Innovations

In Early Education: The International Reggio Emilia Exchange

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Introduction

This issue highlights the value of children and the immeasurable benefits to communities and the world when societies intelligently invest in early education seen as democracy. Jerome Bruner, recalling a visit to one of Reggio Emilia’s municipal nursery schools, described the following exchange between the teacher and children as they played with their shadows.

The teacher behaved as respectfully as if she had been dealing with Nobel Prize winners. Everyone was thinking out loud: “What do you mean by upside down?” asked another child. Here we were not dealing with individual imaginations working separately. We were collectively involved in what is probably the most human thing about human beings, what psychologists and primate experts now like to call, “intersubjectivity,” which means arriving at a mutual understanding of what others have in mind. It is probably the extreme flowering of our evolution as humanoids, without which our human culture could not have developed, and without which all our intentional attempts at teaching something would fail (Bruner, 2012, p. xviii).

An article on Rights, Differences, Participation, and Democracy is written by Paola Cagliari, a pedagogista and the director of Preschools and Infant-toddler Centers – Istituzioni of the Municipality of Reggio Emilia, Italy, and Ivana Soncini, a psychologist and psychotherapist, who collaborates with Reggio Children in training initiatives in Italy and other countries. Moira Nicolisi, also a pedagogista, collaborated with Cagliari and Soncini on the article, which recognizes the complexity of children, and the critical importance for schools of childhood to offer not just any context, but one that values differences and the constant exchange of points of view in dialogue. It states:

Each individual is the expression of a plurality of differences and originality that assume value when they are recognized, legitimated, and placed in contexts that generate dialogue and exchange. Of these, disability is perhaps the one that most questions and challenges the places of education. Reflecting deeply on this theme can become an important formative opportunity for an entire educational system and therefore help to evolve the quality of the “pedagogical doing” with all the children, seeking to overcome viewing differences in terms of a subtractive logic or only recognizing them within rigid categories.

The article also emphasizes the importance of knowledge about knowledge, including awareness of the myriad ways adults organize knowledge. Rich contexts for child and adult learning and living resist improvised, laissez-faire notions of pedagogy as well as standardized or externally-rigid notions. Contexts that engage, evolve, respond, promote exchange, and welcome different approaches are ones through which processes can be multiplied, circulated, and reflected upon.

For teachers and educators, giving attention to the contexts in which knowledge is constructed poses the question of how we attain knowledge...

~Cagliari, Soncini, and Nicolisi

For teachers and educators, giving attention to the contexts in which knowledge is constructed poses the question of how we attain knowledge; it urges us to seek and apply an operational epistemology, which is interested in understanding first and foremost how we adults organize knowledge (i.e., hypotheses, prejudices, assumptions, values, ideas). In this perspective, the need arises for a systemic science that combines the sciences and the humanities, with the contributions of the neurosciences on the functioning and concept of mind, in its inescapable, indissoluble, mutual relationship with the external world.

Peter Moss offers “Alternative Narratives in Early Childhood.” Moss, emeritus professor at UCL Institute of Education, University College
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 and adults are honored and respected for their potential, capabilities, and humanity.

Our mission is to build a diverse community of advocates and educators 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.

London, presents a case for the Reggio Emilia approach starting with a reference to the Contesting Early Childhood Series, in which he helped to edit three books from Reggio Emilia. He points out the common tendency to use stories, starting from very early childhood, about our individual selves and experiences to define us. However, a story, Moss explains, is only an interpretation and “alternative narratives in early childhood” are called for.

In addition, Moss emphasizes how dominant discourses by powerful institutions overtake and direct perception, influencing such paramount aspects of society as early childhood education.

A discourse may be dominant, yet it never manages totally to silence other discourses, or stories. . . . The good news is that there are other stories - alternative narratives - that can be told about early childhood education: stories with very different values, understandings, and practices: . . . These are stories that are aware of the risks of early childhood education - but also believe in the possibilities of an education that might contribute towards a more democratic, caring, just, and sustainable world.

Harold Göthson continues by expounding on the Reggio Emilia approach in an article titled, “Education and Expanded Democracy as Learning by Doing.” Göthson co-founded the Reggio Emilia Institutet in Stockholm with Gunilla Dahlberg and Anna Barsotti, which he directed and chaired until 2006. In this issue’s article he says,

It is interesting to observe that the wonderings and ways of children become a challenge some adults endeavor to recapture, similar to how artists like Picasso aimed to reawaken himself in order “to paint like a child.” Think of it as a return to our humanity of limits and senses. Imagine the art of dancing as a tool for understanding and integration, rather than an act of separating bodies and thoughts.

In the Perspectives on NAREA column, NAREA staff offer a reflection of the winter conference held in Madison, Wisconsin. Madison’s Preschool of the Arts, lead organizer in bringing “The Wonder of Learning--The Hundred Languages of Children” exhibit to the community, welcomed conference participants to visits of their school. Madison Public Library and The Overture Center for the Arts welcomed visitor encounters with the exhibit. Sunshine, glimpses of the coming spring weather, and engaging collegiality among participants and presenters gave all who participated a much-appreciated post winter boost.

Finally this issue concludes with a book review by Rita Melia, presently early years specialists with the Tusla Child and Family Agency Early Years in Ireland, on The Languages of Food published by Reggio Children. Melia notes how the book inspires readers’ imagination and curiosity, while providing educational and cultural information about food. “The importance of the rich environment of the kitchen, which is the living heart and soul of the infant-toddler centres and preschools of Reggio Emilia, is highlighted,” she says in her review.

REFERENCES

Rights, Differences, Participation, and Democracy

by Paola Cagliari and Ivana Soncini, in collaboration with Moira Nicolosi

Paola Cagliari: With a degree in pedagogy, she worked as a teacher in the Diana municipal preschool of Reggio Emilia from 1978 to 1985. In 1985, she joined the pedagogical coordinating team of the municipal infant-toddler centers and preschools, first as a pedagogista and then as a coordinator of the pedagogical team. Since February 2010, Paola Cagliari has been the director of the Preschools and Infant-toddler Centers - Istituzione of the Municipality of Reggio Emilia. She is also a member of the Scientific Committee of the Reggio Children - Loris Malaguzzi Center Foundation.

Ivana Soncini: With a degree in psychology, she was a teacher in the municipal preschools of Reggio Emilia from 1979 to 1988. In 1988, she joined the pedagogical coordinating team of the municipal infant-toddler centers and preschools (since 2003, Preschools and Infant-toddler Centers - Istituzione of the Municipality of Reggio Emilia). In that role until 2017, she worked specifically with the integration of children with special rights. A practicing psychologist and psychotherapist, she also collaborates with Reggio Children on professional development initiatives in Italy and other countries.

Moira Nicolosi: With a degree in pedagogy, from 2005 to 2014, she worked at Reggio Children coordinating professional development courses and the Master’s program for pedagogistas. From 2012 to 2014, she was also the reference person for the Scientific Committee of the Reggio Children - Loris Malaguzzi Center Foundation. Since 2014, she has been a pedagogista on the pedagogical coordinating team of the Preschools and Infant-toddler Centers - Istituzione of the Municipality of Reggio Emilia.

The subject we were asked to address for this issue of Innovations, “Rights, differences, participation, and democracy,” is a complex topic that we will approach starting from the experience of the infant-toddler centers and preschools of Reggio Emilia, in which we all work, though for different lengths of time and in different roles, and from how these values are expressed in this experience.

For over fifty years, the municipal infant-toddler centers and preschools of Reggio Emilia have responded on a daily basis to the demand for education of parents and children, as well as to the city’s demand to foster a culture of childhood that is sensitive, high quality, innovative, and inspired by children’s right to have public places where they can express their culture, hence a place that respects differences and gives value to the different subjectivities.

“This is a space open to rights”: the declaration displayed at the entrance to all the municipal infant-toddler centers and preschools of Reggio Emilia. Here, at the Nilde Iotti Infant-toddler Center.
The city of Reggio Emilia has invested in services to citizens since the post-war period, and over time has continued to carry out cultural, pedagogical, health, and social research, with the courage to make visionary choices and on numerous occasions assuming the responsibility of being a “trailblazer” at the national level.

The policy choices made by the local administration, in particular those related to the educational project, have put the value of democracy into practice on multiple levels through the recognition of the right of children and adults to have a voice and to be the constructors of the educational experience. What can be seen in the participatory genesis of the experience of the infant-toddler centers and preschools is an attention to the rights of people, starting from birth. It was a genesis with a pluralistic matrix, to which many protagonists contributed: attentive administrators, women who demanded recognition of their public role in society, and a non-academic educator, Loris Malaguzzi, who thought of children as possessing the right to have their ways of learning respected and to discover the world and relationships, maintaining wonder, curiosity, the desire to research, and the legitimate intermingling of poetry and science, reason and emotion.

A true affirmation of rights is always accompanied by the participation of the citizens who demand their rights as co-constructors, and not just external controllers, in a dynamic of exchange rather than one of grievances and legal claims.

The highest forms of production are not in the universities and the secondary schools but in the schools of young children. And this is precisely what policy-makers have not yet shown to have understood. –Professor Tullio De Mauro

A true affirmation of rights is always accompanied by the participation of the citizens who demand their rights as co-constructors, and not just external controllers, in a dynamic of exchange rather than one of grievances and legal claims. Rights must be the subject of public discourse, a place for the participation of all citizens, a practice of democratic discussion with respect to which it is necessary to legitimate children, teachers, and parents. This is why participation cannot only concern parents but is the quality of the experience of children, teachers, and parents alike: all of whom are called upon to build the educational experience, each with his or her own original contribution.

