



# Smithsonian Institution

Smithsonian Early Enrichment Center

Welcome ...

The Smithsonian Early Enrichment Center (SEEC) offers a rich learning environment for children, parents, and teachers in our community and at the same time extends its innovative practices to professionals in schools and museums through an educational outreach program. For those of us who enjoy learning new ideas through the wonders of museums, SEEC is an exciting experience.

Today SEEC is recognized broadly for its pioneering efforts in museum learning. Over the past 16 years, educators at the Smithsonian Early Enrichment Center have engaged students in meaningful museum experiences based upon educational strategies and techniques that work effectively for children in their formative years. As an organization, SEEC continues to grow as a leader in the field of museum-based education and influences practice within museums and schools. Our educators apply best practice recognized in the early childhood field and enrich children's learning through an object-based approach to teaching. Museum education initiatives within the program build on the practice established within the SEEC model, blending theory and practice as a basis for consulting and professional development.

Educators from around the world continue to demonstrate an interest in the SEEC philosophy, evidenced by the many requests for tours by individuals, museums, and schools. Recently, a delegation from the National Committee on United States – China Relations visited SEEC to learn about our innovative educational program. Educators representing the Ministry of Education, universities, and schools expressed interest in SEEC's use of the museums and the emphasis on art in the curriculum.

The children at SEEC continue to learn about their world in an educational setting that is unparalleled. They are introduced to new ideas through personal conversations with scientists, artists, and cultural historians who share their passion for learning in concrete, engaging ways. SEEC children learn about the era of dinosaurs through personal encounters with paleontologists where they are able to see the tools used to examine the past. Kindergartners become 'scientists' in a visit to the Smithsonian Environmental Research Center where they explore nature intimately, make observations, test hypotheses, and discuss ideas with an entomologist. Throughout the year, SEEC children become familiar with people and cultures from around the world through the wondrous collections on the Mall.

For me, it is exciting to see the impact that museums have in the lives of our nation's youngest learners. Not only are children exposed to art, history, and science of their own culture, but they also are able to gain an understanding of our global society. I encourage you to explore our website to learn more about the SEEC program and take advantage of the many opportunities that we offer parents and educators. I hope that each of you will feel the passion and excitement of learning that SEEC embraces.

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