

Reggio Emilia – Inspired Philosophy

What does it mean to be “Reggio-Inspired?” The Reggio Emilia approach to early childhood education was developed from a city-sponsored educational system serving children up to age six, in a town in northern Italy bearing that name. The Reggio Emilia educational system is commonly recognized as one of the best programs for young children worldwide. International study groups of educators from around the globe journey to Italy annually to get a first-hand glimpse of this exceptional philosophy in action. Because in Italy this approach is integrated into the fabric of the local government, community, and its people, it cannot be replicated exactly in the United States. However, to be “Reggio-Inspired” is to adopt the core values and beliefs of this approach to educating young children. Such principles include:

The Image of the Child

We view every child as strong, capable, independent, curious, and full of imagination. We empower children to think, question, investigate, explore, and help navigate the journey of learning.

Emergent Curriculum

Teachers observe and document the interactions, discussions, and fascinations of children. By developing learning opportunities from these observations, the curriculum “emerges” from children’s interests and ideas.

Project Work

Our educators deliver this emergent curriculum through project work, which allows children to explore these areas of interest in detail. Teachers are thoughtful about introducing a broad range of opportunities, from art to music to early language, math, science and nature experiences, in support of the project. By exploring projects of children’s interest in great detail, children are excited by the learning process. This enthusiasm for knowledge, combined with the ability to experience project work in detail, will foster a predisposition for “life-long” learning.

The Role of the Teacher

The teacher is viewed as a partner in learning, with the children. By listening, observing, and documenting children’s work, the teacher is equipped to guide children’s learning experiences, and “co-construct” knowledge.

The Role of Environment

The environment of the school (its classrooms, common spaces, and playground) is viewed as the “third teacher.” The environment should be a reflection of the children, teachers, and parents who live and learn there. It should be thoughtful, imaginative, enticing, and respect the image of the child.

Parental Involvement

Learning takes place not just within the school, but also at home and throughout the community. We encourage parents to participate in project work, special events, and the daily life of the school. We seek an integrated learning community, where teachers, parents, and administrators work together to meet the needs of the children.

Documentation

By documenting the children’s work through photographs, video, written word, displays, etc, teachers tell the story of the children’s early childhood experiences. Every child has their own portfolio, consisting of art work, photographs, information related to developmental milestones, and more. Lesson plans, project boards, and Daily Highlights explain the work of the children and communicate the life of the school to the community at-large.