Living in a school in which the quality of relationships is based on participation means deeply rethinking the school’s identity. Participation is what makes the school a forum of public debate, a place where a new culture of childhood and humankind can be constructed: the culture of rights that we all hope for. In 1989, Loris Malaguzzi quoted linguist Professor Tullio De Mauro (who later became the Italian Minister of Education), “The
Through the participation of the families, the infant-toddler centers and preschools are offered as public and pluralistic places open to debate and exchange. They are learning communities of children and adults (i.e., teachers, staff, and parents), and laboratories of civil coexistence for all. They offer people places where they are legitimated to converse, to reflect, and to process the large amount of information, often contradictory, that comes from the media, together producing a culture that is capable of becoming a political and social actor. They are places where each individual, whether adult or child, exercises his/her rights to education and to citizenship and sees that these rights are recognized. They are places in which the community can evolve its thinking and its cultures of childhood, in which childhood finds a place where it can express and give visibility to its specific culture, places through which the rights of childhood can be affirmed.

In this framework, the theory of the hundred languages is fundamental, viewed as the right of each individual to have the opportunity to find his or her own way of expressing him/herself. The hundred languages do not simply represent the idea that children communicate and learn through many different communicative channels and modalities. The idea is also to overcome the preeminence of the word, which is so selective, especially for the youngest children and for the culturally and socially disadvantaged groups. It means giving everyone the possibility to learn and to experience the dignity of learning, recognizing freedom of expression and the legitimacy of difference for each individual, without hierarchies, and the possibility for each individual (especially the child) to feel whole. Loris Malaguzzi wrote,

the non-verbal languages actually incorporate many words, feelings and thoughts, many desires for knowing, communicating and expressing themselves, and many means for doing so. These other languages, too, are ways of being and acting which generate complex images and lexicons, metaphors and symbols, organize practical and formal logics, and sustain personal and creative styles (Municipality of Reggio Emilia Infant-Toddler Centers and Preschools, 1996, p. 35).

The Italian epistemologist Mauro Ceruti states:

Giving value to the diversity of experiences and languages is not incompatible with, and indeed becomes one with, a new aspiration to universality, a universality that is not decided a priori based on definitive and defining characteristics of the human species. Instead, it emerges from the play of relationships and interactions between the many differences of points of view and languages . . . . The generative individual is the result of a creative dance between different ‘languages’, whereas the pathological individual is the result of a ‘coup d’état’ in which one ‘language’ wants to suppress the others, to act as the single and definitive ‘foundation’ of individual identity, interrupting the continuous play of conflict and cooperation between multiple ‘languages’. Heinz von Foerster once said to me that we should not speak of human ‘being’ but of human ‘becoming’. And this is why we must understand and value not only the diversity between human ‘becomings’ but also the diversity within
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Each individual is the expression of a plurality of differences and originality that assume value when they are recognized, legitimated, and placed in contexts that generate dialogue and exchange. Of these, disability is perhaps the one that most questions and challenges the places of education. Reflecting deeply on this theme can become an important formative opportunity for an entire educational system and therefore help to evolve the quality of the “pedagogical doing” with all the children, seeking to overcome viewing differences in terms of a subtractive logic or only recognizing them within rigid categories.

First of all, it is important to note the important theoretical-methodological reversals that converged in the spheres of psychology and science in the 1970s. The principal one was the shift from a child-centered theoretical model to one centered on the context in which the educational action takes place, which shifts the attention of the adult, whether scientist or educator, from the object to be investigated to the conditions of the knowledge-building. The interactive-constructivist approach of psychology, with the contribution of the neurosciences, highlights the development of the child as a process of social construction; many functions of the mind take place in interpersonal contexts, and they are constructed and maintained in the interactive system (i.e., of values, constructs of meaning, etc.) within which they develop (Bateson, 1972). This approach brought about an extension of observation to the relationships that occur within all educational contexts, where the observer is part of the system. “This means that no observation can be considered ‘objective’ in the sense of being independent from the observer” (Ugazio, 2003, p. 29).
For teachers and educators, giving attention to the contexts in which knowledge is constructed poses the question of how we attain knowledge; it urges us to seek and apply an operational epistemology, which is interested in understanding first and foremost how we adults organize knowledge (i.e., hypotheses, prejudices, assumptions, values, ideas). In this perspective, the need arises for a systemic science that combines the sciences and the humanities, with the contributions of the neurosciences on the functioning and concept of mind, in its inescapable, indissoluble, mutual relationship with the external world.

Also situated on this backdrop-matrix is the difference represented by disability, which forces us to traverse the crossroads of the cultural contexts between the sciences, leading us to reflect on the social representations with which we signify the various individuals involved in this human experience. It obliges us, in a more decisive manner, to integrate the disciplines and take responsibility for the awareness of our knowledge in relation to the different strategies of the learning processes. So, disability, too, comes to be seen as one of the expressions of the complexity of human functioning, of the multidimensionality that is highlighted by focusing on the context.

Development is a dynamic process, and as such it requires models and tools that, in order for us to interpret and evaluate, must bring in this dynamic. The diversity among children requires us to understand what idea of change and of the child underlies the clinical, diagnostic, and rehabilitative methods used, and requires us to pay close attention to the performative aspect of the words we use to communicate with families and teachers, as well as to the documentary tools used for exchanging experiences. We need an idea of a “relationship-sensitive environment” that connects the inner world with the outer world, which makes one feel “part of” contexts that are sensitive to the traces left by children, that speak about them. It is one thing to employ semantics that measure the child, but it is another thing to employ semantics that educate toward being able to do, being able to be, and toward recognition. This means understanding how the child manifests knowledge, accepting the socio-cognitive conflicts that lead him to seek explanations about the world and to reorganize his/her knowledge. The particular way in which each individual organizes his/her own cognitive and identity processes is an expression of the way he/she deals with others. This is a radically interactionist conception of the mind; the brain does not work by dichotomies but by connections.

Hence we are talking about a school that keeps the context at the center of its attention, welcomes and values all differences, and considers exchange among children, all the children, to be important. It activates and/or enhances research, legitimates different timeframes and methods, validates the different competencies, legitimates silence and listening, and gives importance to the process “where knowing and know-how become a single process” (Rufo, 2014, p. 86). Jerome Bruner wrote,
most learning in most settings is a communal activity, a sharing of the culture. It is not just that the child must make his knowledge his own, but that he must make it his own in a community of those who share his sense of belonging to a culture. It is this that leads me to emphasize not only discovery and invention but the importance of negotiating and sharing—in a word, of joint culture creating as an object of schooling and as an appropriate step en route to becoming a member of the adult society in which one lives out one’s life” (1986, p. 127).

For this reason, we think of school as a contemporaneity of project situations, constructed and nurtured with the children, which allow the democratic participation of all the individuals involved, in their differences and peculiarities, in producing the history and culture of that group respecting their timeframes and motivations, at the same time nurturing, allowing time, and supporting new motivations and understandings. These issues propose a reflection on the idea of mutual respect that being in a group requires, respect that arises from continuous negotiation in which different perspectives are taken into consideration, a dynamic in which the differences, the different ideas, abilities, awarenesses, and strategies become the wealth of the group.

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A fundamental element in this perspective on rights, differences, participation, and democracy, viewed as knowledge of knowledge, is an adult who listens, observes, documents, and stays in relation with the children, fostering the circularity between their minds and knowledge. From the participatory research carried out by adults and children, through the adults’ interpretation of the processes brought into play by the children, an important fact emerges for the progettazione of the adults that contributes to making school more and more a place where the culture of childhood is produced. It is a wealth of knowledge that, starting from the research of the individual, can become the wealth of the whole group, through the documentation that enables processes of sharing and exchange.
Documentation is the necessary structure for giving shape to the shared research among the children and adults in the learning group, a strategy and way of thinking through which the teacher gives shape to her role as teacher-researcher along with the children-researchers. It is an essential tool for respecting the search for meaning of each individual and of everyone. From the paths constructed in the circularity between the minds of the adults and the children, concepts emerge from active experience that can be transferred to and experienced in many other contexts. Such concepts are filled with the sensations, emotions, challenges, fears, enthusiasms, and the collaboration and sharing that have been experienced: concepts that are alive and full of meaning.

Knowledge of knowledge means that the adults must give attentive listening that enables them to grasp and give value to the different ways in which children access experience and knowledge, the different mental images and the different forms these images assume in dialogue with the material in which they become visible, along with the ever-changing interweaving of languages that is characteristic of the generative individual. While the children learn, participating in the “process of collective, social construction, where knowing and know-how become a single process” (Rufo, 2014, p. 86), the adult participates in the never-ending search for getting her own way of organizing knowledge into focus, and for a culture of childhood that does not betray children, does not trivialize their culture and identity, instead promoting the rights of citizenship that a culture of knowledge democracy acknowledges in children: freedom of research, participation in the social process of knowledge-building, and the right of access to knowledge.

