Introduction

In this issue of Innovations, we focus on the rights of children to participate in the life of their community, to develop and maintain relationships, and to have a voice in asserting their rights. The first section in “Identity and Aims of the Infant-Toddler Centres and Preschools” in Indications—Preschools and Infant-Toddler Centres of the Municipality of Reggio Emilia concerns the rights of children:

Education is the right of all, of all children, and as such is a responsibility of the community. Education in an opportunity for the growth and emancipation of the individual and the collective; it is a resource for gaining knowledge and for learning to live together; it is a meeting place where freedom, democracy, and solidarity are practiced and where the value of peace is promoted. (Istituzione of the Municipality of Reggio Emilia, p. 7)

The first article in this issue, “Children are Citizens: The Everyday and the Razzle-Dazzle,” includes experiences with children in the city of Reggio Emilia and in Washington, DC, and is co-authored by Mara Krechevsky, a senior researcher at Project Zero, Harvard Graduate School of Education in Cambridge, MA; Ben Mardell, a principal investigator at Project Zero; Tiziana Filippini, a pedagogista and former member of the Pedagogical Coordinating Team of the Preschools and Infant-Toddler Centers, Istituzione of the Municipality of Reggio Emilia; and Maddalena Tedeschi, a pedagogista and member of the Pedagogical Coordinating Team of the Preschools and Infant-Toddler Centers, Istituzione of the Municipality of Reggio Emilia. Early in their article, Mara, Ben, Tiziana, and Maddalena state, “The recognition of children as citizens is an essential pillar of the Reggio schools. Sustaining the strong bond between children’s and adults’ destinies has characterized 50 years of dialogue and cultural and political collaboration between the city of Reggio and its municipal preschools and infant-toddler centers.” In fact, Indications states that the infant-toddler centers and preschools are “qualified in a system of relationships”:

As an active and dialoguing part of the community life of the city, the infant-toddler centres and the preschools are constantly engaged in developing a close relationship with the territory, interacting and collaborating with the entire system of cultural, educational, and economic offers of the city managed by both public and private bodies. (Istituzione of the Municipality of Reggio Emilia, p. 8)

Children possess extraordinary potentials for learning and change, as well as extensive affective, relational, sensory, and intellectual resources that manifest in an ongoing exchange with the cultural and social context.

–Indications – Preschools and Infant-Toddler Centres of the Municipality of Reggio Emilia

The “Voices” column also features “Excerpts from the Daily Life at Colorado State University Early Childhood Center: Relationships Matter” by Emily Murphy, a mentor teacher at Colorado State University Early Childhood Center in Fort Collins, CO. In this article, Emily shares stories of friendships between the three-and four-year-old children in her class and how she and her colleagues realized that they “were witnessing a level of maturity that [they] previously thought only capable of adults.” In the first principle of the Reggio Emilia educational project, Indications states:

Children possess extraordinary potentials for learning and change, as well as extensive affective, relational, sensory, and intellectual resources that manifest in an ongoing exchange with the cultural and social context. (Istituzione of the Municipality of Reggio Emilia, p. 10)

Finally, the “Perspectives in NAREA” column features “The Power of the Collective Voice: ‘The Wonder of Learning’ Exhibit Project” by Judith Kaminsky, NAREA exhibit project coordinator and Innovations editor. This article highlights the initiative that NAREA organized for host community representatives of phase one (2008-2014) of “The Wonder of Learning – The Hundred Languages of Children” exhibit project during and immediately following the Twelfth NAREA Summer Conference in Toronto, ON in June 2016. Judith discusses the intentions of the initiative as well as the dialogue that took place during the three days of meetings in order to better understand the significance of the NAREA exhibit project in host communities and throughout North America. In order to begin to realize “the power of the collective voice,” NAREA and phase one host community children, educators, and families collaborated in the development of the “NAREA Children’s Rights Video,” which was posted and shared in mid-October and again on November 20 in recognition of Universal Children’s Day.

REFERENCE


NAREA Mission Statement

The North American Reggio Emilia Alliance (NAREA) is a network of educators, parents, and advocates seeking to elevate both the quality of life and the quality of schools and centers for young children.

We envision a world where all children are honored and respected for their potential, capabilities, and humanity.

Our mission is to build a diverse community of advocates and teachers to promote and defend the rights of children, families, and teachers of all cultures through a collaboration of colleagues inspired by the Reggio Emilia philosophy.

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Children are Citizens: The Everyday and the Razzle-Dazzle

By Mara Krechevsky, Ben Mardell, Tiziana Filippini, and Maddalena Tedeschi

“DC belongs to anyone who takes care of it really good. The other people have to practice.”
Maya, 4.7 years, Washington, DC

“You know how you share food with people? That’s what it’s like living in a city—you share the whole city with everybody. It’s like a house that you share with your family.”
Ingrid, 5.1 years, Washington, DC

“Reggio Emilia is big because lots of houses fit in it, and that way we can be friends with other people.”
Francesco, 5.6 years, Reggio Emilia

“People have always built cities because without cities everyone would have to stand up all the time and just walk around.”
Laura, 5.2 years, Reggio Emilia

Mara Krechevsky is a senior researcher at Project Zero at the Harvard Graduate School of Education in Cambridge, MA. Mara has been conducting educational research for over 30 years, including directing “Making Learning Visible,” an investigation into documenting and assessing individual and group learning from preschool to high school. Ben Mardell is a principal investigator at Project Zero and the project director of “Pedagogy of Play.” Ben has been associated with Project Zero since 1999, initially on the “Making Learning Visible” project. Mara and Ben co-authored Visible Learners: Promoting Reggio-Inspired Approaches in All Schools with Melissa RIyard and Daniel Wilson. Tiziana Filippini was a member of the Pedagogical Coordinating Team of the Preschools and Infant-Toddler Centers, Istituzione of the Municipality of Reggio Emilia from 1978–2015. From 1994–2010, Tiziana coordinated the Documentation and Educational Research Center of the Municipality of Reggio Emilia. She also participated in the collaborative research project with Reggio Children and Project Zero titled “Making Learning Visible,” which was published in a very well-known book in North America and around the world. Maddalena Tedeschi has been a member of the Pedagogical Coordinating Team of the Preschools and Infant-Toddler Centers, Istituzione of the Municipality of Reggio Emilia since 1991 and was a teacher at the Rodari infant-toddler center from 1981–1991. Maddalena is the pedagogista at the preschool and primary school at the Loris Malaguzzi International Center.
Cities belong to the adults and children who live there—even young children, who are capable of generating compelling insights about their communities.

—Mara Krechevsky, Ben Mardell, Tiziana Filippini, and Maddalena Tedeschi

How do children get to know their city and the city get to know its children? How often are children asked their opinions about their city? The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989) established that in addition to children’s human rights to protection from harm and provision of an adequate standard of living, children also possess civil rights to participate in the cultural and civic activities of their communities. We, the authors of this article, maintain that children are indeed citizens from birth with the right to participate in the civic life of their cities. Cities belong to the adults and children who live there—even young children, who are capable of generating compelling insights about their communities.

The recognition of children as citizens is an essential pillar of the Reggio schools. Sustaining the strong bond between children’s and adults’ destinies has characterized 50 years of dialogue and cultural and political collaboration between the city of Reggio and its municipal preschools and infant-toddler centers. Loris Malaguzzi, founder of the Reggio Emilia educational philosophy, believed that schools are a critical context for fostering the relationship between children and the city. Once Malaguzzi said:

Our children go outside of the school as often as they can. They go to discover what is there or not in the city and to reflect and maybe conquer, with the help of the adults, what could be there...[They go] to strengthen relationships with cultural and sports institutions, to run in the fields, to meet the farmers...[They go] to discover people’s most beautiful trades, where and how their fathers and mothers work, to make friends with the elderly in their nursing home—images that are missing from their eyes and minds but that are essential to launch themselves into life, into the future. They invite to school the farmer and the factory worker, to hear their stories, their problems, the conditions of the work, and to understand the meaning of life, to feel they are part of a wider community. (see also Cagliari et al., 2016)

How might we help children imagine their futures as active members of their communities? Schools are an ideal setting for fostering a dialogue between children and the city. Like the ancient Greek agora, classrooms can serve as laboratories for life in a democratic community—places where knowledge and culture are both created and transmitted. When children encounter other perspectives—when they discuss, argue, and compare ideas—they are building understanding and making public that which had been private. Cities also provide a construct that three-, four-, and five-year-olds can understand—places they can experience and to which they can respond.

This article is written for those who wish to foster a relationship between children and their cities. We start with two examples of children’s contributions to their communities, one from Reggio Emilia—a city with a long and rich history of connecting children to their community, and one from Washington, DC—a city that has more recently built child-community connections. We close by identifying three lessons learned about engaging children in their communities.
Throughout the history of Reggio Emilia’s municipal infant-toddler centers and preschools, the city has often been the subject of, and participant in, project ideas suggested by children and adults. Each day, schools and centers seek to build meaningful relations with the local area (territorio), city, and people. The surrounding environment is a concrete resource that can be interwoven with curriculum design.

“For a Scaffolding” was one of these journeys—a six-month project by five- and six-year-old children about a historic place of particular significance for the people of Reggio—the old covered market in the city’s central street, Via Emilia. The idea—promoted by the Municipality of Reggio Emilia and Reggio Emilia’s municipal Istituzione for Infant-Toddler Centers and Preschools, Reggio Children, and the Accademia di Belle Arti [Arts Academy] in Brera, Milan—was a proposal made with the input of children and artists to design large works to “inhabit” the scaffolding that covered the market building during its renovation.

The Department of Culture in the city suggested that the scaffolding project be developed around the feeling or expression of desire (the Italian word desiderare means to wish or desire). In this article, rather than narrate the entire project, we focus on those steps of the project that make visible how children conceive of their role in the supportive context of the school.

