

Intro to  
**The  
Reggio  
Emilia  
Approach**

The History, Key Aspects, and Power of  
the Reggio Emilia Philosophy



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# Reggio Emilia, Italy and Loris Malaguzzi

- Developed in the 1940's, post-WW2, in Reggio Emilia, Italy
- Born from the town, and cultivated by Loris Malaguzzi
- Took off throughout Europe, the US, and the rest of the world in decades to follow

## Key Aspects of the Reggio Emilia Approach

- Child at the Center of Learning
- Open Ended Materials - *Loose Parts*
- Project Based Learning
- The Learning Environment
- Documentation
- Embracing Community
- Teacher as a Learner





# The Child at the Center of Learning

*"Stand aside for a while and leave room for learning, observe carefully what children do, and then, if you have understood well, perhaps teaching will be different from before."*

- Loris Malaguzzi

- Children are seen as **competent**, full of wonder and intelligence. Children are seen as **capable** of constructing their own knowledge.

- **Hundred Languages**

- A metaphor for all the different ways that children express themselves, both verbally and nonverbally, and the ways in which they navigate the world and learn.

- **Emergent Curriculum**

- A curriculum that is designed per the unfolding development, learning, and interests of the children





# Open Ended Materials - *Loose Parts*

*“What children learn does not follow as an automatic result from what is taught, rather, it is in large part due to the children’s own doing, as a consequence of their activities and our resources.”*

—Loris Malaguzzi

- ***What are loose parts?*** Natural materials, up-cycled pieces (tin, wood, plastic), blocks, legos, pieces of fabric...
- ***Why use loose parts?***
  - Child-led, open-ended, and unstructured play unveils the hundred languages, and allows us to observe the development and learning that is taking place.
  - Benefit to emotional-wellbeing and all domains of development





# What is a Provocation?

A provocation is an arrangement of materials that are meant to provoke curiosity engagement, and discovery.





# The Atelier

The Atelier, or workshop, is a space dedicated to open-ended materials, offering opportunities for exploration, discovery, creativity and innovation.





# Project Based Learning

- Long-term, collaborative investigations
- Follows the children's interest and learning needs
- Allows for deeper understanding of concepts + more **skills** acquired





# The Learning Environment

*The environment is the third teacher.*

- Prioritizes well-being
  - Neutral, warm, reduced sensory overload
- Reflects the learners
  - Designed to fit the children's needs
  - Driven by Documentation
- Reflects the community
  - Family wall
  - Reflections of the greater community in the environment.





# Documentation

- Take observational notes!
  - Use observational tools, note-taking tools, assessment tools to document what you witness throughout the day
- Use your findings to guide your practice, including your classroom set-up.
- Reflect the learning back; Celebrate the learning!
  - Display recorded dialogue and images of the children at work, as well as their pieces of art and projects. The documentation highlights authentic experiences, while informing the Children, parents, and community



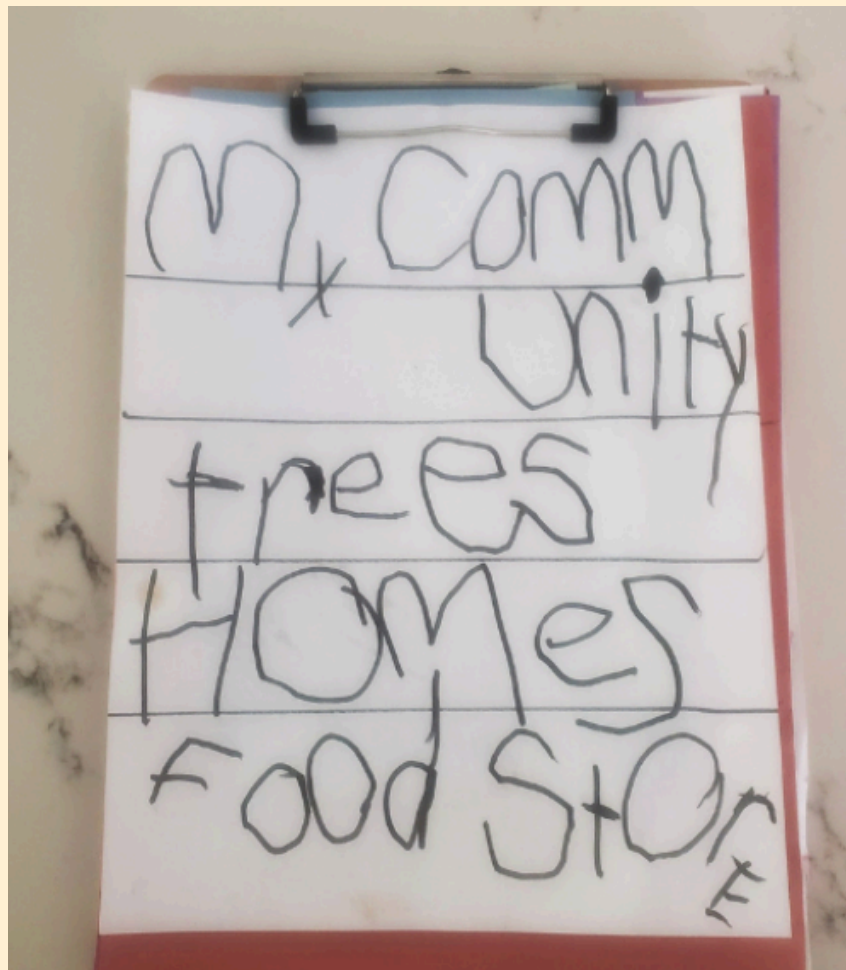
*The Hundred Languages of Children Exhibition, Reggio Emilia, Italy, 1987*





# Embracing People and Places Within a Community

- Emphasize collaboration between the school, families and children, and the greater community. Prioritize communication with families so their insights on their own children can guide practice, so we can be culturally responsive, and so we can work in a partnership.
- Allow the child to learn from the environment and community that is around them. Give time and space for the children to investigate and reflect on the environment around them: their neighborhood and community. What do they observe? Who do they see? What do they wonder? What can they learn from it? What can they contribute? They have a role in this place and society!





# Teachers, Educators as Learners

- We learn with the children, as investigations unfold and as we learn from them – we learn what they need and where to go next. We learn more about our practice.
- We are learners because we are ever-seeking professional development and are engaging in discourse around our work.
- We work in partnership with families and the community, and therefore we learn from them.





# Questions? Let's Hear Them!



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