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The fact that all the schools democratically welcome all children is an indispensable prerequisite, necessary but not sufficient, for actualizing the acceptance of differences and the valuing of participation and knowledge democracy. We must ask ourselves: do all the schools really promote and make possible this collective process of producing culture, which is the basis of the acceptance of differences and the valuing of participation and knowledge democracy? Children are great processors of knowledge, from a very young age. But as already stated, much depends on the contexts that are offered to their action. Here we could refer back a fundamental idea expressed by Jerome Bruner, that of the translatability of structures, according to which anything can be learned by anyone at any age, and this depends on how the learning content is offered. In this perspective, we can affirm that what is truly fundamental is the structure of the context offered: environments, materials, people, but also the immaterial contents, that is, the implicit rules, relationships, and expectations that the children themselves express in that context. It depends on the culture of the school that, as Bruner stated, ‘can never be considered culturally ‘free standing’. What it teaches, what modes of thought and what ‘speech registers’ it actually cultivates in its pupils, cannot be isolated from how the school is situated in the lives and culture of its students’ (1996, p. 28).

REFERENCES


At the start of each book in the series Contesting Early Childhood (CEC) are these words:

This groundbreaking series questions the current dominant discourses in early childhood, and offers alternative narratives of an area that is now made up of a multitude of perspectives and debates.

The series, which started in 2005, now has 18 titles including three from Reggio Emilia. I had the privilege of being the first editor, along with my Swedish colleague Gunilla Dahlberg. Although we handed over the role in 2016 (to Michel Vandenbroeck and Liselott Mariett Olsson), I remain closely involved and have written one of the latest books to appear in the series: Alternative Narratives in Early Childhood (ANEC).

The book is an introduction, aimed at students and practitioners, to the series and some of the main ideas that appear in it. These ideas - concepts and theories - can open up new worlds. But they can also be daunting, difficult to grasp not least because they challenge the assumptions and beliefs that many people have become accustomed to and take for granted as self-evident. So, although the authors in the series ground the concepts and theories they write about in actual, concrete examples of practice, I have felt for some time the need to offer an accessible and enticing introduction, to assist more people to enter the exhilarating and liberating world of contesting early childhood.

In this article, I would like to introduce you to the new book, hoping you will want to dip deeper into it and that new world. Let me start by exploring two key terms: narratives and dominant discourses.

Peter Moss is an emeritus professor at UCL Institute of Education, University College London. In recent years, he has helped to edit three books from Reggio Emilia, by Carlina Rinaldi and Vea Vecchi, and a selection of the writings and speeches of Loris Malaguzzi. These three books are part of the Contesting Early Childhood Series of which there are presently 18 titles. For more information about books within this series, go to https://www.routledge.com/Contesting-Early-Childhood/book-series/SE0623.

His other interests include the comparative study of early childhood policies; the relationship between care, employment, and gender, in particular parental leave policies, and men working in early childhood; and the relationship between early childhood and compulsory education. He lives in London.
Narratives and Dominant Discourses

The stated aim of the Contesting Early Childhood series connects three important ideas: the importance of narratives or stories (I use the two terms interchangeably); the power of certain narratives – or dominant discourses; and the existence of other narratives, alternatives that resist or contest dominant discourses. I will attempt to explain these ideas more clearly. (For more on this, see Chapter 1 in ANEC.)

First, the importance of narratives, that is the stories we hear and tell, for how we interpret or make meaning – of ourselves and our lives, of our families and other relationships, and about what goes on around us. As Jerome Bruner recognised, mankind has an innate tendency to communicate and to make sense of existence through stories; they are how we make meaning of our world and our place in it, rendering our existence meaningful. This idea is captured by the Dark Mountain Project, an American environmental group, who write that they “believe that the roots of [the converging crises of our times] lie in the stories we have been telling ourselves . . . . We will reassert the role of story-telling as more than mere entertainment. It is through stories that we weave reality” (Dark Mountain Project, 2009a).

Stories, then, are how all of us weave reality; they help us explain and justify what we think and do. Depending on your perspective or viewpoint, stories can be good or bad, enchanting or disenchanting, have beneficial or harmful consequences, trap us in dysfunctional positions, or help us to move on. But whatever their consequence, they are stories. Perhaps the biggest danger of all is when we forget that our stories are just that – stories, believing instead that they are some revelatory and fundamental truth.

This leads me to a second idea: the existence of dominant discourses. We live in a world of stories, or discourses, ways of thinking and talking about things. Within this multitude of stories or discourses, certain ones can become particularly influential. For the Dark Mountain Project, as crises multiply and worsen, stories of human separation from and mastery over the environment become increasingly incredible and lose their power to convince. But they have and still wield great influence, shaping economies, societies, and how many people think and act, in short weaving reality. They have become, in the words of French philosopher Michel Foucault (the subject of Chapter 5 in ANEC), dominant discourses.

Dominant discourses become dominant when powerful institutions (e.g., governments, business, professional organisations, the academy) take them up and reproduce them in a symbiotic relationship between discourse and power. They become stories that have a decisive influence on a particular subject, for example early childhood education, by insisting that they are the only way to think, talk, and behave; that they are the only reality. They seek to impose, in Foucault’s words, a regime of truth, through exercising power over our thoughts and actions, directing or governing what we see as the truth and how we construct the world or weave reality. Typical of dominant discourses is that they “make assumptions and values invisible, turn subjective perspectives and understandings into apparently objective truths, and determine that some things are self-evident.
and realistic while others are dubious and impractical” (Dahlberg and Moss, 2005, p.17). This is simply how things are, the dominant discourse asserts: no need to add any qualifications, to say “in my opinion” or “it seems to me” or “from my perspective.”

By behaving in this way, by insisting they are the one and only truth, dominant discourses stifle alternative discourses or stories. They exclude, or attempt to, other ways of understanding and interpreting the world, of weaving reality, marginalising, or drowning out other stories. A person putting forward an alternative story is dismissed, as out of touch with reality, living in the past, not knowing what they are taking about, or some other put down. In short, dominant discourses seek to impose a “dictatorship of no alternative” (Unger, 2005a), or Mrs. Thatcher’s TINA - there is no alternative. Shortly, I will introduce what I think is the most dominant discourse in today’s early childhood education.

Which brings me to the third idea: the existence of other narratives, resisting or contesting dominant discourses. A discourse may be dominant, yet it never manages totally to silence other discourses, or stories. Some will always speak out and contest the dominant discourse for, as Foucault contends, “where there is power, there is resistance” (Foucault, 1978, p. 95). For if there was to be no resistance, the relationship would no longer be one of power but simply of slavery, and we are not reduced to that relationship, certainly not in education. Resistance is to be found in many shapes and sizes. It finds expression in many alternative stories that give voice to the multitude of perspectives and debates in early childhood. These stories may be unheard by power and consigned to the margins, for the time being at least, but they are out there to be heard by those who choose to listen. I will give an example later.

These three ideas - the importance of narratives or stories, the dominance of some, and the possibility of resistance to such dominance - explain the title for the book, Alternative Narratives in Early Childhood, and the series, Contesting Early Childhood. The basic premise of both is simple. Early childhood education can be viewed from many different perspectives. There is no one objectively true viewpoint, rather there are many ways of thinking about, talking about, and doing early childhood (or any) education.

Some may find this an unsettling prospect, a source of anxiety and uncertainty. From my perspective, the alternative narratives and the multitude of perspectives and debates from which they are derived are not only inevitable but something to be welcomed, reflecting a world rich in diversity. This prospect is invigorating, since encounters with difference can provoke experimentation, movement, and new thinking. It is, moreover, a necessary condition for a democratic politics of education, since democracy requires the creation, articulation, and valuing of alternatives, and confrontation and contestation between them. In healthy and vibrant democracies, contesting early childhood, meaning confrontation and debate between a multitude of perspectives, should be an everyday and everywhere occurrence, whether in services themselves, in their surrounding communities, in the academy, or among policy-makers and politicians. It is both sad and worrying that this is not happening today, or not nearly enough, leaving a democratic politics of education that is in the same moribund state as democracy in general. Rather than vibrant and exciting debates about diverse contemporary projects and different visions for the future, education like so much else has come to be dominated by one or two stories and how best to manage things to ensure their enactment; a stultifying dictatorship of no alternative.
A Dominant Discourse in Today’s Early Childhood

What is this dominant discourse in today’s early childhood education? One of the chapters in the *Contesting Childhood Education* series, *Transformative Change and Real Utopias in Early Childhood Education* (Moss, 2014), is titled “Two early childhood education stories: Quality and high returns and markets.” Most of you will be familiar with the first of these stories (the story, at least, if not the title), for it appears frequently in international and national policy documents, adopted uncritically by policy-makers who have heard it first from an array of researchers and other experts.

In a nutshell the story goes like this. Find, invest in, and apply the correct human technologies, i.e., *quality*, during early childhood and you will get high returns on investment including improved educational and economic performance and reduced social problems - and we all live happily ever after. These human technologies include child development concepts; knowledge and vocabularies; developmental and learning goals; early years curricula; pedagogical and other programmes, such as developmentally appropriate practice; the authority of various experts; child observation techniques and normative assessment methods; regulatory and inspection regimes; *dataveillance* (digitally augmented surveillance, for example, the monitoring of children and centres through analysis at a distance of test and other data); positivistic research; and more besides. Bradbury and Holmes (2017) discuss in greater detail the notions of dataveillance and *datafication*.

The story seeks credibility by appeal to certain theories drawn mainly from branches of psychology (child development) and economics (human capital); certain so-called iconic research studies (mainly longitudinal studies conducted in the US in the 1960s, 70s and 80s); and certain authority figures, usually selected academics. The story is imbued with a particular tone and style – instrumental; calculative; economistic; technical; avid for certainty, control, and closure - and a distinctive vocabulary, with frequent recourse to words such as *evidence-based, programmes, quality, investment, outcomes, development, effects, returns, and human capital*. Last but not least, the story is entirely lacking in self-criticism or awareness of possible alternative narratives.