From the beginning, the educators worked with the children to contextualize such a topic in a public place. The city spaces were not only inhabited by the children, they were also thought up, designed, and re-signified by them with intelligence and sensibility. Children, therefore, became city protagonists and city planners.

Initial conversations in school were generated by seemingly simple questions by teachers:

“What is desire?”
“What does it mean to desire (or wish for) something?”
“In your opinion, can everyone and everything feel a desire for things?”

The children gave “broad” answers, open and rich in empathy for other beings, living and non-living:

“Desires are everywhere.” Lorenzo, 5.8 years

“Everything can have a wish, because if nothing wishes for anything, there would be nothing. Animals can wish, ants, a heart, fingers, hands, everyone.” Margherita, 6.6 years

“Even a line can wish. It can wish to be drawn one day, to be given life.” Arianna, 6.10 years

“My wish is to smell the perfume of flowers with my nose. You can buy flowers, but you can’t buy their perfume.” Lu Yi Sha, 7 years

These fragments of conversations speak of desire as a free and universal sentiment rightfully belonging to one and all. Desire is a feeling that drives knowledge and taking part in the world. As the philosopher and cultural anthropologist Umberto Galimberti reminds us, “Desire is the great revolutionary machinery of life.”

Teachers, with the children, identified ideas to set thoughts in motion and create passion around a theme. Ideas easily multiplied into more ideas made of words and subjective mental images. The teachers felt it was important that the children identify possible ways of giving shape to these ideas—to translate them into figurative ideas. The same idea can take different forms, so it was important for children to share mental images and give form...
to them, even just an outline, so that they became public and inter-relatable. For each idea the children proposed, the teachers and children collected objects, materials, and images, bringing to life small visualizations. Together they made “tables of ideas,” first to remind themselves of things to look for, and then as a real collection of small but visible “cells” of the ideas.

At this point, the children and teachers met to decide how to proceed. The idea of perfume in the words of Lu Yi Sha, “My nose desires the perfume of flowers,” was one that emerged over time. It was both an intuition and an increasingly consolidated and shared direction.

For the children, perfume was a concentrate of certain fundamental characteristics. It could be the wish of a person, of many people, of a place, or of a city. Perfume and desire share similar identities in that both generate well-being. It was a lovely idea that could gather together the many meanings the children were seeking.

“Everyone can smell it, and all its friends will feel good.” Elena, 5.7 years

“The wall wants to be perfumed.” Artur, 6 years

The design of the project the children inhabited daily always tried to maintain a visible, active relationship with the destination of their work. Photographs of the scaffolding were always available, which enabled the children to make multiple and rapid simulations.

Research often develops in multiple directions simultaneously. At the same time that children’s projects were focused on an overall vision of the environment that their work would transform, the children and teachers also felt the need to explore specific elements such as perfume. The teachers asked,

“What is perfume?”

“How many perfumes can we distinguish?”

“What are they made of? How are they made?”

“How can we tell their story?”

The design of the project the children inhabited daily always tried to maintain a visible, active relationship with the destination of their work.

Children partook in their own ideas, discussing and adjusting them in a democratic practice that considered content along with the procedures that being part of a group implies.

-Tiziana Filippini and Maddalena Tedeschi
Sensitive thoughts and interpretations in mark-making and drawing—capable of conveying the qualities of perfume—emerged from the children.

“Perfume is subtle.” Artur, 6 years

“It moves with the wind.” Desiree, 6 years

“Perfume draws its shape in the air.” Sara, 6.1 years

“It talks with all the other perfumes, so the world becomes all perfumed. It makes the city feel good, and so there is perfume for everyone.” Elena, 5.7 years

In speaking of the well-being generated by smell, the children were focusing on a relationship between perfume and the body. In their theories—in words and drawings—the body was understood as an intelligent element, a place of experience, and a context in which they rendered desire and perfume perceptible.

The children recognized similarities in the behaviors of desire and perfume:

“When a perfume is inside us, we don’t feel the same as before because a perfume makes us dream.”
Artur, 6 years

“Hands can smell, too. The perfume comes in through the nail, and then goes inside.” Margherita, 6.6 years

Two boys, Hansel and Michael, and two girls, Arianna and Margherita, began to give shape to the encounter between perfume and body. Their drawings included subjective hypotheses which, when discussed and reinterpreted, led to a visual theory. In the large drawing, the children interpreted the relationship between perfume and body as a cycle of life that generates reciprocal transformations.

In explaining the drawing, the children said:

Thanks to the hand’s contact with the flowers, the perfume gets into the body through the fingernails. It is very powerful. It descends and enters the body. It goes into the brain, where it is still powerful. It spreads through the body and gradually gets lighter. When it leaves the body, it is very, very thin. It meets with flowers again and recharges, then part of it spreads into the air and the space around it, and part goes back inside the body through the hands.
With this drawing as a starting point, the teachers proposed to all the children that they each create their own personal interpretation. This became the basis for work on a new large drawing.

The children at work

“We have to do the journey of the perfume.”
Margherita, 6.6 years

“The perfume goes inside the arm. It spreads out and goes into the whole body . . . It’s all strong perfume. The hand is where there is most perfume.”
Kevin, 6.4 years

The atelier became a space where this scaffolding could be simulated, and children tried out possible installations on different scales. Children made evaluations together in order to choose between multiple possibilities. Projections onto a wall became a worktable for the group for trying out various combinations of the different elements of the project, simulating a view from underneath the scaffolding, and trying to understand perspectives and proportions.

The children's final work was printed on a larger scale on canvas and mounted on the scaffolding of the covered market, where it remained for several months until the renovation work was completed. The inauguration took place during a large street party in the heart of the city that was open to children and adults and accompanied by a perfume atelier created by the school in a flower shop nearby.

“'We have given the wall a new desire.’”
Elena, 5.7 years

“If everyone keeps a wish, it gets bigger and bigger, because so many people hold it tight.”
Lorenzo, 5.8 years
“The Story of Rayo”

The Reggio schools have a more than 50-year history of connecting children to the city. What if a city does not have this tradition? How does a city establish a tradition in which young children are considered not just future, but current citizens with their own distinctive contributions to make?

In 2014, Jim Reese of the Washington International School and Nathalie Ryan at the National Gallery of Art in Washington, DC came together with Ben Mardell and Mara Krechovsky to develop an initiative called “Children Are Citizens: Children and Teachers Collaborating across Washington, DC” (CAC). Their goal was to build informed, meaningful, and reciprocal relationships between children and the city. During the 2014–2015 school year, 331 children and 23 educators from five schools throughout the city—Sacred Heart School, Seaton Elementary School, School within School @ Goding, the Smithsonian Early Education Center, and the Washington International School—explored the idea of young children as citizens in the here and now, with the capacity to contribute to their community in powerful ways. Seventeen classrooms from PreK3 through 1st grade spent the fall and winter discovering and researching places in the city that interested them.

Across the city, children played, talked, wrote, drew, photographed, and created three-dimensional models. Children shared their work with each other, soliciting feedback from classmates in their own schools as well as from schools in other parts of the city. Their research was supported by field trips to the National Gallery of Art and Imagination Stage (a children’s theater company and another cultural partner) and school visits by arts educators. Teachers and arts educators participated in monthly professional development seminars, which emphasized documenting children’s learning and supporting learning in groups to foster children’s inquiry into the city. The tool of documentation—the practice of observing, recording, interpreting, and sharing the processes and products of learning in order to assess and deepen learning (Krechovsky, Mardell, Rivard, & Wilson, 2013)—helped teachers stay close to children’s thinking and learning by enabling them to revisit children’s work and words. This process was critical to informing the next steps.

One result of this effort was the book Washington, DC, Belongs to Everyone!, co-authored by DC’s youngest citizens. The book shares children’s perspectives and emerging theories about the city in text and images; it includes 10 chapters that describe the results of children’s explorations of different aspects of the city such as the Metro, monuments, museums, public sculptures, and playgrounds. For example, one classroom of four-year-olds from the Smithsonian Early Education Center investigated museums and shared a collectively imagined story of how the security guards came to own the museums.

How does a city establish a tradition in which young children are considered not just future, but current citizens with their own distinctive contributions to make?

– Mara Krechovsky and Ben Mardell

We have our own ideas about how the museums got here...

The Story of How the Security Officers Own the Museums
By The Cinnamon Bears

Once upon a time, a really long time ago, construction workers built the museums and it didn’t belong to anyone. It was built at the old times. Then, perfect timing, when the security guards came, the construction workers said, “OK, you can own all these buildings.” And then the security guards turned them into museums. The guards made the sculptures and some of the art part. Artists made some too.

If bad guys come in at night the security guards get them. The security guards stay all the time. When it’s daytime, guards stand in front of the museums to make sure everyone is safe.

One time a bad guy came in. And then the security guard got him. The security guards called the police to take the bad guy to jail. Their number is 911. The bad guys hide some of the art pieces, so some of the police found them up a little bit. One of the buildings that the security guardsown is our National- American History. People started coming to the museums and deciding to work there and they help the security guards. The bad guys started being nice, and then they all had a celebration.

The Cinnamon Bears’ (4-year-olds) view of who owns museums

Another class of three-year-olds from the Sacred Heart School, a Catholic dual language school in Northwest DC serving a significant number of children receiving free or reduced-price lunch, chose to investigate the Metro under the guidance of their teacher, Anna Ramirez. Anna was a new teacher at the Sacred Heart School. She taught a Spanish immersion class of 13 three-year-olds, 11 boys and two girls. The children decided it was the Metro that made Washington, DC special. To provoke the children’s thinking, Anna facilitated a “thinking routine” called “See-Think-Wonder” in which she showed the children captivating images of the Metro and asked them to describe what they saw, what it made them
think, and what it made them wonder. Emily, a teaching artist from Imagination Stage, also visited Anna’s class and led children through a reenactment of a Metro ride.

