills, and further suggests how creating collections can support meaningful learning in the classroom.

- ***Consulting***

Educational experts in museum-based education for young children share their knowledge through consulting. Museums interested in creating programs for young children often recognize the need for professional expertise in this field since early childhood education is a path not frequently traveled by most museum professionals. Schools interested in arts-based teaching that emphasizes the use of cultural institutions such as museums seek guidance in linking the world of early childhood with the world of museums. As a veteran in this field, SEEC offers a sound approach to the development of new programs linking museums and young children. Costs are determined by the scope of the project.

- ***Licensing of Curriculum***

Museum Magic is a unique museum-based curriculum that serves as the foundation for the SEEC program. Through licensing, *Museum Magic* can offer a framework for museums or schools developing a new object-based or arts-based program for young children. It is also possible for SEEC to design resource materials to support a new educational initiative.

Development

SEEC engages in a variety of development activities aimed at strengthening the program through corporate, foundation, and individual giving. The funds help enrich the museum-based curriculum and program; increase staff salaries and benefits; build the scholarship endowment; and provide additional income for educational outreach and special projects.

- ***Individual Giving***

Unrestricted funds from individual donors are raised primarily through the yearly Annual Giving campaign, which seeks support from our community of parents, alumni families, teachers and staff, grandparents, and other supporters, and the Combined Federal Campaign (CFC). Since 1989, SEEC has participated in CFC, which allows Smithsonian employees and workers from other Federal agencies to make contributions to SEEC through payroll deduction. SEEC's CFC # is 7428. Over \$150,000 has been donated to SEEC from the Combined Federal Campaign.

- ***Scholarship Fund***

SEEC conducts various fundraising activities each year to garner financial support for the scholarship program. The annual SEEC Benefit Auction is the primary fundraiser and largest single source of income for scholarship. First held in 1994, the Auction now attracts close to 400 guests and raises approximately \$40,000 each year. In-kind donations of goods and services from Smithsonian museums and offices, as well as sponsorship from corporations, minimize costs, which ultimately leads to an increase in funds for the scholarship program.

Other fundraising initiatives are being developed in order to increase general scholarship and an endowment. This endowment, established in 2001 by Smithsonian Secretary Lawrence M. Small with the transfer of \$100,000 in Trust funds to SEEC, provides tuition assistance for children of Smithsonian employees who hold positions no higher than the GS grade 8 level or equivalent.

- ***Foundation and Corporate Support***

The Smithsonian Early Enrichment Center seeks financial support for the scholarship program, as well as for educational outreach activities and special projects, through grant proposals to foundations and corporations. Grants to SEEC support a range of initiatives, including scholarships for professional training for Washington area teachers serving low-income families.

Admissions & Enrollment

Enrollment in the SEEC program is based upon an annual lottery process that includes consideration of factors such as parent's place of employment, child's birth date, and sibling status. Each March, enrollment is determined for the upcoming fall through a weighted lottery process. If a vacancy occurs during the year, a child will be selected from the remaining applications, always giving priority to Smithsonian staff members.

Enrollment on a part-time basis is an option for older children. Parents may contract for specific days of the week, and tuition is pro-rated. The Executive Director must approve all requests for part-time enrollment.

Applications are available through any SEEC center and should be returned to SEEC along with the application fee (based on a sliding scale). A scholarship program is available. Application does not guarantee enrollment.

For questions concerning enrollment, contact Sharon Shaffer, Executive Director, at (202) 357-3077.

Daily Operations

The SEEC program is open year round from 7:30 am to 6:00 pm with the exception of a two-week closure prior to Labor Day. The center is also closed on Federal Holidays. A calendar of specific meeting dates and special events is distributed yearly to parents. Lunch and snacks are provided daily for all children except infants who are still restricted to baby food. Nursing mothers are welcome in the infant program. Parents supply diapers for infants and toddlers, and are responsible for providing food in cases of medical restrictions. To be enrolled in the preschool program, children must be potty-trained.

Along with daily museum excursions, children enjoy SEEC's outdoor play spaces morning and afternoon. Parents are invited to participate whenever possible.