Why has this story become so dominant today? Why do we talk so much, and so unquestioningly, about quality and high returns in early childhood education, effortlessly adopting its singular vocabulary? These are big questions, and space precludes detailed answers. Suffice it to say, I think it is no accident that the rise of the story of quality and high returns coincides with the ascendency of an even bigger story, the *meta-narrative of neoliberalism*, which currently dominates politics in much of the world. This story tells of a world in which all human relationships and actions can be understood in economic terms, driven by competition, calculation, and (individual) choice; in which management and technical practice are harnessed to maximising returns; and in which all human beings act in the spirit of *homo economicus*, i.e., economically rational, always seeking to optimise returns through the exercise of free choice, an autonomous and self-serving consumer. In this political and economic context, the story of quality and high returns makes perfect sense, feeling so much at home that it comes to seem natural and self-evident – the only show in town.

But once aware there are alternatives, the story of quality and high returns is neither natural nor self-evident. Indeed, it can seem to be both unappealing and dangerous, offering a narrow and impoverished view of education and life, and leading to an early childhood education steeped in regulation and control. Moreover,
But once aware there are alternatives, the story of quality and high returns is neither natural nor self-evident. Indeed, it can seem to be both unappealing and dangerous, offering a narrow and impoverished view of education and life, and leading to an early childhood education steeped in regulation and control.

even considered in its own terms, the story of quality and high returns seems incredible. The iconic studies it draws on so heavily have been criticised – but no mention is made of this. And even if we do accept, without question, the results of such local studies, there is no evidence that quality early childhood education has, by itself, made any difference at a national level. This is true of Head Start, where it is difficult to discern any impact on child or adult outcomes for the USA as a whole, but also elsewhere. Naomi Eisenstadt, who led the English government’s ambitious early intervention programme Sure Start for its first seven years, reflecting on “what I have learnt and what I have achieved,” concluded that the most important lesson for her is the need to address inequality as well as poverty and low attainment. . . . We set out with Sure Start to improve the educational, social and emotional development of young children living in poverty so as to reduce the chances of growing up to be poor as adults. We have probably achieved the first part of that aim, but have been less successful in the second part. . . . I believe that without significant redistribution of wealth across social classes, where you are born and who your parents are will remain a significant determinant of life chances. . . . The expectation that early years services, however wonderful, could affect overall inequality was unrealistic. This shift will come from wider social reforms (Eisenstadt, 2011, pp.160-161).

Maybe this is because achieving a better society is a complex process, requiring serious political commitment to social justice; there is no technical fix or “magic potion” (Zigler, 2003) that can do the job. Tellers of the story of quality and high returns ignore the inconvenient evidence that inequality, which has grown in the USA (and elsewhere) in recent years, “seems to make countries socially dysfunctional across a wide range of outcomes” (Wilkinson & Pickett, 2009, p.174), more than outweighing any positive results from early intervention. (For a more detailed critique, see Moss, 2013, Chapter 2.)

An Alternative Story

The good news is that there are other stories - alternative narratives - that can be told about early childhood education: stories with very different values, understandings, and practices. These are stories that prioritise politics and ethics over managerial and technical practices (politics and ethics as first practice is the subject of Chapter 3 in ANEC). They start from political questions, for example: What do we want for our children? What is the purpose and meaning of education? What are the fundamental values and ethics of education? What is our image of the child? How should we relate to each other? They do not start from technical questions such as: What works? These are stories that draw on a wide range of disciplines and theories. These are stories that are aware of the risks of early childhood education – but also believe in the possibilities of an education that might contribute towards a more democratic, caring, just, and sustainable world.

Among these stories is one that might be called the story of democracy, experimentation, and potentiality. This story takes democracy as a fundamental value of education, experimentation as a fundamental principle of pedagogical work, and potentiality as a fundamental belief about children and adults alike.
tion as a fundamental principle of pedagogical work, and potentiality as a fundamental belief about children and adults alike. A fundamental belief in potentiality warrants that the potentiality of us all is great and unknowable, quite simply incalculable, a matter of and . . . and . . . and . . . . As the 17th century philosopher Baruch Spinoza puts it “We never know in advance what a body can do.” Or, in the words of the philosopher and educationalist John Dewey, human experience can “have no end until experience itself comes to an end.”

When it comes to choosing ethics, the story of democracy, experimentation, and potentiality makes a clear choice: the ethics of care and the ethics of an encounter. The ethics of care involves both particular acts of caring and a “general habit of mind that should inform all aspects of life” (Tronto, 1993, p. 127), and which includes attentiveness, responsibility, competence, and responsiveness. The ethics of an encounter seeks to relate to the Other in a way that respects the Other’s uniqueness and resists making the Other into the Same, contesting the will to know that is so powerfully present in the story of quality and high returns, with its desire to standardise, measure, and classify – a desire that is full of dangers. As Gunilla Dahlberg has observed:

Putting everything one encounters into pre-made categories implies we make the Other into the Same, as everything which does not fit into these categories, which is unfamiliar and not taken-for-granted has to be overcome. . . . To think another whom I cannot grasp is an important shift and it challenges the whole scene of pedagogy. It poses other questions to us pedagogues. Questions such as how the encounter with Otherness, with difference, can take place as responsibly as possible (Dahlberg, 2003, p. 270).

If the vocabulary in the story of quality and high returns affirms the instrumental, the technical, the managerial, the reductive, and the economic, the vocabulary in the story of democracy, experimentation, and potentiality affirms relationships and responsibility, immanence and emergence, diversity and complexity, the ethical and political, with words such as projects, potentialities, and possibilities; uncertainty, wonder, and surprise; in-between, lines of flight, and rhizomes; images, interpretation, and meaning making; democracy, movement, and experimentation. Contesting early childhood is therefore at least in part about contesting language.

Paradigms and Theories

The role of theory and paradigm are vital to contesting early childhood. Different stories draw on different theories and theorists, or different ways of trying to make sense of the world and our place as humans within it. As already noted, the dominant discourse draws in particular on theories in two disciplines – child development in psychology, and human capital in economics. The story of democracy, experimentation, and potentiality, and indeed most of the books in the Contesting Early Childhood series, draws on very different theories from a wider array of disciplines. You will find authors working with Foucault’s theories of power relations (the subject of Chapter 5 in ANEC), with Deleuze and Guattari’s theories of experimentation and creative thinking (Chapter 6), with Levinas’s theory of the ethics of an encounter, with Barad’s theory of agential realism (Chapter 7), with complexity theory and its various proponents, and with much else besides.

Paradigm (the importance of which is the subject of Chapter 2 in ANEC) can be understood as the lens through which each of us views the world and makes meaning of it, a combination of beliefs, values, and understandings (or theories) that adds up to our perspective on life. Or it can be understood as the particular position from which we view the world, a particular position that gives us a particular perspective. Because of paradigm, our take on things is necessarily perspectival, partial, and provisional; there is no possibility of being above the world, of adopting a god’s eye view that is objective and universal.

Paradigms are, like stories, diverse and complex, but I will simplify here to clarify the point. The dominant discourse, the story of quality and high returns, views the world through the lens of the paradigm of positivism. This paradigm believes the world can be truly understood through the discovery of universal, stable, and replicable laws, objectively arrived at through processes of measurement and reduction that overcome (control for) com-
plexity and context. With natural science as an ideal, this paradigm puts much faith in the figure of the objective, rational, and authoritative expert, who is able to muster the evidence that reveals how things truly are and what we must do to change them.

By contrast, a story such as that of democracy, experimentation, and potentiality views the world from the position of what might be termed a paradigm of post-foundationalism. Truth, from this perspective, is not something that is absolute and immutable, or out there awaiting discovery by an impartial scientist, but is “the contingent product of particular, situated ways of comprehending the world” (Otto, 1999, p. 17). Indeed, it is better to speak of truths, not the Truth. And if the positivist values and seeks certainty, control, and objectivity, the post-foundationalist welcomes and seeks to work with complexity, uncertainty, and unpredictability.

This has profound implications. Paradigm is a choice, not an inevitability. We can change paradigm, and to do so is also to change how we understand what a human being is, can be, and should be (ontology); what knowledge and learning is, can be, and should be (epistemology); and what relationships are, can be, and should be (ethics). And these changes, in turn, have profound consequences for policy, provision, and practice, not the least for early childhood education. I take issue with the tellers of the story of quality and high returns for failing to acknowledge what they have done: adopted a paradigm and taken a position, which is just one of many they could have adopted. To take a position and acknowledge what you have made a choice is one thing; to take a position and behave as if it is the only one, is quite another and smacks of myopic arrogance.

Reggio Emilia: Contesting Dominant Discourses in Practice

As I said at the beginning, Reggio Emilia has a major role in the CEC series, with three titles from and about that city’s early childhood education. I return to Reggio in ANEC (Chapter 4), explaining why this Italian experience is so important to those wanting to contest early childhood. Not, I argue, because it is a transferable programme or universal blueprint that, properly applied, can provide a panacea for early childhood education. For, it seems to me that the education undertaken in the municipal schools is best understood not as an approach, implying a generalisable model, but as a local cultural project that has emerged from a very particular time and place.