The children suggested to Anna that the class take a ride on the Metro. Armed with clipboards for sketching and iPads to take pictures of what they deemed important for other children to know about the transit system, the children began their field research. When the Metro station manager saw the group of children with clipboards and iPads, he was skeptical until he asked the young researchers what they were doing. “Investigating the Metro” was their reply. The children were especially impressed by the speed of the train, by the Metro traveling above as well as below ground, and by how many train lines met at the Metro Center stop.

At first, Anna struggled to use documentation. When she collected documentation, she was not sure what to do with it. But, over time, she came to see the value in revisiting the documentation to plan the next steps and sharing the documentation with the children so that they could build on what they had learned. Anna printed selected photographs from the images taken on the iPads for the children to review. They then drew pictures based on the photos and created their own Metro maps. They also developed theories about where the trains slept after working so hard all day (“in the tunnels where it was dark”).
Teachers in the “Children Are Citizens” seminars photographed and shared children’s work from their own classrooms with other teachers so that children could exchange feedback across schools. Because Rebecca Courouble’s PreK4 French immersion class from the Washington International School was also studying the Metro, Anna’s class shared their early drafts of the Metro map with Rebecca’s class. Anna requested photographs of the children looking at the maps, because she wanted the children “to be able to see and feel what it’s like to have someone you don’t know, look [at] something you created.”

The feedback from the children in Rebecca’s class was specific and direct. Their comments helped the children from Anna’s class to create better maps and to realize that they could change their ideas if other suggestions appealed to them more.

“Try to do a better blue line. We do not see it well.” Sammy

“Maybe practice the scientific eyes when he looks at the Metro map.” Imogen

“Try on a bigger paper,” Derek

“He did a good job because he put the yellow and the blue together.” Helen

“The green line should not be broken. It is supposed to be connected.” Linnea

“The orange line should also be next to the blue line.” Sonia
When children grow up in a culture and begin their schooling with support for thinking, feeling, and acting in groups, they are more likely to participate in and practice democracy as informed and caring citizens.

—Mara Krechevsky and Ben Mardell

The children’s response shows that they both welcomed other points of view (“He did a good job, because he put the yellow and the blue together”) and retained their own points of view (“The green line should not be broken”). Children identified problems and made suggestions. Ultimately, with support from Anna and Kristen Kullberg, the Integrated Arts Specialist, the PreK3 children at Sacred Heart shared what they learned by writing a story about a special Metro train named Rayo (“Because Rayo means lightning in Spanish . . . and because he is so fast!”).

Throughout the CAC project, children shared knowledge and ideas and reasoned logically to solve problems. They drew on their mathematical skills to make aesthetic decisions about their book pages (e.g., planning how to include their most important ideas in the eight pages allotted each class) and developed literacy skills (e.g., using new vocabulary to explain their ideas, conveying their ideas in words and images, and learning how books were made).

When children grow up in a culture and begin their schooling with support for thinking, feeling, and acting in groups, they are more likely to participate in and practice democracy as informed and caring citizens.

At the celebration of the book launch at the National Gallery of Art, every child received his or her own copy of the book, along with a red author’s sticker. The joy, wonder, and excitement of the adults along with the children were palpable. Each school donated a book to the local public library. One year later, the books have been checked out of the libraries numerous times, and the authors of “The Story of Rayo,” now four, are described by their teacher as children who hold themselves accountable for listening to each other and giving each other relevant and respectful feedback.
Lessons Learned

We hope the examples from Reggio and Washington, DC will inspire readers to undertake projects to engage children in the civic life of their cities. Elsewhere we have shared examples of other projects in the U.S. (Mardell & Carpenter, 2012; Mardell, 2011). We have also shared a preliminary framework for creating such projects (Krechevsky, Mardell, & Romans, 2014). Here, we share three lessons learned.

Choosing topics that connect children and their communities

How can one identify a topic or a project that connects children with their communities? In La Bambina del Profumo, educators were alert to opportunities such as the canvas construction scaffolding in the heart of the city. Opportunities like this abound. In Providence, RI, educators realized that the National Association for the Education of Young Children Professional Development Institute, with the participation of 2,000 early childhood educators from around the country, presented just such an opportunity. They invited children to create a guidebook called Places to Play in Providence. The construction of a local playground, or other shared space in a community, is also ripe for children's input (Hall, 2011).

Choosing a topic can also be an outgrowth of a need in the community. In Washington, DC, educators wanted to elevate the visibility of young children and the value of high quality early childhood education. A beautiful book that shares children's thoughts, stories, and theories about DC was the result. Other needs may be more complex and challenging to address, though they still deserve consideration. In 2002, when Reggio educators noticed that children were talking about the war in Iraq, they decided to select some of the children's comments to put on banners in front of the municipal theater. The children's points of view became part of the debate going on at the time. We believe children's thoughts about police and safety in their cities would contribute to the conversation around issues raised by the Black Lives Matter movement. In all these cases, the topics identified by adults were broad and flexible enough to allow children's interests to play a central role in shaping the project.

Making learning and learners visible: The value of the razzle-dazzle

Holding public events like the celebration at the National Gallery of Art or the inauguration of La Bambina del Profumo in the center of Reggio take a great deal of work. So, why do them? As Malaguzzi suggested, children should go outside the school as often as they can to discover “images that are missing from their eyes and minds, but are essential to launch themselves into life, into the future.” We want to make children's hearts and minds visible to themselves, to their teachers and families, and to the communities and policymakers whose guidelines and programs influence their lives.

Venturing beyond the classroom and creating a shareable product accomplish two things. First, they challenge adults' assumptions and beliefs about young children's capabilities. They encourage adults to look at children differently and perhaps to take them more seriously. Second, making children's thinking and feelings visible refreshes and renews the ways adults look at the world; it reminds adults of the joy of life and fosters empathy—the ability to understand and share the feelings of others.

The adults who encounter “The Story of Rayo” probably did not think of the Red Line and Green Line as their friends, just as the adults who walk through the historic city center in Reggio probably never thought about listening to the walls. Of course, walls don't speak, but perhaps one can imagine what they might say if they could. Perhaps adults who ride the Metro will think of the story of Rayo and smile. As developmental psychologist Allison Gopnik (2009, p. 246) writes, “Very young children can use their causal maps of the world—their theories—to imagine different ways that the world might be. . . . Eventually, they enable even adults to imagine alternative ways the world could be and make those alternatives real.”

Remembering the everyday

The deep and thoughtful collaboration in La Bambina del Profumo and “The Story of Rayo” emerge from the everyday life of the classrooms, where teachers recognize the value of listening to children and helping children to construct their own culture. Children do not just share what they already know—they build knowledge together. In these classrooms,
children learn how to listen to each other; they acquire the skills and dispositions to work together to solve problems and develop ideas; and they are comfortable asking questions and finding their own answers. These practices are foundational to meaningful connections between children and their communities. Democratic classrooms encourage children to have a voice in matters of consequence and to engage in a process in which they consider one another’s perspective in order to reach solutions.

In this context, democracy is not about individuals stating their views as loudly as they can in order to win an argument; nor is it about self-advocacy, persuasion, or majority rule. Rather, it is about creating a community that works for each individual as well as for the group—individuals coming together to listen, to learn, and to convey and create knowledge and culture. Again, think of the agora, where children learn to share their own perspectives and encounter new ones, and to offer and receive feedback on their points of view.

Nurturing such cultures involves much more than allowing children to vote about matters such as whether to have pretzels or crackers for snack (in reality, there is no reason you can’t have both); rather, it involves attention to every aspect of the day—from the way children are welcomed in the morning, to the formation of classroom rules, to negotiating plans for the day in morning meeting, to engaging in long-term projects. Every moment of every day is grounded in a democratic vision.

We give the eminent psychologist and honorary citizen of Reggio Emilia, Jerome Bruner, the last word. On the occasion of the 40th anniversary of the Reggio municipal preschools, Bruner said:

Every child is given an opportunity to grow into effective adults. That, to me, is the ultimate granting of rights to children: not putting up a sort of battle saying we are in favor of the rights of the children, but doing something so that they can use their rights as well. (Municipality of Reggio Emilia, Istituzione Scuole e Nidi d’infanzia, Reggio Children, & International Association Friends of Reggio Children, 2006)

REFERENCES


Democratic classrooms encourage children to have a voice in matters of consequence and to engage in a process in which they consider another’s perspective in order to reach solutions.

-Mara Krechevsky, Ben Mardell, Tiziana Filippini, and Maddalena Tedeschi

Resources
Project Zero website: www.pz.harvard.edu
Reggio Children Resources/Learning Materials Workshop website: http://learningmaterialswork.com/reggio-children-resources
Reggio Children website: www.reggiochildren.it

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Building Possible Worlds: The Special Friendship between Reggio Emilia and Professor Jerome Bruner in Three Acts

The following tribute to Jerome Bruner is from the Preschools and Infant-Toddler Centers of the Municipality of Reggio Emilia, including the children, parents, teachers, atelieristas, cooks, and pedagogistas. The quotes by Jerome Bruner are all excerpted from transcriptions in Italian of interviews and meetings that took place in Reggio Emilia between 1995 and 2012. The original English was not transcribed; therefore, the English versions in this article have been translated from the Italian.

Cultural Interweavings

In 1981, in an ongoing search for cultural interweavings and potential interlocutors that could enrich and further the educational thinking and practice of the municipal early childhood project, Loris Malaguzzi asked Lella Gandini* to interview Jerome Bruner for the journal Zerosei.** Professor Malaguzzi’s curiosity and culture always traveled together closely. So it was that Jerome Bruner, already an important point of reference in Italian and international pedagogical culture, entered directly into dialogue with the educational experience of Reggio Emilia and with the world of infant-toddler centers and preschools. The article in Zerosei included other information in addition to the interview, to enable different interpretive possibilities and keys to understanding, as Malaguzzi wanted all of these possibilities to be available to the individual readers, who were mostly women.

