

Introduction to Reggio

OUR NEIGHBORHOOD CHILD DEVELOPMENT CENTER

September 21, 2017



What is Reggio Emilia

- A city in Italy that revolutionized the way we think about early education.
- The community came together after World War II, and built schools for children under 6.
- Loris Malaguzzi, founding teacher and Pedagogista (curriculum director/program director).

Principles of Reggio Emilia

- Holding a strong image of children as competent learners in mind.
- Valuing and respecting children's rights.
- Deep exploration based on children's interest.
- Community and family involvement.
- Viewing children's play as research.
- Teachers as researchers seeking to understand children's learning.
- Aesthetically pleasing, and thoughtfully designed environments.
- Supporting children to express many languages (especially artist languages).
- Deepening understanding through documentation of learning.
- Intentional teaching based on deep observation.
- Learning through relationships with others.
- Attention to nature and its role in our lives.
- Professional and well supported teachers committed to lifelong learning.
- Intentional material choice, including a plethora of natural, recycled, and open ended materials.
- Authentic assessment through documentation.

Reggio Emilia in the United States

As word of the schools of Reggio Emilia spread, teachers from around the world flocked to the city of Reggio Emilia to see these new programs. The schools of Reggio Emilia set up study tours to engage with teachers, and open up a dialogue regarding this new approach to education. Educators returned to their classrooms inspired by the work being done in the schools of Reggio Emilia. Teachers began adopting many of the principles of what came to be known as the Reggio Approach.

Resources for Further Study

North American Reggio Emilia Alliance, NAREA, online at:
reggioalliance.org

Reggio Children online at: Reggiochildren.it

Books by Margie Carter and Deb Curtis

*HUNDRED LANGUAGES OF CHILDREN by Carolyn Edwards,
Lella Gandini, and George Forman*

*WORKING THE REGGIO WAY – BRINGING REGGIO EMILIA
HOME – TWELVE BEST PRACTICES FOR EARLY CHILDHOOD
EDUCATION – VISIBLE LEARNERS – WE ARE ALL EXPLORERS*

The Hundred Languages

The child is made of one hundred.
The child has
a hundred languages
a hundred hands
a hundred thoughts
a hundred ways of thinking
of playing, of speaking.

A hundred.

Always a hundred
ways of listening
of marveling, of loving
a hundred joys
for singing and understanding
a hundred worlds
to discover
a hundred worlds
to invent
a hundred worlds
to dream.

The child has
a hundred languages
(and a hundred hundred hundred more)
but they steal ninety-nine.
The school and the culture
separate the head from the body.
They tell the child:
to think without hands
to do without head
to listen and not to speak
to understand without joy
to love and to marvel
only at Easter and at Christmas.

They tell the child:
to discover the world already there
and of the hundred
they steal ninety-nine.

They tell the child:
that work and play
reality and fantasy
science and imagination
sky and earth
reason and dream
are things
that do not belong together.

And thus they tell the child
that the hundred is not there.
The child says:
No way. The hundred is there.

-Loris Malaguzzi
Founder of the Reggio Emilia Approach

Is Our Neighborhood really Reggio?

You can't actually "BE" Reggio. We are inspired by their schools, their work, and their principles. We have adapted parts of that inspiration into the shaping of our own program. Reggio is not a curriculum box that can be pulled out and applied. The principles of the Reggio Approach can be adopted by programs, studied, and adapted to each programs cultural context. This is a process of learning and growing; it is a way of thinking that takes time to embrace and reflect upon.

You may encounter teachers and programs that say they 'do Reggio.' Likely, they are inspired by the work of the Reggio schools, but have not yet developed a deep understanding of the principles of the Reggio approach. Each teacher and each school will be at their own point in the process of becoming an intentional reflective teacher.

Some programs will clearly show deep documentation of learning. Other programs may have a concrete understanding of constructing knowledge through respectful and reciprocal relationships with children and families. Yet more programs will have a deep understanding of using natural and recycled materials to support diverse means of expression. Each Reggio inspired program is at their own place in the process of revolutionizing the way we think about early education.

Projects Not Themes

One thing that is commonly confused is projects and themes.

Projects

Themes

In a project the topic, timeframe, and resources come from the children, families, teachers, and community.	In a theme the topic, time, and resources come from the teachers or administrator.
In a project activities are designed to promote investigation, to answer questions from children or teachers, and to learn how to learn. Representations are created to deepen learning, add to investigation, and help children show their learning.	In a theme activities are planned to learn concepts and representations are designed to create a product.

Jargon from Reggio

Pedagogista – Similar to a director or a curriculum director.

Atelier – Art studio

Mini Atelier – Art space in a classroom, preferably not to be cleaned up each time to allow for long projects.

Atelierista – Specially trained visual arts teacher.

Piazza – Central gathering or living room space, like a gross motor gym space, but cozier.