From my perspective, there are three reasons for the importance of this local cultural project. First, it shows what can be achieved by local communities or groups with the courage and imagination to engage in what Roberto Unger has termed “democratic experimentalism,” which is further described as “the organisation of a collective experimental practice from below... [in which democracy is] the most important terrain” (Unger, 2005b, pp. 179, 182). If Reggio Emilia has achieved something special educationally, “a collective experimental practice from below,” then such democratic experimentalism can surely happen in some other places - where conditions are right. Indeed, it can and has happened, as there are numerous other examples of innovative local projects in early childhood education in other parts of Italy and far beyond.

Second, Reggio Emilia challenges the dictatorship of no alternative and the story of quality and high returns. For Reggio has had the courage to think for themselves in constructing new discourses, and in so doing daring to make the choice of understanding the child as a rich child, a child of infinite capabilities, a child born with a hundred languages; [and] building a new pedagogical project, foregrounding relationships and encounters, dialogue and negotiation, reflection and critical thinking; border crossing disciplines and perspectives (Dahlberg, Moss and Pence, 2013, p. 129).

In this way, the city shows that there are alternatives, such as creating their own narrative, which might indeed be called a story of democracy, experimentation, and potentiality, and by so doing has proven other worlds are possible, where other stories cannot only be told but enacted, and not only enacted but sustained.

Finally, Reggio Emilia demonstrates the importance of working with political questions as a basis for building up early childhood education. They do so explicitly, being quite upfront about doing this: for, to repeat
Finally, Reggio Emilia demonstrates the importance of working with political questions as a basis for building up early childhood education. They do so explicitly, being quite upfront about doing this: for, to repeat Malaguzzi’s clearly stated view, education is “always a political discourse whether we know it or not. It is about working with cultural choices, but it clearly also means working with political choices” (Cagliari, Castagnetti, Giudici, Rinaldi, Vecchi and Moss, 2016, p. 267).

Malaguzzi’s clearly stated view, education is “always a political discourse whether we know it or not. It is about working with cultural choices, but it clearly also means working with political choices” (Cagliari, Castagnetti, Giudici, Rinaldi, Vecchi and Moss, 2016, p. 267). By doing so, by asking and answering political questions, by making political choices, Reggio Emilia acts as a provocation to the rest of us. Why do we often find it hard to recognise that education is, first and foremost, a political practice? What are our political questions? Do we agree with Reggio Emilia’s political answers?

Why Does Contesting Early Childhood Matter?

I have already touched on one reason why it is important to contest dominant discourses, offering instead a diversity of narratives about early childhood education. Such diversity is a precondition for a democratic politics of education, in which politics and ethics are first practice, which in turn is an important element in a democratic society.

A second reason for contesting early childhood is because, in Foucault’s words, “everything is dangerous.” What Foucault is getting at is that however well meant something is, however virtuous its proponents may be, however worthy its goals, there are always harmful risks attached. This is because power relations are always present, and these relations inevitably lead to attempts to govern and control others. In Foucault’s words,

"In human relations, whatever they are — whether it be a question of communicating verbally . . . or a question of a love relationship, an institutional or economic relationship — power is always present: I mean the relationship in which one wishes to direct the behaviour of another (Foucault, 1987, p. 11)."

Foucault, and his compatriot, Gilles Deleuze, have delved into the means, the human technologies, through which such direction is exercised, and it is clear that over time these have become more pervasive, invasive, and powerful, capable of shaping not only our behaviour but our desires, fears, and pleasures; of forming the very ways we think about things and about ourselves: capable in short of governing the soul. Early childhood has not escaped this process.

As Foucault constantly reminds us, we can never escape power relations. One way to mitigate the dangers is to create an environment of critical thinking around all forms of early childhood education—to treat all stories (including the story of democracy, experimentation, and potentiality) with caution and scepticism, seeing every narrative as having the potential both to emancipate and to govern. In short, to create an environment where contesting early childhood is accepted practice, where analyses of power relations are routinely brought to bear on narratives, and where no narrative can ease its way unchallenged to claim it is natural, neutral, and the only show in town.

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Reggio Emilia (Rinaldi, 2006; Vecchi, 2010; Cagliari et al., 2016), the series offers evidence of experimentation, of movement, and of possibility—confirmation that another world is possible if we so choose.

The Resistance Movement

I am certainly not naïve enough to think that a few books, however good they may be, will change the world of early childhood education and remove the dictatorship of no alternative. So, what might the series, realistically, hope to achieve? Before attempting an answer, I need to situate the series in a wider context.

I have already said that resistance is to be found in many shapes and sizes. Developing this theme, it seems to me that CEC is part of a growing international movement that is both critiquing the dominant discourse and exploring and creating alternative narratives. This might be thought of as a resistance movement confronting the dictatorship of no alternative, forming a global network of alternative storytellers from which new thinking and new ways of working are constantly emerging. Others in the resistance include the Reconceptualising Early Childhood Education movement (http://www.receinternational.org/); the many individuals and organisations linked to and inspired by the early childhood education in Reggio Emilia; and the many practitioners, students, and academics who are actively engaging with alternative narratives, exploring different paradigms and theories, whether in their everyday work, their postgraduate theses, their research, or their publications. Indeed, there is a burgeoning resistance literature—the CEC series is not alone.

The dominant discourse may have powerful backers and loud voices, and certainly has most of the resources and influence, but it has become static and repetitive, unable to respond to a world of complexity, diversity, and multiple perspectives. The resisters relish this world and seek ways to do it justice; they draw on rich traditions such as progressive education and critical pedagogy. Viewed in this context, the CEC series provides one of several public arenas for opening up a multitude of perspectives and debates for exploring connections with radical traditions, and where alternative narratives can be told to a global audience.

My hope is that the dominant discourse will be put back in its place as just one of many stories, as a local narrative that once upon a time got beyond itself and claimed to be the universal truth.

My hope is that the dominant discourse will be put back in its place as just one of many stories, as a local narrative that once upon a time got beyond itself and claimed to be the universal truth. For those who believe, with good historical justification, that times and regimes change, that stories come and go, the important point is to be ready when change comes, ready with other stories to tell and with well-developed ideas about how these stories might be enacted. In this respect the economist Milton Friedman, the Godfather of neoliberalism, offers excellent advice, writing way back in 1962 about the task for neoliberals at a time when they were living through the post-war hegemony of social democracy and their story struggled to get a hearing:

Only a crisis – actual or perceived – produces real change. When that crisis occurs the actions that are taken depend on the ideas that are lying around. That, I believe, is our basic function: to develop alternatives to existing policies, to keep them alive and available until the politically impossible becomes politically inevitable (Friedman, 1982, p.ix).

Contesting Early Childhood is in its modest way trying to develop alternatives, and to keep them alive and available, ready for the crisis and the subsequent transformative change that will depose the story of quality and high returns from its dominant position.
REFERENCES


Harold Göthson worked for the Swedish government developing the first official curriculum for Swedish preschools and leisure time education in the 1980s, when he was also the director of Educare in a suburban community outside Stockholm. In 1992, Göthson co-founded the Reggio Emilia Institutet in Stockholm with Gunilla Dahlberg and Anna Barsotti, which he directed and chaired until 2006. Today, he is a senior advisor to the board of Institutet and a founding board member of the Reggio Children—Loris Malaguzzi Foundation in Reggio Emilia, Italy, with Margie Cooper of NAREA. Göthson has authored numerous book chapters and articles in the United States and has previously authored articles in Innovations.

Reggio Emilia, Italy, is world renowned as a laboratory for exploring and understanding the relationship between education and democratic citizenship. In Reggio Emilia, civic responsibility is expressed in actions. From the establishment of the first municipal preschools in 1963, Reggio Emilians have activated an image of early childhood education that parallels social democratic values of citizenship. When a new kind of school was needed during the post WWII era—not just any kind of school, but one that resisted the status quo with avant garde ideals based in human rights and human potentials—the creation of such a school was met. In this cause, Reggio Emilia has created a conviction that is possible for us to share, which is that education is democracy.

**Reggio Emilia’s Approach to Education**

Reggio Emilia’s expansive approach to education is focused on schools’ reason-to-be. It is expansive in how it relates to dominant discourses in educational and political fields. Reggio Emilia, as Alice Chipman and John Dewey also argued in their University of Chicago Laboratory Schools, looks for how democratic values can be torches for research as a civic responsibility and effort, not only in universities and schools, but in all public activities. Of course, this includes our educational systems.

Reggio Emilia has widened our views through the argument that education interconnects all aspects of society, which is always driven by selected values and ideas. From this perspective, Reggio Emilia has developed and puts into action in its municipal infant-toddler centers and preschools useful concepts such as progettazione, the hundred languages, environment as a third educator, and many more. These are criteria for a high quality education. Developing education that is accessible, affordable, and of high quality is possible for us all to share, even in different contexts, traditions, and occasional resistance.

**Education and Challenges of our Time**

Globally today, we face growing attacks that violate decency and responsible civic action and invite hate and despair in our everyday lives. These attacks impact three global challenges that connect us, which are

- growing waves of nomadism that raise questions of what it is to be human,
- how to heal a planet in environmental crisis and near a tipping point, and
- strengthening the crisis in democracy by embracing diversity and uplifting all children as rightful citizens of society through education.

Inspired by Reggio Emilia, we must use these issues and challenges as a call to action and as one of our main tools of public awareness. With children considered “taken for granted,” this could be a time of new vitalization in making schools a meeting place for democracy.
Education is/and Democracy

I borrow this subtitle from a conference held in Reggio Emilia some years ago. Within the Italian language, there is a play on words as the same Italian word can mean “is” or “and,” depending on the context of the sentence. Here, when paired with the word “education,” we can consider the meaning of education as democracy. To use education and schooling as the most important tool for a healthy democratic, ecological, and transcultural village, we must challenge our preschools, compulsory schools, and other high-quality education initiatives, with ideas and actions—and in ways that support evolving transcultural identities. This is necessary in a world where strict definitions of culture, class, ethnicity, and discourses are challenged. And, it is also necessary to develop strategies to live and develop together within the limits raised by a healthy planet.