That same year, the exhibition “The Hundred Languages of Children” had its first important international showing at the Moderna Museet in Stockholm. It was a time of great and vibrant cultural ferment. Years before, Malaguzzi had most certainly read with interest about the Woods Hole Conference of 1959, where new relationships were formed between educational policy and ideas about learning. The Center for Genetic Epistemology in Geneva, founded and directed by Jean Piaget, and the Harvard Center for Cognitive Studies, founded and directed by Jerome Bruner, had become essential reference points for those who were interested in defining and redefining cognitive experience.

Back in the 1960s, Malaguzzi had appreciated Bruner’s ability to make connections between disciplines, keeping old and new knowledge together. Cybernetics, ethology, and psycholinguistics, also through Bruner’s thought, contributed to the development of new ideas about cognitive development. (The book Processes of Cognitive Growth: Infancy, written by Bruner in 1968 and published in Italian in 1971, consolidated and reinforced his thoughts around infant behavior: “The child’s behavior is intelligent, adaptive, and flexible right from birth” (Bruner, 1968).

The young pedagogistas of the first pedagogical coordinating team in Reggio Emilia, as well as those that followed, had explored the theories and thoughts of Jerome Bruner in their pedagogical and psychological studies. In the 1970s, an important collective process of professional development and ongoing research began in Reggio Emilia that involved, at different levels, teachers, atelieristas, pedagogistas, auxiliary staff, parents, and community members. These meetings, often organized by Loris Malaguzzi, would become a permanent feature of the Reggio Emilia educational experience.

Throughout our history, many notable people have appeared. Our good fortune is having found them, being able to meet them

* Lella Gandini, writer and author of books for children and teachers and former professor at the University of Massachusetts at Amherst, has been a special friend of the Reggio Emilia educational experience since the 1970s, making an important contribution to the construction of the dialogue between the United States and Reggio Emilia.

** The journal Zerosei (1976–1984), founded and directed by Loris Malaguzzi along with Ferruccio Cremaschi, was one of the first Italian publications dedicated to discussions on the important issues of early childhood education.
practice—an effort to study how law is practiced and how its practice can be understood by us—using tools developed in anthropology, psychology, linguistics, and literary theory.”

A few years later, in September 1995, upon the invitation of Giordana Rabitti, president of Reggio Children from 2000 to 2007, Bruner came to Reggio Emilia for the first time and spoke at a public conference held at the Romolo Valli Municipal Theater to open the school year of the municipal infant-toddler centers and preschools. The experience showed good prospects for these elective affinities to be longstanding and to become an ongoing cultural dialogue.

In 1991, *Newsweek* magazine designated the Diana preschool, representing the early childhood educational institutions of Reggio Emilia, as the most advanced in the world, leading to broad international exposure.

Malaguzzi would have been fascinated by the interpretation that Jerome Bruner was developing in the 1990s around the field of law and by his view that laws are a response to the big questions pondered by men, women, and children: “...how the law shapes our thinking, talking, and feeling and, in turn, is shaped by them” (Bruner, 1993). It was a search for a human dimension that would increasingly become a cultural and social dimension.

Bruner’s position as Meyer Visiting Professor at New York University School of Law provided a special backdrop for his research around these themes, as attested by this course definition: “Colloquium on the Theory of Legal Practice—an effort to study how law is practiced and how its practice can be understood by using tools developed in anthropology, psychology, linguistics, and literary theory.”

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**The Beautiful “Crossings”**

Bruner was known worldwide for being the first psychologist to cross the Atlantic Ocean in his own sailboat. It was quite an adventure, which he undertook with his wife Carol Feldman, and he always enjoyed telling the children in Reggio Emilia about it during his yearly visits to the city. This story of a journey across the ocean would become a metaphor, an invitation to undertake “adventurous and impossible enterprises” that Bruner referenced during a meeting with the children, teachers, and parents at the primary school at the Loris Malaguzzi Center, inaugurated in 2009, a new project of continuity and experimentation that has seen important developments over the last several years.
September 1995 marked the beginning of a friendship comprising many “crossings”—crossings of the ocean, always the Atlantic, and crossings of ideas, thoughts, educational practices, and stories. The relationship between Professor Bruner and the educational experience of Reggio Emilia was, above all, one of talking and storytelling. There were so many meetings, exchanges, dialogues, and affinities, along with some disagreements and criticisms, always necessary—all of which made it possible to build and maintain a vibrant and important cultural discourse.

Dr. Carol Feldman said of these first visits: “For my husband, coming to Reggio Emilia and seeing what he has seen has been extremely important. He said to me: ‘I’ve spent a lifetime saying that it was possible, but lately I feared that it might not be. Now I am sure that it can be done’.”

What struck me about the municipal infant-toddler centers and preschools of Reggio Emilia was seeing how the imagination is cultivated, at the same time strengthening in children a sense of the possible . . . . The teachers show respect [towards the children] as if they were dealing with Nobel laureates. –Jerome Bruner, January 1996

Bruner’s presence in Reggio Emilia over the years coincided with the first public recognitions of our educational experience by the Italian government and the Ministry of Education. Bruner had significant experience as an interlocutor for governments in the development of national “curricula,” and the meeting in Reggio Emilia with Italian Minister of Education Luigi Berlinguer became a special opportunity to highlight the culture of education of the Reggio municipal infant-toddler centers and preschools. This political and cultural backdrop set the stage for the opening of the 1996–97 school year at the Romolo Valli Municipal Theater. Like at other times in the history of the Reggio educational experience, this special international dialogue also supported the development of new national dialogues.

The relationship between the city of Reggio Emilia and Jerome Bruner grew, and in June 1995 marked the beginning of a friendship comprising many “crossings”—crossings of the ocean, always the Atlantic, and crossings of ideas, thoughts, educational practices, and stories. The relationship between Professor Bruner and the educational experience of Reggio Emilia was, above all, one of talking and storytelling. There were so many meetings, exchanges, dialogues, and affinities, along with some disagreements and criticisms, always necessary—all of which made it possible to build and maintain a vibrant and important cultural discourse.
of 1997, he was awarded honorary citizenship by Mayor Antonella Spaggiari.

“In Reggio Emilia, I feel like a citizen of the world. These wonderfully creative schools do not exist in a vacuum but are an integral part, an expression of this wonderful small city.” – Jerome Bruner, 1997

The same year, Bruner received an honorary doctorate in Communication Sciences from the University of Bologna, presented by Professor Umberto Eco, who described him thus: “An intellectual legend, which is difficult to encompass with any of our words.”

In Reggio Emilia, Jerome Bruner contributed to the development of innovative cultural strategies that started with the infant-toddler centers and preschools and, as has often occurred in our history, came to involve the entire city.

In this dialogue with the infant-toddler centers and preschools that unfolded over the course of fifteen years, many harmonies and affinities of ideas took shape that would trace a sort of common humanistic thought running through different areas of knowledge. In a meeting at the Balducci preschool in which teachers, pedagogistas, and atelieristas presented research on the subject of theater carried out in the infant-toddler centers and preschools, Bruner talked about the development of the theatrical “alphabet” in very young children, reflecting on the value of pedagogical documentation as a lens for making this development visible. Citing Giambattista Vico and discussing the idea that theater and theatrical forms are not copied from one culture to another but represent similar archetypes that are present in all cultures, he posited that the genesis of theater could be seen in the play between three-year-old Mario and a shadow, which he had seen in one of the documentations presented. The experiences from the infant-toddler centers and preschools presented highlighted the scenic space as a space where different relationships took place simultaneously, where the game of relationships became both a very cheerful and very serious game of collective construction of identity.

“Creativity has nothing to do with overly ordered organizational structures. A context that supports creativity should be a continuation of the disorder that is in our heads.” – Jerome Bruner, June 2009

In Reggio Emilia, Jerome Bruner contributed to the development of innovative cultural strategies that started with the infant-toddler centers and preschools and, as has often occurred in our history, came to involve the entire city.
This passion for narrative and storytelling and for the need and the right of each story to find a listener became the strong foundation for the construction of a culture of education that would have new developments in the thought of Jerome Bruner.

infant-toddler centers and preschools as places where culture is constructed, for Bruner, this idea of culture and knowledge extends through the different areas of knowledge. The collective investigation develops around contexts through which “the most complex cognitive processes work to take us beyond what is real and fact to what is possible and new” (Bruner, 1996). As Malaguzzi declared, learning and the wonder of learning are closely intertwined. “Culture is in the mind and in our interactions with others.” –Jerome Bruner, 1995

The theme of intersubjectivity, which Bruner defined as “the most human thing about human beings,” returned as a central element acting as the guiding thread between schools and the city, knowledge, and democracy. Some years later, he stated: “Experience leads us to be conscious not only with our eyes, but with the whole body” (Bruner, June 2009).

In the late 1990s, Jerome Bruner and Carol Feldman participated in the international symposium “Learning about Learning” in Reggio Emilia, where “Cultural Passages, Technological Passages” was one of the research projects carried out in the infant-toddler centers and preschools that was presented. This meeting opened up an interesting dialogue between the schools and Professor Bruner on the question of digital technology and the approach of children and schools to the new technologies. The introduction of technology raises new questions about learning. Speed, multiplicity, instantaneity, variability—all characteristics of analog but especially of digital technologies—produce a shift of a sensory nature, also due to the compression of the space-time concept, requiring both children and adults to respond to events and situations by means of new codes. “Young children are accustomed to reacting whenever they encounter new things; the children are already ready.” –Jerome Bruner, 1999

Bruner underscored and appreciated the perspective of this research, which supported an approach to new technologies that is collective, group-based, and surpasses the child/computer dynamic to access a broader dimension of relationship:

“I have participated in many discussions about computers and information technology, but this is the first time I’ve heard them spoken about in this dimension of relationships, because it is almost always the computer that’s the main subject.” –Jerome Bruner, 1999

The interweaving between manual, analog, and digital technologies is immediately evident as the way the schools of Reggio have interpreted this question, developing and enriching the theory of the hundred languages. Technologies contribute to the construction of contexts that are highly attractive to children, but the construction of the context is not a given, and herein lies the role of the teacher, and in this specific context, of the atelierista.

