



# Circle of Education Overview

The Circle of Education is a new musical system for early learning. The Circle of Education was designed to prepare children of preschool age for the fundamentals of what they will be exposed to in kindergarten. Eighteen specialized songs have been developed in conjunction with a research study at San Diego State University (SDSU) to expose young children, through music, to behaviors and knowledge that they will need to succeed in kindergarten.

Dr. Shulamit Ritblatt, Associate Professor, Child & Family Development Department, is spearheading the project at SDSU. A two-year research project is under way which will test several preschool classes; some implementing the new Circle of Education music and some test groups without, to see if the music helps the children be more prepared and thus adapt easier to kindergarten. On the first day of each semester, parents will be given a Baby Genius Circle of Education compact disc and song book to learn and sing together with their preschooler. We feel that this music will not only be a great tool for the children, but it will also empower parents to help their children. As a parent, it's always very difficult to find preschool preparation materials to help your little one. The Circle of Education music will provide this from the first day of preschool.

The concept is based on the fact that music can be a great learning aid in helping people of all ages recall things. We all have memories that are triggered by a song from our past. The Circle of Education music is based on that same theory. Each song has been developed to introduce little ones to concepts that will be some of the most important first lessons they will ever learn.

When children arrive at kindergarten, if they are not mentally and emotionally prepared, it can lead to confidence problems early on. This must be avoided at all cost, as confidence in small children is extremely important. We, as parents and educators, must encourage and boost the confidence of our most precious assets, our children. The Circle of Education music will facilitate the transition from preschool to kindergarten.

## **How did this concept come together?**

Ten years ago, I was honored to have the opportunity to develop a brand with three partners called Baby Genius. We based the brand on the fact that music has a tremendous impact on all people, particularly children. Our original tag line back then and still today is "Music Makes a Difference". We began with four CDs and then an award-winning DVD series that introduces children to numbers, letters and the world around them with great music and beautiful images. Books and toys were soon developed all based on the same principal "Music Makes a Difference".

When my daughter was born seven and half years ago, everything changed for me personally and professionally. I immediately began to write songs to express my love for her. Songs that I thought would be good ways to teach her things, such as counting and spelling her name. When she went to preschool, I taught every week. When she went to kindergarten, I taught every week. Now she is in first grade, and I still teach every week. What I found amazing was the number of children that simply were not prepared with the basic fundamentals. Every parent wants to do the very best for their children but simply don't know how.

Then it hit me. I call it an epiphany. I thought if I could create specialized music that could help kids start the Circle of their education, it might just change the way people are educated. With the help of one of my partners, I was introduced to Dr. Stephen Weber, President of San Diego State University. I told him my idea, and he was intrigued. We set up another meeting with Joe B. Shapiro, Dean, College of Extended Studies and Ric A. Hovda, Dean, College of Education. Again, I explained my concept and asked if they would join me in my quest to change how we teach little ones. After several more meetings and a few demo tracks to illustrate exactly what I wanted to do, Dean Hovda introduced me to Dr. Shulamit Ritblatt. At first, Dr. Ritblatt was not sure, but after several more meetings we began to lay out the plan. She became so excited that we applied for two research grants for the study.

## **Making the music**

Once we agreed on the song content, my team and I wrote some of the best, most inspired music in any of our lives. When we started to make the music, it occurred to us, as we all have kids, that we should create these songs into a new format. The songs would be short very, very catchy tunes. Kids could easily remember the lyrics after just a few listens. We call it the Jingle Concept. The idea was to keep each song short; every song is less than two minutes.

## **The best part of the story**

When this great country was founded, people did things because they needed to be done. The government was made up of pioneers that fought for the future. The time has come again when private sector companies need to take a stand for our most precious asset, our children, and give them every chance to succeed to their fullest potential. This music is the culmination of everything I have learned in my 45 years, and I want to make sure that every child of preschool age has the opportunity to at least be exposed to the things that they will need to be successful in kindergarten.

We will give an 18 song, free download starting in June during a national press campaign to anyone who visits our website, [www.babygenius.com](http://www.babygenius.com). In this world of uncertainty, we must do everything we can to help each and every child be the very best they can be. The Circle of Education will help start children on the most important journey of their lives, their education!