A democratic society invites questions. Its citizens respect other cultures through multiculturalism. It is open to dialogue between cultures by interculturalism. And, it learns from other cultures through transculturalism. This is a challenge for those of us who live and believe in democracy. We are republicans and democrats, liberals and conservatives, Muslims, Christians, Pashtuns, and Pacific Islanders. This is the core of democracy—to not only offer a vote to citizens, but also to invite dialogue and to organize spaces for that dialogue, which changes us and our society into a culture that celebrates diversity as a tool for learning.

It seems crucial to stress the idea of education as the fostering of citizenship and the idea of knowledge as something negotiable and expanding. Therefore, schools must be looked upon as meeting places where skills for learning together in our diversities is a basic goal within a democratic society and, therefore, one of the most important challenges for every teacher.

The primary goal of education should be to support a diverse society and community as it develops and redefines itself. Further, education is called to integrate learning in an equal and collaborative way that views every group of children as a collaborative learning community.

The Democratic Citizen: An Extended Image

My offer is to extend the image of democratic citizens first to children through education, then to the stranger or the other, as expanding and honoring both diversity and similarity but ending with an expansion of the other. Today, the challenge is to question the anthropocentric gaze on the planet.

American writer and conservationist Terry Tempest Williams said the following in a speech to graduates at the University of Utah, "In the future, brave men and women will write a Declaration of Interdependence that will be read alongside the Declaration of Independence; proof of our evolution, revolution of our own growth and understanding.

The open space of democracy provides justice for all living things and extends our notion of community to include plants, animals, rocks and rivers, as well as human beings. It is a landscape that encourages diversity and discourages conformity."
It is quite a discovery to truly see the magnitude of children’s capacities to actively construct knowledge. Very, very young children can know what is close and what is distant; they distinguish countless sounds from one another; they regard the many differences among stones underfoot, the musicality of running water, the unpleasant and wonderful smells of herbs, the playful movements of tiny animals, or the songs of different birds. This is a time when their bodies and minds keep life’s experiences connected and related, and before the culture of languages begins to sort out, separate, categorize, and classify their perceptions and concepts into checked boxes. This animism, or openness to all life, is considered primitive. Unfortunately, it is the dominant view of children’s knowledge that it is incomplete until academic mastery within disciplines is exercised upon it. This is the challenge of cultures and schools. It’s a matter of decision whether to welcome children’s curiosity, or to control and move them into conformity.

A School for Asking “Why?”

Here is where we find the significance of Loris Malaguzzi’s famous poem published now in so many resources worldwide (Edwards, Gandini & Forman, 2012, p. 3).
No way. The hundred is there.
The child
is made of one hundred.
The child has
a hundred languages
a hundred hands
a hundred thoughts
a hundred ways of thinking
of playing, of speaking.
A hundred always a hundred
ways of listening
of marveling, of loving
a hundred joys
for singing and understanding
a hundred worlds
to discover
a hundred worlds
to invent
a hundred worlds
to dream.
The child has a hundred languages
(and a hundred hundred hundred more)
but they steal ninety-nine.
The school and the culture
separate the head from the body.
They tell the child:
to think without hands
to do without head
to listen and not to speak
to understand without joy
to love and to marvel
only at Easter and at Christmas.
They tell the child:
to discover the world already there
and of the hundred
they steal ninety-nine.
They tell the child:
that work and play
reality and fantasy
science and imagination
sky and earth
reason and dream
are things
that do not belong together.
And thus they tell the child
that the hundred is not there.
The child says:
No way. The hundred is there

~Loris Malaguzzi
(translated by Lella Gandini)

[Intro to images]
The images accompanying this article are from project work characterizing social sustainability and democracy that began from children wondering, “Where are all the people going?” This project took place within the city's ecological network and offers an expanded look at children, ecology, and activist citizenship. The project highlights children’s interest in their city, different people, streets, paths, and labyrinths—all seen as systems, movements, cycles, and ecologically connected. The richness of the city’s ecological network challenged the children to construct and create different kinds of movements with many different materials connected to the purposes of various roads, paths, and labyrinths. Together, project work and pedagogical documentation give the children the opportunity to make shifts and open up to new opportunities and conditions, which create a new order and question the existing order.

[Images 1 & 2]
Reflection meetings with pedagogical documentation: getting tools for being and becoming a democratic person who can make choices from different perspectives and can test different ideas, theories, and thoughts through the contribution of others. The meetings are a context where differences in all ways of doing and thinking can be lifted as an asset for the group. Negotiation that deals with complex situations where different thoughts can meet, where different ideas contribute to build common, new understanding becomes essential.

Credits
Images courtesy of Malin McConnachie, pedagogista
Stockholm, Sweden
All rights reserved.
Our too often impatient response of “Because” to the whys of childhood stems from a belief that knowledge exists solely by what we have already ordered into so-called “objective” truths. To oppose a culture’s conformity to this idea can lead to loss of life as in the case of Italian philosopher Giordano Bruno, who was burned at the stake in the 16th century, after he persistently supported Nicolaus Copernicus’s heliocentric theory that the earth was not the center of the sun.

As earlier mentioned, today’s challenge is to question the anthropocentric gaze on the planet, together with our children.

Education and the Values of Democracy

Cultures are often designed in accordance with an already conformed way of thinking and living. This results in education being a matter of transmission. This view places the child, seen as a new member of the culture, in a position of receiving the knowledge already believed to exist as objective truths. The child’s own curiosity is not welcomed as a pathway to knowledge building. Pity the child who is always asking why, for this revolutionary question must too often be controlled so as not to disturb the framework of objective truth.

Dewey believed that in a society built on diversities of wealth, religion, and race, it is necessary to create a public school where children learn within groups of people who look and think differently from one another. In a society that seeks the contributions of diversities, education is a process that supports mutual understanding. Rights are understood not only in terms of one’s own personhood, but also in terms of “others,” whether the other is a classmate, a neighbor, or beyond. This is why the school in a democracy is a crucial tool, and why the right to education is a right of all. The role of education is much greater than a service to an individual’s right, it is also the foundation on which democratic society is built.

The concept of democracy is the first human idea of society building based on the value of putting human differences together. Differences situate “conflict” (i.e., of ideas, histories, genders, ages, races) as a strategy for strengthening society. Diversity is the impetus for
Different creative processes within the 100 languages create opportunities and conditions for all children in the group to become an important participant with the right to communicate and create relationships and contexts. The importance of shaping contexts around all children that opens up and offers opportunities and conditions is the premise.
Diversity is the impetus for all understanding and learning. This makes democracy a very special epistemological culture that invites challenges to established ideas rather than demanding conformity of mind. Democracy values a culture of learners who change their minds. A democratic society encourages and values knowledge as a matter of different points of view, complexity, and multiple interpretations within a confronting dialogue. Developing an ecology of mind is a democratic act.

Democracy gives us a very weak organizational idea of society, since it doesn’t necessarily promote the idea of staying together and thinking the same. But unity is a necessity, so this is a paradox. To be able to support diversity, we have to agree on some shared values. The problem is that even these agreements will be criticized in a democracy built on rights. Yet, the question is about the values related to building a democracy, such as subjectivity,

- contrasts, variations, and diversity,
- mutual interdependence, negotiation, and compromises, and
- learning as the right to change your mind.

During a lecture titled, “The secret of a raindrop,” at The Sixth NAREA Winter Conference in New York, Vea Vecchi explained, “human beings, plants, and animals; all living creatures relate to each other; all are responsible for each other’s destiny” (2015). This ecological way of thinking expands our concept of democracy even further.

This is where Reggio Emilia offers the greatest contribution to education in our times. It is not simply a catalogue of written rights; it is a living practice of actions and thinking that respects every life, offers diversity, seeks negotiation, creates participation, and promotes learning through the widening of the hundred languages.

These values are put into action within an attitude of projecting that continually invites every child’s individual process along a journey with peers and adults of becoming responsible, integrated, democratic citizens who care for our fragile planet. Situating our idea of consciousness as striving to go beyond the already known and ordered scientific, artistic, and spiritual concepts, places value in the unknown and in what we merely sense rather than what exists as so-called objective truths. This is the attitude of projecting that we must give young citizens who are the most open to the hundred languages.

This is the challenge for us all, and we need tools to meet this challenge. We need to view schools as one of the tools. Schools can activate and give value to children’s research, taking responsibility for pedagogical documentation of learning processes. Schools can activate and give value to projects on common places, such as the Piazza Piazze research of the municipal infant-toddler centers and preschools of Reggio Emilia in the 2017-2018 school year (Centro Internazionale Loris Malaguzzi, 2017).

A democratic education can never be based in indoctrination that is concerned with consensus. Rather, a democratic education opposes this in favor of supporting each child and each human being in the right to be known. A democratic education offers space for each unique way of understanding self and surrounding context. A democratic education doesn’t end with the individual perspective, although it values subjectivity.

These ideas are the foundational image of humankind on which Reggio Emilia builds its image of society and empowers its infant-toddler centers and preschools; and hopefully a postmodern school. These ideals can be shared worldwide.