The children are learning en passant, effortlessly, all these languages of archive structure and memory related to the use of the computer, which are very complicated concepts. The thing I liked is that here the new technologies are always explored in a human context, giving importance to sharing and dialogue. –Jerome Bruner, 1999

The religious dimension in children is another area of research that developed in the late 1990s in the municipal infant-toddler centers and preschools of Reggio Emilia. This has always been a delicate subject, and the dialogue constructed with the Diocese of Reggio Emilia starting in the 1970s led to interesting innova-
tions and developments regarding the teaching of religion in the municipal preschools, making an important distinction between the religious dimension, or religiosity, and religion as a whole, which in turn comprises all the different religions.***

The idea that underlies this thinking is that young children are generally very deeply engaged in exploring thoughts about religion. Among themselves, without waiting for adults to give answers, they tackle and delve into very weighty topics having to do with the origin and destiny of their own existence, the bonds between individuals and with the world, the origin of the world, the existence of the soul, and death and immortality. How can we cultivate and support this questioning, this sense of the unknown and the mystery that accompanies this precious endeavor of questioning, which is age-old but always topical and that is part of all human existence?

“Yes, children talk about the roots of the mystery, of mysteries. How can we know our world? As a child, this question made my head spin.”
–Jerome Bruner, 1998

“It would not even be possible to have an hour in which we say ‘now we’re going to talk about religion.’ The big challenge would be to produce an educational project on religiosity.”
–Jerome Bruner, 1998

Bruner was fascinated by children’s intelligence and by the way these delicate and important themes were approached in the preschools and infant-toddler centers.

“The deepest way to show respect between human beings is through the heart, taking seriously the meanings that each of us seeks to create from our own experiences in the world.”
–Jerome Bruner, 1998

In 2002, during the G8 summit in Genoa, Bruner held a meeting in Reggio Emilia on “The transition from everyday language to the language of mathematics.” The discussion began with a comparison between paradigmatic language (the basis of mathematical language) and narrative language, with a strong initial declaration: “These two ways of thinking can never be completely separate.” The consequences of this premise, Bruner immediately commented, are also political: “What is happening in Genoa is an effort to make the world paradigmatic by means of the use of mathematical economics, while completely neglecting the story of human lives” (Bruner, 2002).

On June 12, 2003, Bruner was awarded an honorary doctorate in Science of Education from the University of Modena and Reggio Emilia.

“We are making our children into revolutionaries. This is one of the reasons why it is such a joy for me to come here to Reggio Emilia every summer.”
–Jerome Bruner, 1999

*** The Concordat between the Italian State and the Catholic Church signed in 1984 confirmed the teaching of the Catholic religion in non-university public schools of all levels, including preschools, where two hours per week are allocated. Each individual is guaranteed the right to choose whether or not to participate in religious education.
The Exhortation to “Live Dangerously”

One of the most topical pieces of advice that Bruner gave us in his visits to Reggio Emilia was his exhortation to “live dangerously,” to practice *ostranenie*: “to take words that seem familiar to us and make them strange, to alienate things that appear to be familiar. To experience being the stranger, and to live dangerously.” In this declaration, he placed the emphasis on possibilities, on the power of the experimenter, and on the vast sense of the possible.

“A preschool is a community where mind and feelings are shared. It is a place to learn together about the real world and the possible worlds of the imagination.”

~Jerome Bruner, 2004

This way of being at school, where there is a relationship of deep respect between children and adults, and which Bruner often said resembled the kind of relationship he had with his

Ernesto Balducci Municipal Preschool, Reggio Emilia, June 11, 2010

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university students, should spread to every level of school, creating “a possible revolution in thinking about education” (Bruner, 2004).

We feel that this is a wonderful framework for continuing to redefine the cultural project of the educational experience of Reggio Emilia, making a space for the great challenges of the contemporary world regarding multiculturalism, the construction of knowledge, and education itself.

It is difficult to close this tribute and this loving farewell to an illustrious friend who spent an entire century always happily curious and so vastly human. In one of the last interviews Bruner gave in Reggio Emilia, talking about narrative and parenting, he said: “Italo Calvino was very clear about the fact that without stories, we would be lacking the basis for deciding how to confront the future.”

All the stories, the narratives, the voices and ideas that Jerome Bruner gave to us over the years will provide a strong basis for confronting this new future, and we will continue to interweave his thoughts and ideas. Among the many possible ways to say farewell to a man with a passion for the wind and for stories, it seems appropriate to use the delicate words of a very young storyteller:

“The wind carries us gently like pieces of really light paper.”
–Caterina, 5 years

REFERENCES
In the September issue of Innovations, NAREA honored the passing of Jerome Bruner through comments and reflections from those who knew him. His death at age 100 left behind a tall wake of writing, wondering, and questioning. It seems as if an ordinary person might need two lifetimes of 100 to begin to appreciate the density and diversity of Bruner’s scholarship.

As we continue to consider his contributions, it is impossible to set aside the joie di vivre expressed in much of his writing. Take, for example, his essay, “The Conditions of Creativity,” from the book On Knowing: Essays for the Left Hand, originally published in 1962 and re-published with a new introduction in 1979. He takes up the question of surprise and its place in creativity and learning:

An act that produces effective surprise—this I shall take as the hallmark of a creative enterprise. . . . I could not care less about the person’s intention, whether or not he intended to create. The road to banality is paved with creative intentions. Surprise is not easily defined. It is the unexpected that strikes one with wonder or astonishment. What is curious about effective surprise is that it need not be rare or infrequent or bizarre and is often none of these things. (Bruner, 1979, p. 18)

What follows Bruner’s working definition of surprise is the kind of intellectual reasoning that earned him accolades as a giant of mind. What is, perhaps, most striking about his essay is the subject. For early childhood educators, the delight of surprised children is a familiar experience, although it seems seldom noted or discussed in relation to knowledge-building or creative thinking. The literature on curriculum is rife with propositions for how, when, where, and why alphabetic and numeric codes should be presented to children in this way or that. Yet, if educating is an enterprise that seeks to manifest and provoke knowledge-building processes and creative thinking and doing in children and adults, then the dearth of discussion regarding the notion of surprise is a weakness in our work.

Bruner’s essay is sewn with examples from literature, physics, chemistry, mathematics, logic, music, metaphor, psychology, and art through which considerations of surprise can be considered. In contemplating examples from these various disciplines, he arrives somewhat empty-handed in the effort to “think reasonably about the creative process” (Bruner, 1979, p. 30). Thus, while we are left to wonder about the necessary energies for producing creative acts and processes, we are more
aware of and curious about the role surprise might play.

At a minimum, Bruner’s essay reminds us to notice and to wonder what is happening in the child and in ourselves when we encounter surprise. Could surprise mark a moment of creative enterprise that in the miracle of the human mind transforms, inspires, and develops other creative processes of mind and body? Without the experience of surprise are we hampered in the development of creative processes? Insight into these questions is afforded us each and every day as we bear witness to the stir of attention marshaled by children when surprised. Perhaps more curiosity about surprise by adults will stimulate and innovate our role when designing experiences with children.

What follows Bruner’s working definition of surprise is the kind of intellectual reasoning that earned him accolades as a giant of mind.

– Margie Cooper

REFERENCE
Excerpts from the Daily Life at Colorado State University Early Childhood Center: Giving Relationships Recognition

By Emily Murphy

Emily Murphy is an instructor in the Human Development and Family Studies department at Colorado State University (CSU) and serves as a mentor teacher at CSU Early Childhood Center in Fort Collins, CO. Emily has been teaching preschool for 10 years and is currently working with the three-year-old classroom.

Our Context

Colorado State University’s Early Childhood Center is a year-round preschool currently serving 146 CSU staff, students, and community families with children between six-weeks-old and six years in seven classrooms. After decades on campus, the ECC was moved into a refurbished elementary school near City Park in January 2013 where the school more than doubled in size, and the staff began in-depth study of the Reggio Emilia approach, which they had learned about a year earlier. The ECC has a three-fold mission: to provide diverse opportunities for research, a high-quality and NAEYC-accredited early child care program for children, and hands-on training opportunities for CSU students interested in careers working with children and families. The following story is from a young preschool classroom, typically serving 17 two-and-a-half- to four-year-old children per day. As a lab school, this classroom typically has one mentor teacher, one classroom teacher, one assistant teacher, two interning teachers, and two practicum students each semester.

A Story of Friendships

It happened just as our summer session began—the pairings. Our class size dropped for the season, and children began grouping by twos. As a staff, we speculated that this had been the way with these children for months, and now, with only 10 children a day, it was more evident to us. We also hypothesized that being in a smaller group made it easier for the children to organize themselves. They had more space, more time, and less distraction.

As the weeks went on, children continued gravitating toward specific peers. It became evident that these groupings indicated more than just a habit of choosing comfortable playmates. Hayden would not start his day until Charlotte greeted him at the gate of the playground. Walker went to swimming lessons and gymnastics after hearing that Ella would also be going. Harper would stop what she was doing when Elise was crying and seek her out, offering a silent hug. They were forming relationships—complicated and deep, filled with self-sacrifice, concern, protection, reassuring hugs, and gentle touches. They were layered with hurt, too. With a word or a look, these three- and four-year-olds could bring their
friends to tears. Then they would try to fix the problems that they had.

