What is the Reggio Emilia approach?

In 1991, Newsweek commissioned a panel of experts to identify “the best ten schools in the world.” The Diana School, representing the entire system of municipal infant-toddler centers and preschools in Reggio Emilia, Italy, was described as the most avant garde preschool in the world. From that point on, interest in Reggio Emilia schools exploded, and their approach is now studied all over the world. The Reggio Emilia approach refers to the philosophy of early childhood education that originated in Reggio Emilia, founded by Loris Malaguzzi, and that continues to be oriented by several principles in perpetual development:

- Children are active protagonists of their growth & development processes
- The hundred languages
- Educational documentation
- Educational research
- Listening
- Participation
- Learning as a process of individual & group construction
- Progettazione
- Organization
- Environment, spaces & relations
- Professional development
- Assessment
Resources for further research

The Hundred Languages of Children: The Reggio Experience in Transformation, Third Edition

The Reggio approach to early childhood education supports children’s and adult’s well-being. Children’s intellectual development is fostered through a systemic focus on symbolic representation. Children are encouraged to explore their environment and express their understanding through multiple paths and all their symbolic “languages”—for example, cognitive, expressive, communicative and relational. Children experiment and develop competencies in using spoken language, gestures, drawing, painting, building, sculpting, shadow play, collage, dramatic play, music and emerging writing, to name but a few.

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Innovations in Early Education: The International Reggio Emilia Exchange

www.reggiochildren.it  www.reggioalliance.org

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