Schools can be places to formulate one’s own opinion and construct meaning in confronta-
Part of the children’s own manufactured system for marbles, which was built on the idea of children working together in the group. Each child had an important position and an important task. This requires democratic negotiations in the group to get everything to work, to trust that everyone should take care of their tasks, and to trust each other to perform their job. The children created and operated in a direct democracy.

The children took their place and created new openings in the sphere of appearance and became main characters. They chose various places in the city like streets, parks, and libraries to create meetings, conversations, and shared knowledge with other people in the city. The children became important children with important and interesting assignments.
A democratic education doesn’t lecture and talk about democracy; it puts these values into practice through everyday living. As we can see in Reggio Emilia, the infant-toddler centers and preschools of Reggio Emilia offer children daily opportunities to play, learn, and explore. It is a “learning by doing” as John Dewey noted. To further paraphrase Dewey’s idea, one must think in order to act; yet, after one acts, it always creates doubt that makes it necessary to think again (Dewey, 1933).

This is our way to nurture “nostalgia for the future,” an ongoing never-ending struggle to defend and develop an extended democratic citizenship. Our challenge is to put this approach into practice by researching actions with children, families, educators, scientists, politicians, and others—in other words, with CITIZENS.

What nutrition and reproduction are to physiological life, education is to social life. This education consists primarily in transmission through communication. Communication is a process of sharing experience till it becomes a common possession (Dewey, 1916, p. 11).

Innovations in Early Education

A democratic education doesn’t lecture and talk about democracy; it puts these values into practice through everyday living.
REFERENCES


PERSPECTIVES ON NAREA

The 10th NAREA Winter Conference
Ensuring All Children’s Rights to Education Based in Relationship and The Hundred Languages

by the NAREA Conference Team

Since our first conference in 2005, NAREA, in collaboration with Reggio Children and local host communities, has built up a legacy of people and places that have participated in the ongoing effort to advance a new ideal in early childhood education. This requires rigor on the part of all invested in honoring children’s rights. Against a backdrop of a hardening world, we seek to find points of contact and harmony to move Reggio Emilia’s message forward.

Time and time again, we are renewed by the effort, community connections, and passion that we find in conference host communities—24 different communities to date. These North American communities tangibly express the wisdom that comes from knowing the critical importance of connecting, innovating, widening and strengthening relationships, and maintaining an ongoing dialogue of different points of view. Children’s rights are made real not by one person, one school, one discipline, or one community. Children’s rights are made real through a participating cross-section of an inter-connected society.

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Marina Castagnetti, Jane McCall, and Nunzia Franzese
Holding the 10th NAREA Winter Conference in Madison, Wisconsin, was a concrete way of responding to the desire of educators to continue designing new ways of working and living together with children and families. Here, we find inspiration and connection with the collegiality and determination of colleagues from Reggio Emilia, Italy.

Madison, with its strong emphasis on the arts, history, and design (the birthplace of famed architect, Frank Lloyd Wright), combined with the state motto, “Forward,” reflects a particular identity. In connection with hosting “The Wonder of Learning—The Hundred Languages of Children exhibit,” the theme, “Ensuring All Children’s Rights to Education Based in Relationship and The Hundred Languages,” was a natural fit in Madison.

The Wisconsin Historical Society Auditorium, on the campus of The University of Wisconsin, served as a place of opportunities: to share, exchange, dialogue, and think together.

Over the course of three days, 170 participants from the four countries of Canada, Italy, Liberia, and the United States, walked past the Jean Pond Miner (1895) bronze statue entitled “Forward” and carried her message and spirit into our days together.

Over the course of three days, 170 participants from the four countries of Canada, Italy, Liberia, and the United States, walked past the Jean Pond Miner (1895) bronze statue entitled “Forward” and carried her message and spirit into our days together. The featured speakers from Reggio Emilia, Marina Castagnetti and Nunzia Franzese, along with interpreter Jane McCall, spent each day sharing with participants through presentations, contemporary examples of experiences from Reggio Emilia’s education project, and historical context. Their approachable style invited and encouraged ongoing exchange and thinking together throughout the days.
NAREA board members Barbara Acton, Margie Cooper, David Fernie, Brenda Fyfe, Jeanne Goldhaber, and Susan Redmond, gave a warm welcome to the attendees and speakers, as they opened the conference. Ann Gadzikowski, director of Preschool of the Arts and member of the local host committee, continued the greeting and thanked those who worked so hard to make the conference come to fruition, including the venues where the exhibit is displayed, Madison Public Library and Overture Center of the Arts. With a feeling of solidarity, we came together, educators; members of community organizations; NAREA board members and staff; and speakers from Reggio Emilia, to dive deeply into the theories and practices in Reggio Emilia and within our own contexts.

Marina Castagnetti, from her many years working as a teacher in the Diana school and later in the Documentation and Educational Research Center of the Preschools and Infant-toddler Centers - Istituzione of the Municipality of Reggio Emilia, shared the history, values, and theories of the storied education project of Reggio Emilia. Marina began by looking back to 1860 and the contributions of Ferrante Aporti and Friedrich Frobel, continued through the Second World War, liberation, the “brick by brick” building of Villa Cella, the mobilization and emancipation of women in Italy, and the birth of preschools and infant-toddler centers as municipal services. It is a history of evolution, founded by those with a shared vision for education working in collaboration. Through additional presentations during the conference, Marina elaborated on the values of the educational project by sharing examples from the children, families, and educators—including Loris Malaguzzi, collegial founder of Reggio Emilia’s approach.

Children can feel the attention there is in the local area, feeling the different ways of working with teachers, feeling the solidarity. Preserving this is a dialogue in an environment that is carefully cared for. The children feel that they count, for the present and the future.
The way we think of designing schools is to think about a school as a concrete rendition of the aesthetics of relations.

Marina and Nunzia continued in the spirit of exchange, building a structure to think together each day after the presentations. Questions and comments were collected both orally and in written form. It was a comfortable way to encourage participants to ask questions without constraints. Sometimes, questions were answered directly; sometimes, questions required more consideration and responses were deftly woven into the presentations of the following days. This style of being together mirrored an attitude that is reflected in Nunzia’s words,

We must tear teachers from the solitude that deforms them because this is an image that the old pedagogy gave us…. We must take this old idea and introduce it into a new construct, into a way of working which introduces exchanges, bringing together different points of view.

During announcements each day, an effort was made to highlight organizations and people who made a commitment to be in professional development in Madison. Kinderberry Hill Child Development was the first to register for the conference and received a complimentary registration to a future NAREA conference. Butler University brought the largest group from one organization with

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Nunzia Franzese, pedagogista for Reggio Children, contributed presentations based on values and theories of Reggio Emilia’s educational project, including discussions of contexts within the infant-toddler centers and preschools and children’s learning processes. Nunzia shared, through images and narratives, examples of children’s and adults’ work where creativity is seen as a universal quality of the learning process. Speaking of schools as places of life, Nunzia captured the attention of the group as she talked about designing spaces and work in a process of circularity.

We think of our schools as places of life that elaborate a living culture—not just children’s culture but a culture of all the subjectivities. A place where different professional profiles come together, a place of parents, and where the community around the school has a relationship with the school.

The way we think of designing schools is to think about a school as a concrete rendition of the aesthetics of relations.
Butler University brought the largest group from one organization with ten participants. To recognize the importance of collegial learning, NAREA recognized their commitment with two complimentary registrations to a future NAREA conference.

The process of building relationships through exchange, dialogue, and thinking together.

It was not unusual to run into conference attendees at the exhibit after the conference had ended for the day. This illustrated the strong pull of the exhibit and the commitment of conference participants to engage with its messages.

It is with sincere appreciation that we thank our colleagues from Reggio Emilia, Italy, Marina Castagnetti, Nunzia Franzese, and Jane McCall who shared three days with us in professional exchange. It was delightful to work with Preschool of the Arts, Madison Public Library, and Overture Center for the Arts, and we are grateful for their generous contributions to the 10th NAREA Winter Conference. We extend our appreciation to the children, families, and educators of Preschool of the Arts for giving shape to this conference. We are encouraged and motivated by all the educators who, from various contexts, work to ensure all children’s rights to education based in the highest ideals and knowledge are granted.

Ten participants. To recognize the importance of collegial learning, NAREA recognized their commitment with two complimentary registrations to a future NAREA conference. Honorable mention went to Grand Rapids Early Discovery Center and Google Children’s Center, each with groups of eight educators.

It was inspiring to be with educators who worked together on a daily basis and who invested in study and learning in a reciprocal and shared manner. Keeping with tradition, NAREA gifted a few books to participants as a way of giving value to study beyond conference attendance. Marina Castagnetti, one of the authors of “Journey into the Rights of Children,” was happy to personally present the book to Kellie Estevas from Indianapolis, Indiana, whose name was drawn from all those registered. We hope these books will serve as important touchstones for the teachers and increase awareness of the tremendous educational value in materials published by Reggio Children.

Participants eagerly greeted the sunshine each afternoon as they left the Wisconsin Historical Society Auditorium for breakout opportunities including: visits to “The Wonder of Learning-The Hundred Languages of Children” exhibit, small group discussions, school tour to Preschool of the Arts, and local cultural encounters. It was a time to digest and reflect upon the theories and practices discussed during the mornings and to continue...
Our hope is that the time spent at Wisconsin Historical Society, engaged in the ongoing study of the Reggio Emilia educational project, thinking and learning together, will serve to support all who attended and that each participant will continue to progress in their efforts to give concrete reality to the rights of children. With Wisconsin’s motto “Forward” coming to mind, we feel Nunzia’s words offer us a way to continue the journey in that direction.