As we stood there, watching a wet Elise wordlessly hand her only towel to a shivering and wet Harper, or Eliana take a book out of the hands of a classmate and hand it to Jaylen because Eliana knew it was her favorite, or an entire class save a seat for Charlotte next to Hayden on the bench because they know “she will like this spot the best,” we began to realize that we were witnessing a level of social maturity that we previously thought only capable of adults.

How or why they were drawn to each other was not always evident. It is possible with one pair that because they shared an interest in princesses and were two of the youngest in the class that these commonalities were responsible for their friendship. Another pair had parents who were friends and, therefore, they saw each other frequently outside of school. Yet others had few or no shared interests. It seemed, in these cases, that the challenges provided to them through their friendship is what made them happy together. Ella gave Walker the courage to try new things. Eliana gave Jaylen a chance to be wild. They took part in each other’s interests because they wanted to be together.

They began characterizing these relationships with statements like these: “She’s my sister.” “He’s my best friend.” Those who worked and played in our classroom knew who was close with who because these children were so public about their relationships—kissing each other, holding hands, sitting very close to each other.

Our notes and documentation began reflecting a trend. “Best friend” became the most frequently heard phrase. We began thinking about how to address the topic of relationships and friendship. For the most part, our observations suggested that separation often discouraged children from participating in meaningful work. Walker might hesitate to engage in a particular experience and say, “But where is Ella?” The children were often distracted by thinking about the friend they loved when they were apart and were supported and encouraged when they were together.

We decided to take a risk and address this topic by doing the opposite of what often happens in classrooms. Instead of separating children who tended to choose each other, we encouraged them to work together. We discussed their relationships with them through conversation, teacher skits, stories, and a look at the language behind friendships. And then, in order to make love visible in our classroom and to highlight the strengths in these pairs, we interviewed them and shared their insights in the classroom and with their families.

They were forming relationships—complicated and deep, filled with self-sacrifice, concern, protection, reassuring hugs, and gentle touches.

—Emily Murphy
Jaylen and Eliana, both four-years-old, have been in preschool together since they were infants. They have just recently decided they are sisters and are often seen protecting each other, holding hands, and sitting with each other at every opportunity. Here is what they have to say about their relationship.

Eliana: “She is my sister. She’s always playing with me, and we do everything together. We sometimes even will back up into pokey branches, but we will get out together. I know a lot about her. I know she likes blue. So sometimes I will wear blue. Sometimes I play with other kids, too. Being a sister is different, because you get to come home together. Our houses are very close to each other. Sometimes we will be able to go home together. We’re sisters all the time, even when we’re not together. When it’s time [for me] to go to a different school, Jaylen will say, ‘I will go to that different school, too!’”

Jaylen: “I call her my sister because she likes to be my sister. I let her do whatever she wants to do because she is my sister. I love her because she’s fun. We do all of everything together. We even eat together.”
Ella and Walker’s friendship was first noticed on a day when Walker, three-years-old, was having trouble pulling up his pants. Ella, four-years-old, marched into the bathroom and quickly told him, “I will help you.” Since that day, teachers have noticed Walker waiting for Ella in doorways, and Ella saving Walker seats at lunch.

Ella said about Walker: “I’ve loved him since I was a little kid, and he was a little kid. Walker came to my house when we were babies, and we watched trash truck movies together. He doesn’t want to play hockey like me when I told him to. Sometimes he doesn’t do what I tell him to. But we are still friends, even when he doesn’t like playing hockey. We’ll be friends when I’m a big kid, too, but I’m already a big kid. But when I’m a big kid like Cole [her brother] I’m going to be so big, I’ll bump my head on the ceiling. And when Walker is five, he will be so big, too. He’s already four. I know because he told me. Even though I thought he told me he was three. At my home, he was only one. And when he was two, he came over, too, and I loved to pet his hair. I still do like to do that. I liked to hold him when he was a baby when he could only say ‘goo-goo-gaa-gaa.’ Now I love hugging him. Even when he pushes me off when I’m giving him a hug. He never hugs me except sometimes he does do that.”

Walker shared this about Ella: “She’s my best friend. I know that because I just know. I love her because she’s always playing with me. She goes to my swimming class, too. She’s always with me.”
Harper and Elise

This is a passionate relationship, filled with love and angst. Harper and Elise, both three-years-old, are forever within an arm’s reach of one another, jumping to each other’s rescue in one moment and fighting for the lead in another.

Harper talked about Elise: “We are best friends, because we give each other hugs—and kisses! We play together. We play Elsa, and we play going to TJ Maxx. And we sit next to each other because we love each other. When you love somebody, you love them. You know them, and you know they love you. When she was a baby, I was the big sister. And do you know what? We both have blue water bottles. When we’re big together, we will play still. And we will go to TJ Maxx’s. I love her. I love that she will sit with me when it’s lunchtime.”

Elise shared this about Harper: “As long as I’ve been a girl, I loved Harper. When she was first my friend, she was nice, and her nails looked really nice. We were being Elsa under the tree together. I like playing with her because she will always play games with me. I miss her today. I know what she is doing [Harper is out sick, and this has not been communicated to Elise]. She’s going to the hospital. She’s been sick. She’s my best friend, because she tells me that she is, and then I give her hugs. I love to give Harper hugs.”
Charlotte and Hayden

Charlotte, three-years-old, and Hayden, four-years-old, met outside of school, and both spend time at the ECC on Tuesdays and Thursdays. Recently Hayden grew out of our room, moving to the Older Preschool class. Charlotte and Hayden still find each other on the playground, where important decisions about their future together are made. “Hayden wants to have babies, but I don’t,” Charlotte told me. “I think you can decide to not have babies but have kids when they are older. Maybe we will have babies, though. Hayden really wants to.”

Charlotte and Hayden talk about their relationship:
Hayden: “We’re best friends because we are. We just are. I like Charlotte.”
Charlotte: “And I like you, Hayden, because you’re my friend. You play with me.”
Hayden: “We do play. We play ‘building shelters.’ And we play eagles. And we also play…”
Charlotte: “Cars. We play cars, too, Hayden. And we watch Cars—Cars I and Cars II.”
Hayden: “One time I went to drive the go-carts with my dad at Fort Fun. Sometime I’ll go there with Charlotte. But that was at Fort Fun. We would have to drive there.”

After discussing the phrase “best friend” and the children’s relationships with them, we reflected on the children’s comments and actions with parents. Many were surprised at the depth of thought and feeling involved. How could such small children have such mature feelings? How could they accurately reflect on their relationships with such little life experience? Many of our young preschoolers were just beginning to transition from associative to cooperative play. Were these relationships really as deep as they felt to the adults witnessing them, or were they related to typical development?

Throughout this look at relationships in our classroom, we held onto our Reggio perspective. Children are capable and competent, oftentimes beyond what they are given credit for being—beyond even what I, as a Reggio-inspired educator, expected from them. We decided that whatever the reason for these friendships and relationship trends, there were things for us to learn. As teachers, we saw the value in taking risks—trying what we have never tried and being okay with any result. We learned to ask ourselves questions about our own intentions and expectations for small groups and relationships. As human beings, we have gained life lessons from our small citizens—to love openly, to be passionate and vulnerable, and to be confident in our ability and theirs to care deeply for others.

By Judith Kaminsky

Judith Kaminsky is the NAREA exhibit project coordinator and editor of Innovations in Early Education: The International Reggio Emilia Exchange. “The Wonder of Learning – The Hundred Languages of Children” exhibit is the third North American version of “The Hundred Languages of Children” exhibit. The first version was in 35 cities from 1987–2000, and the second version was in 13 cities from 2000–2008. NAREA coordinates “The Wonder of Learning” exhibit project in collaboration with Reggio Children, which manages the exhibit that includes traces of work in progress from the Preschools and Infant-Toddler Centers, Istituzione of the Municipality of Reggio Emilia. NAREA considers this to be an ongoing professional development project that contributes to the purpose of the organization to promote a network of dialogue and exchange regarding quality in early childhood education and the rights of children, educators, and families. During phase one of the NAREA exhibit project, “The Wonder of Learning” exhibit was hosted in 13 North American communities from 2008–2014. Phase two of the project began in 2015 and is currently scheduled through May 2019. Visit the Exhibit Project page of the NAREA website for more information. The author would like to express appreciation to Margie Cooper, standing chair of NAREA, for her contributions to this article.

An Invitation to Reflect on the Experience of Hosting the Exhibit Together with Colleagues

As a gesture of appreciation for the commitment of the phase one hosts of “The Wonder of Learning – The Hundred Languages of Children” exhibit, NAREA invited two representatives from each host community to be our guests at the Twelfth NAREA Summer Conference in Toronto, ON in June 2016. Additionally, on the day following the conference, NAREA hosted a special initiative for phase one hosts to convene in order to exchange and reflect on how the presence of the exhibit and related initiatives mattered to host communities. NAREA also shared compiled data and reflections from the final and annual reports submitted by host communities to date. We saw this as an opportunity to continue our collaboration, thinking that the dialogue that took place during this gathering could strengthen our solidarity in confronting the issues of early childhood education in our own areas and throughout North America.

Twenty representatives from 11 of the 13 host communities enthusiastically accepted our invitation. Here are some of the responses we received:

“I add my thanks for this generous and wonderful invitation. What an opportunity. I think this will be a very important occasion to think together about the effects of the exhibit, strengthening connections among exhibit hosts and maximizing the potential impacts of the exhibit.”
Baji Rankin, Albuquerque, NM

“This is a fabulous and generous opportunity, and we are very excited about it.”
Kathy Stewart, Greenville, SC

“What a lovely surprise! We are pleased to accept this kind offer on behalf of the Vancouver Reggio Consortium.”
Laurie Kocher, Vancouver, BC

“It’s a wonderful invitation that NAREA is offering to representatives that hosted the exhibit.”
Judy Graves, Portland, OR
We saw this as an opportunity to continue our collaboration, thinking that the dialogue that took place during this gathering could strengthen our solidarity in confronting the issues of early childhood education in our own areas and throughout North America.

—Judith Kaminsky
In order to create a thread of continuity for the exhibit host representatives through two afternoon breakout sessions during the conference and the one-day initiative, NAREA and the phase one exhibit host representatives collaboratively planned the shared experience.

~Judith Kaminsky

“We plan to attend and are very honored to be invited.”
Ena Shelley, Indianapolis, IN

“What a wonderful surprise and invitation to continue the journey and conversation in Toronto! Thank you for the generous opportunity.”
Leslie Gleim, Kapolei, HI

In order to create a thread of continuity for the exhibit host representatives through two afternoon breakout sessions during the conference and the one-day initiative, NAREA and the phase one exhibit host representatives collaboratively planned the shared experience. We organized several conference calls in order to think together about how we could best use our time in Toronto. NAREA referenced a summary of the calls when making plans for the initiative and sent the final plan to host representatives in May so they could prepare for the meetings.

In addition, NAREA invited the two educators from Reggio Emilia who were participating in the summer conference—Moira Nicolosi, *pedagogista*, Preschools and Infant-Toddler Centers, *Istituzione* of the Municipality of Reggio Emilia, and Giovanna Cagliari, former primary school teacher and consultant, Reggio Children—to join us at the one-day initiative on June 26. Emanuela Vercalli, who is responsible for the development and presence of the exhibit throughout the world for Reggio Children, also participated in the last day of the conference and the one-day exhibit host initiative.

**The Experience of the Phase One Exhibit Host Initiative**

NAREA board member and Toronto exhibit host representative Karyn Callaghan graciously invited all phase one hosts who were coming to Toronto to the opening reception for the exhibit on the evening of June 21. There, NAREA board and staff and phase one host representatives had the opportunity to meet and greet each other in the context of the work of the children, educators, and families of Reggio Emilia that brought us all together. To be among community members connected with the Ontario Reggio Association reminded all of the beauty within community—no matter where in North America a community vibrates.

During our first breakout session, Judith Kaminsky welcomed representatives from host communities in Indianapolis, IN; Chicago, IL; Newark, OH; Portland, OR; Vancouver, BC; Henderson, KY; Kapolei, HI; Greenville, SC; and Albuquerque, NM, acknowledging those from Tulsa, OK and Boulder, CO that would be joining us on subsequent days as well as those from Santa Monica, CA and Monterey County, CA that were unable to participate in the initiative. Then, representatives from the nine host communities present introduced their contexts, referring to a one-page summary that included information about the schools, centers, and organizations that hosted the exhibit as well as the history of interest in the Reggio Emilia approach in their community.

A draft of the Exhibit Project Phase One Summary was distributed. Margie Cooper and
Judith explained NAREA’s intention to create a strong summary document that was representative of the significant efforts of all of the host communities. The draft of the summary was presented as a first attempt to give visibility to the impact that the collaborative exhibit project had throughout North America, and host community representatives were invited to review the draft with their colleagues and offer suggestions for strengthening this document in the coming months. Host representatives suggested possible audiences for distribution of the final summary, ways in which it could be used, and initial thoughts about content that could be integrated into the summary. The afternoon session concluded with presentations from host representatives that focused on significant developments related to the presence of the exhibit in their community as well as challenges encountered and plans for the future.

The next day, representatives from Tulsa, OK joined the group, and we began with a continuation of presentations from exhibit hosts, followed by discussion groups. The discussion starter was this: “You are an accomplished group. There is something alive in your community that enabled you to pull together in the way that you did. What can we all accomplish together to confront the realities we face? What are our common areas of interest? What could be? All is possible.”

Here are some of the highlights of these discussions:

• Establish a dialogue with the leadership in public schools and the business community.
• Develop a collective voice in the form of statements on early childhood education.
• Develop a publication about the exhibit project.
• Develop leaders among younger teachers by establishing mentorships.
• Post stories from the work of children online.
The session ended by asking participants to think about how the large group discussion planned for the final day could be most useful and productive. The general topic could be: What's next and how to prioritize what's next?

During our daylong final session, a representative from Boulder, CO, 3 representatives from Reggio Emilia, Italy, 2 additional NAREA board members, and 3 additional NAREA staff members joined the group. We began the day with a welcome and expression of gratitude from the NAREA co-chairs, followed by a presentation from Emanuela Vercalli titled “Exhibitions—Between Present and Future: Perspectives and Strategies.” Emanuela elaborated on the value of exhibitions as a tool for professional development, research, and international relations. She shared information about the many and varied exhibitions that have toured the world and have been housed at the Loris Malaguzzi International Center in Reggio Emilia over the past 8 years. Emanuela also shared future developments and strategies for traveling exhibitions and requested feedback from the exhibit hosts about these plans. She then outlined future plans for permanent exhibitions at the International Center, including hosting new exhibitions of authors and artists and planning new ateliers, and she invited the exhibit hosts to share any ideas they may have. Emanuela stated that through exhibitions that begin at the International Center and travel throughout the world, we can build a “Reggio movement” together.

Following Emanuela’s presentation, the remaining hosts shared their presentations about the impact of the exhibit in their communities. Over lunch, host community representatives shared thoughts, ideas, and possibilities regarding how this group can stay together and maintain this level of thinking, whether we want to meet again, and what key topics we would like to address, including:

- We all have a common thread through the exhibit, NAREA, and Reggio Children. We are all engaged, and there is power in our collective voice that gives possibility to a Reggio movement. Organizationally, NAREA strives to give visibility and voice to our collective work.
- All of the presentations focused on connecting with policymakers. How can that take place? To whom do we communicate? How do we talk to policymakers? What language should be used? What has been tried and worked or didn’t work? What are the effective strategies and pitfalls of communication with policymakers?
- As a movement, it is a bold step to respond as a group to issues that we all encounter (through position statements on universal pre-K, for example) instead of waiting to be asked.

The group then identified key issues or barriers to advancing the quality of education:

- Leadership
- The business community’s relationship with policymakers and our differing perspectives on education
- Assessment
- Standardization of curriculum
- Teacher education: Students are not prepared to confront the demands of teaching in public schools while working for the best interests of children.
- Children of the next generation require a different kind of society and a different quality of environment.
- The narrow focus of job-embedded professional development: How can we integrate the values of the Reggio Emilia approach into a network of onsite support? How do we keep teachers sustained and growing as learners with time to think and reflect through professional development?
- The perception of policymakers and some early childhood teacher educators regarding our sources of insight (action research).
- Limited definition of quality and limited view of learning: State systems of quality relate to health and safety and to caring for children.
Throughout the afternoon, representatives from each host community had the opportunity to address on video topics related to the experience of hosting the exhibit and of participating in the exhibit host initiative.

~Judith Kaminsky

After lunch, exhibit host representatives broke into two smaller groups to decide on action items that are relevant, doable, collective, and responsible, based on the discussion thus far. After considering the possible actions we could take collectively, the large group decided, as a first collective action, to create a video on the rights of children using children’s words that we would post online in October and early November and then again on November 20—Universal Children’s Day. A work group was formed, and Andrea Sisbarro of Boulder Journey School volunteered to collect the video clips, photographs, and quotes from children and produce the video with her colleagues in collaboration with NAREA.

Throughout the afternoon, representatives from each host community had the opportunity to address on video topics related to
the experience of hosting the exhibit and of participating in the exhibit host initiative. What follows are excerpts from these videos:

“This collaboration of exhibit hosts has been very meaningful to me. I’ve been inspired to put more emphasis on extending this thinking into the primary schools in our area. I think we can garner some support from having hosted the exhibit to give us more of a voice, so that we can go to the systems that are already in place in Greenville and have conversations with the early childhood department in our county schools.”
Rosemary New, Greenville, SC

“Our time together this week has really helped me think of some different ways that I may approach our context to build more connections with people who may not think the way that we do. I believe that every child deserves that, and I believe that every teacher deserves the opportunity to teach in this way. Not only does it enrich the lives of the children, but also it enriches the lives of the teachers. I’m really excited to continue to be a part of this network and learn from everyone else and contribute whatever I have to offer.”
Terry Green, Henderson, KY

“I think that hosting the exhibit has really elevated the conversation about the quality of education and of early childhood education. During our conversations, we have all shared that the exhibit has been a provocation to think deeper about what quality means in our programs and to come together as a collective voice. I look forward to thinking together about the conversations regarding assessment and about universal pre-K. How can NAREA and this group respond together?”
Gigi Yu, Albuquerque, NM

“It’s been an inspiring few days, and we are so thankful that NAREA has brought us all together. We’ve been able to share our stories with one another and hear the different ways the ripples have been made in the various communities. It’s very inspiring to go back and think about the different possibilities that I can share with people in our community, and it gives me renewed energy in moving forward with this work.”
Caroline Wolfe, Portland, OR

“Being here these last few days and interacting with other colleagues who had similar experiences as we did has allowed me to see the potential of creating a collective voice through
NAREA to help support what we will now be calling the “Reggio movement,” which to me is very exciting—the opportunity to have a collective voice, a stronger voice—to advocate for the education of young children and to open up possibilities through the challenges we face in order to make choices that are respectful of children and build on the competencies and curiosities of children.”

Julie Biddle, Newark, OH

“While the exhibit was in the Indianapolis State House, it offered an opportunity for advocacy that I don’t think could have existed had the exhibit been anywhere else. The exhibit offered us the space and the courage for difficult conversations with people who probably didn’t agree with us philosophically or share our perspective on what it means to be educated. We learned that through these courageous conversations, people we might perceive to be our adversaries can actually become our advocates.” Ron Smith, Indianapolis, IN

“For me, the exhibit and our work in Hawaii means becoming a voice that lifts the children’s voices.”