Educating adults really needs to concretely offer opportunities... curious adults for curious children, capable of feeling wonder when confronted with the wonder of children, a sense of wonder and marvel. If adults are capable of feeling it, it can transform our ways of being with children in the daily life.
The Languages of Food
Book Review
by Rita Melia

Rita Melia is early years specialist with Tusla; The Child & Family Agency in Ireland. Rita has worked in the early years sector in research policy and practice over the last twenty-five years. As the Reggio Children International Representative on behalf of her previous employer, Early Childhood Ireland, Rita has become passionate about quality early childhood education and strives to understand how, as educators, we can ensure that young children have quality early childhood experiences. Rita’s PhD research explores the educator’s image of the child as a learner and considers how this impacts the pedagogical approach and children’s subsequent levels of wellbeing and involvement. As a Fulbright Scholar at Harvard Graduate School of Education, Project Zero, Rita undertook a comparative study in Reggio-inspired preschools in the United States. Rita is a recipient of a NAEYC Lasting Leadership Legacy Scholarship.

Allow me to start by saying that I experience the publication, The Languages of Food: Recipes, experiences, thoughts as delicious. It conjures and provokes feelings of warmth, pleasure, curiosity, knowledge, and relationships. I was asked to review this book after I proclaimed on Facebook that it is one of my favourites, which I can tell you it is.

Taking this opportunity to re-read the book has transported me back to relive my many encounters with the infant-toddler centres and preschools of Reggio Emilia. On my first visit to the city of Reggio Emilia and the early learning centres, there were many wow moments; however for me the relationships, values, rights, traditions, cultural context, and the many languages of food were central to this pedagogical approach. As a result, on return to Ireland I started to highlight the importance of the dining experience in young children’s lives, both at home and in centre-based care. I am reminded of the wise words shared by Sergio Spaggiari, retired director of Istituzione, who suggested during lectures that visitors to the preschools and infant-toddler centres of Reggio Emilia should look, listen, and absorb, and then go back to their own countries and use the information, and new knowledge to inspire practice in their own cultural context. This is what I have been doing in the Irish context over the last number of years.
This book and the many other beautiful Reggio Children publications have guided and inspired my thinking, and influenced my teaching and mentoring in early year settings in Ireland. I first read this book in 2010 and it is always close at hand when thinking about the holistic importance of food in young children’s lives. The book is beautifully constructed with short, easily accessible sections. In addition, it’s colour coded and supported by photos that give visibility to the food relationships that exist in the schools and the local community. Children’s voices, dialogues, ideas, curiosities, and understandings are captured and valued in mutual respect with the educators. The book not only gives visibility to the importance of food within a system of relationships, it provides nutritional facts and places food as a core element, which has significant value in this pedagogical approach.

The language, colour, and most beautiful presentation tantalises the senses; it transports the reader and awakens curiosities about food and the importance of food for children’s holistic health and well-being. This book is the go-to resource for early years professionals: from framing food as the essential ingredient for young children’s nutritional well-being to ensuring a well-balanced diet and dietary choices. The publication places the child at the centre of all considerations.

The purpose of reflecting about food and its nutritional values, as well as education about food, and the culture and social aspects of food are all underpinned by a desire to meet with children’s “approval and satisfaction” (Cavallini & Tedeschi, 2008), as outlined in the publication. Pleasure is a theme, which is infused throughout the book. The pleasure of discovery, manipulation, dialogue and exploration. The pleasure of sharing food in the company of others while also fulfilling a basic human need for nourishment is presented in this sensuous publication. This book says it all, the child is central, and children’s voices are made visible through their beautiful drawings and comments. The importance of the rich environment of the kitchen, which is

Credits
Images courtesy of Project Infinity schools: Grant Park Cooperative Preschool, Peachtree Presbyterian Preschool, The Nest Nursery School.
All rights reserved.
the living heart and soul of the infant toddler centres and preschools of Reggio Emilia, is highlighted.

In essence, this publication speaks to the values and principles, which are core to Reggio Emilia’s approach to early childhood education. These values include a recognition of the child as competent and confident: a child with rights not just needs. The importance of the rich environment, where professionals are constantly seeking new knowledge in dialogue with children, is also evident. The cultural context together with the responsibilities and care of the environment ensures that this publication provides a wealth of knowledge to support reflection and further provocations.

I have referred to this publication over the last number of years as a basis for thinking about the many languages of food in early years settings. This book was the catalyst for many of my international presentations and my onsite mentoring and support work in early years settings in Ireland. I have presented experiential workshops where educators reflect on memorable meals that they have shared with colleagues. I have supported early years educators to use pedagogical documentation to make children’s learning visible as they manipulate, investigate, and enjoy the pleasures of the many languages of food.

I hope that this publication gives you pleasure and feeds your soul as it has mine. Enjoy, ingest, and use the learning from this beautiful publication to further enhance the quality of your collaborations with children in early years settings, buon appetito!
In the Infant-toddler Centers and Preschools of Reggio Emilia, the kitchen has always been an important element of quality in the identity of the services, conveying values and choices and supporting the entire pedagogical project. The kitchen is a place of particular symbolic and cultural significance, expressing care, attention to others, and the value of differences in customs and traditions.

MADDALENA TEDESCHI
Pedagogista, Preschools and Infant-toddler Centers
Istituzione of the Municipality of Reggio Emilia

The Languages of Food, p. 14
Resources

Organizations

NAREA
North American Reggio Emilia Alliance
www.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 NAREA
770.552.0179
narea@reggioalliance.org
www.store.reggioalliance.org
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

November 2019 (Dates TBD):
International Study Group
Contact: Reggio Children
www.reggiochildren.it

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–May 2019 | Madison, WI
Hosted by the Preschool of the Arts, 4-C, Madison Public Library, and The Overture Center for the Arts, the exhibit will be located at Madison Central Library and Playhouse Gallery, Overture Center and accompanied by a series of professional development initiatives.
Contact: Ann Gadzikowski
agadzikowski@preschoolofthearts.com
wonderoflearningwisconsin.org

June–October 2019 | Atlanta, GA
Hosted by Project Infinity, a 19-year collaboration of five schools. The exhibit will be located at SunTrust Plaza Garden Offices in downtown Atlanta, and will be accompanied by a series of professional development initiatives.

November–December 2019 | Atlanta, GA
The Wonder of Learning exhibit moves to Kennesaw State University, with additional professional development initiatives.
Contact: Thresa Grove
thresa@reggioalliance.org

Innovations

June 2019
Call for proposals for the 2020 peer-reviewed issue.
Innovations has an open call policy for article submissions for the March, June, and December issues annually.
Contact: Thresa Grove
thresa@reggioalliance.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, reggiochildren.it, www.reggiochildren.it.
NAREA Professional Development

*Discount for NAREA members at all initiatives listed*

**The 15th NAREA Summer Conference**

Defending Spaces for Creative Freedom:
Spaces of Joy, Trust, and Solidarity
Atlanta, GA
June 27-29, 2019
Speakers: Claudia Giudici and Marina Mori,
Reggio Emilia, Italy
Contact: NAREA
www.reggioalliance.org

**NAREA & Reggio Children Resources**

We are pleased to announce NAREA’s new role as official distributor of Reggio Children resources for the United States. We thank Learning Materials Workshop, official distributor for many years, and will perform this activity along with other collaborations between NAREA and Reggio Children within the International Network framework. These collaborations include organizing conferences and seminars with participants from Reggio Emilia, Italy, and “The Wonder of Learning – The Hundred Languages of Children” exhibit project.

If you are interested in purchasing these resources, please visit the shop section of the NAREA website: www.store.reggioalliance.org

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**Echoes: Environment, Spaces, Relations**

In celebration of the 25th anniversary of *Innovations in Early Education: The International Reggio Emilia Exchange*, NAREA published the inaugural volume of the *Echoes: Environment, Spaces, Relations*, highlighting voices from Reggio Emilia, Italy, and North America. A compilation of previously published Innovations’ articles is curated into this themed volume.

Cost: $35 + S/H

**Charter of Services of the Municipal Infant-toddler Centres and Preschools**

Through the combined efforts of Istituzione, Reggio Children, and NAREA, we bring you a resource from Reggio Emilia: the English translation of the *Charter of Services of the Municipal Infant-toddler Centres and Preschools*. This book is given to every family as they begin in the infant-toddler centers or preschools to qualify the public services. Included are descriptions of how a school day is organized, the culture of the *atelier*, the way the kitchens work, and the priority access for the children with special rights, for example.

Cost: $15 + S/H

**The Wonder of Learning Exhibition Catalogue**

The Wonder of Learning exhibition catalogue reconfirms the values that underlie the educational philosophy of the municipal infant-toddler centers and preschools of Reggio Emilia and highlights the changes, innovations, and developments that have taken place in recent years. The catalogue is a beautiful and rich collection of many stories, projects, essays, photographs, drawings, and reflections.

Cost: $53 + S/H
Infants and children in all places in the world cannot continue to have rights only on paper; the right to have good parents, good housing, good food, good schools, good teachers, and good government is what they ask for and what is urgently needed. If we adults will keep in mind that the children are always the holders of new possibilities and perspectives—and not only in the field of learning and of knowledge—perhaps we will not carelessly dissipate, with guilty nonchalance, the good that they, along with we, possess.

– Loris Malaguzzi, Innovations, v.1, no. 1, Fall 1992