Leslie Gleim, Kapolei, HI

“Once we began interacting with the exhibit, the possibility and the opportunity for us to build continuity became very apparent, because we’re a school for infants through 12th grade. As we began to look at the rights of every child, not just the youngest children, to be engaged and passionate about their learning, an expectation developed to look for opportunities for this thinking to evolve into older age groups.”

Katie Musick, Tulsa, OK

How would NAREA begin to think about the kind of worlds or societies that children are inhabiting and inheriting? What are some of the issues that they will be faced with as they grow up? What do children need to learn? Perhaps it’s just about caring. How do we teach children how to care? Is this the kind of society that we want to build? We have a great example from Reggio. They wanted to build another society and another world, and that’s what they have done.”

Veronica Pacini-Ketchabaw, Vancouver, BC

Efforts to Raise Our Collective Voices Following the Exhibit Host Initiative

NAREA children’s rights video

In late July, NAREA sent a communication to all those participating in the phase one exhibit host initiative (and those who were unable to participate) regarding our mutual desire to create a video about the rights of children. Host community representatives collaborated with educators, children, and families in their communities to submit video files, photographs, and quotations of children to educators at Boulder Journey School, who worked collaboratively with NAREA to create a video that represented our collective values regarding the rights of children. Children from eight schools in six host communities contributed to the video. On October 17, NAREA announced to phase one exhibit host representatives that the final video was posted on the NAREA and Wonder of Learning Facebook pages for them, their colleagues, and their families to view and share. We also expressed our appreciation to our colleagues at Boulder Journey School for their strong role in the development of this...
I think that hosting the exhibit has really elevated the conversation about the quality of education and of early childhood education. During our conversations, we have all shared that the exhibit has been a provocation to think deeper about what quality means in our programs and to come together as a collective voice.

~Gigi Yu

video as well as to the children, educators, and families that made it possible for us to share the voices of children from various contexts throughout North America regarding the rights of children. NAREA also posted the video on Vimeo and on the Exhibit Project page of the NAREA website so that people have more options for viewing and sharing this message about the rights of children. On October 27, NAREA shared with phase one host representatives and Reggio Children that the message we had compiled together seemed to be resonating with many people, as there had been 19,000 views and 387 shares on Facebook. Since then, these numbers have increased. Responses to the video from phase one exhibit hosts and Reggio Children has been overwhelmingly positive:

“Thanks for making this available. It’s really lovely.”
Gillian Brune, Portland, OR

“I’ve shared the video with my colleagues, and it has been applauded!”
Julie Biddle, Newark, OH

“What a moving experience! Just beautiful and so strong! I’m remembering that conversation in Toronto and how Leslie’s comment about making the children’s voices heard has resulted in this amazing collaboration.”
Edna Hussey, Kapolei, HI

“Thanks you so much for sharing this video with me. I will share it also with my colleagues. It is really powerful! And it is very meaningful to me since I was at the meeting in Toronto!”
Emanuela Vercalli, Reggio Emilia, Italy

“The Wonder of Learning – The Hundred Languages of Children” exhibit project phase one summary

Since the initiative in Toronto, NAREA staff has been working on finalizing the summary shared with phase one exhibit hosts in June. We have integrated suggested revisions from exhibit hosts as well as information regarding host community contexts and developments related to the presence of the exhibit that was shared during presentations in Toronto. NAREA is also considering the best ways to make this summary visible as a tool for advocacy for elevating the quality of education in North America. We plan to share the final summary with phase one exhibit hosts and the public after the first of the year.
Share Your Voice and Join Us in Solidarity

NAREA is working to mobilize educators, parents, and policymakers to play a collective role in moving the value of early childhood education to a position of priority. We invite you to join us by sharing your perspective on issues that matter to you regarding the rights of children, educators, and families. Together we can advance an inspiring and innovative movement that gives more quality and excellence to education.

Is this the kind of society that we want to build? We have a great example from Reggio. They wanted to build another society and another world, and that’s what they have done."

–Veronica Pacini-Ketchabaw

North American Reggio Emilia Alliance

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Resources

Organizations

NAREA
North American Reggio Emilia Alliance
reggioalliance.org

Reggio Children
info@reggiochildren.it
www.reggiochildren.it

Reggio Children Publications

Resources published by Reggio Children are available:
In the U.S. from Learning Materials Workshop
802-862-8399
info@learningmaterialsworkshop.com
www.learningmaterialswork.com

In Canada from Parentbooks
416-537-8334
orders@parentbooks.ca
www.parentbooks.ca

Bibliography

Visit the NAREA website for a comprehensive listing of resources related to the Reggio Emilia educational philosophy.

North American Study Groups in Reggio Emilia, Italy

March 25–30, 2017: U.S. Students and Professors Study Group

Contact: Angela Ferrario, Reggio Children liaison in the U.S. for study groups
aferrario@comcast.net

International Professional Development Initiatives in Reggio Emilia, Italy

Contact: Reggio Children
www.reggiochildren.it

“The Wonder of Learning – The Hundred Languages of Children” Exhibit

January 15–May 6, 2017
Durham, NC
Hosted by the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill School of Education Early Childhood Program, Carolina Friends School, Lakewood Avenue Children’s School, and Duke Sanford School of Public Policy, the exhibit will be located at Northgate Mall and accompanied by a series of professional development initiatives.

Contact: Sharon Palsha (general information and college/university group visits) or Carmen Raynor (professional development and early education program visits)
NCWonderofLearningExhibit@gmail.com
www.northcarolinawol.org

June 15–August 27, 2017
Ann Arbor, MI
Hosted by the University of Michigan Children’s Centers and the University of Michigan-Dearborn College of Health, Education, and Human Services, the exhibit will be located at the University of Michigan Stamps School of Art and Design and James and Anne Duderstadt Center and accompanied by a series of professional development initiatives.

Contact: Jennie McAlpine , mcalpinj@umich.edu or Seong Hong , seong@umich.edu
wonderoflearning.umich.edu

January–May 2018
Seattle, WA
Hosted by WA Collective for Children as Citizens, the exhibit will be accompanied by a series of professional development initiatives.

Contact: Paula Jones
paula@ourbeginning.com

June–November 2018
Boston, MA
Hosted by the Boston Area Reggio Inspired Collaborative, the exhibit will be accompanied by a series of professional development initiatives.

Contact: Kelly Pellagrinikelly@charlestownnursery.org

Message from Reggio Children

The office of Reggio Children is pleased that there is so much interest in North America about our infant centers, preprimary schools, and educational philosophy. We note with pride the resources published and professional development initiatives organized about the Reggio Emilia approach to education. We caution interested educators that some resources and initiatives related to the Reggio Emilia approach have not accurately reflected our experiences and philosophy. In order to ensure accurate representation of ideas concerning Reggio, we urge publishers and producers of resources as well as organizers of initiatives concerning the Reggio Emilia approach to coordinate their plans with Reggio Children, s.r.l., via Bligny 1/a, 42100 Reggio Emilia, Italy, info@reggiochildren.it, www.reggiochildren.it.

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NAREA-Related Professional Development

Discount for NAREA members at all initiatives listed

Eighth NAREA Winter Conference – Cultivating the Strong Potential of All Children: Growing a Community Vision for Education
Durham, NC
March 9–11, 2017
Speakers: Elena Maccaferri and Elisabetta Rasori
Contact: NAREA, reggioalliance.org

New England NAREA Brick by Brick Series – Reflecting on Multiple Potentials of Documentation
April 22, 2017
Contact: NAREA, reggioalliance.org

Michigan NAREA Brick by Brick Series – A Study of the Principles of the Reggio Emilia Approach and “The Wonder of Learning – The Hundred Languages of Children” Exhibit
Flint, MI
May 12, 2017
Speaker: Karyn Callaghan
Contact: Judith Kaminsky, judy@reggioalliance.org or NAREA, reggioalliance.org

Thirteenth NAREA Summer Conference – Early Childhood Education as Activism: Stewardship, Social Justice, and Global Engagement
Ann Arbor, MI
June 22–24, 2017
Speakers: Two educators from Reggio Emilia, Italy
Contact: NAREA, reggioalliance.org

Visit www.thewonderoflearning.com and reggioalliance.org for more information about the exhibit.

Peer-Reviewed Issue
See Innovations Peer-Reviewed page of NAREA website for details. For further information, contact Judith Allen Kaminsky, judy@reggioalliance.org

Call for Submissions
NAREA invites you to send submissions to two relatively new features in Innovations. “The Story of Us” is envisioned as a regular feature that will introduce readers to the many and varied stories of Reggio-inspired schools in North America. “Mangiare in Bellezza” (Eating Beautifully) will focus on beautiful foods, recipes, and environments in your schools. We invite you to send submissions for these new features and share the story and beauty of your work with young children. Contact Patty Randall for submission guidelines, patty@reggioalliance.org

Call for Cover Photographs
If you have photographs from your educational community that represent the values inherent in the Reggio Emilia philosophy, and you would like to see one of them published on the cover of Innovations, please submit jpg or tiff files of high-resolution photographs (300 dpi @ 8” x 10”) to Judith Allen Kaminsky, judy@reggioalliance.org

NAREA Jobs Site
Searching for Reggio-inspired employment? Searching for Reggio-inspired candidates? See the NAREA Jobs Site section of our website to post or apply for positions. Reggio-inspired educators are in demand, and NAREA strives to connect employers with employees through this service. Please help us spread the word in your community.

Visit reggioalliance.org for regularly updated initiative calendars

Image Credit
Image on back cover courtesy of Reggio Children
Our experience also confirms that children need a great deal of freedom: the freedom to investigate and to try, to make mistakes and to correct mistakes, to choose where and with whom to invest their curiosity, intelligence, and emotions. Children need the freedom to appreciate the infinite resources of their hands, their eyes, and their ears, the resources of forms, materials, sounds, and colors. They need the freedom to realize how reason, thought, and imagination can create continuous interweavings of things and can move and shake the world.

– Loris Malaguzzi