

# Call for Proposals

## Peer-Reviewed Issue

*Innovations in Early Education: The International Reggio Emilia Exchange* is a periodical published by the North American Reggio Emilia Alliance (NAREA) that focuses on the Reggio Emilia Approach to early childhood education. *Innovations* was developed in 1992 through an agreement with Loris Malaguzzi, the founder of the Reggio Emilia educational project, and the *Innovations* editors continue to work in collaboration with Reggio Children and the *Istituzione*, Preschools and Infant-toddler Centers of the Municipality of Reggio Emilia, Italy.

The mission of *Innovations* is to provide an ongoing professional development resource that respectfully represents the values and educational principles of the municipal infant-toddler centers and preschools in Reggio Emilia as well as those of educators in schools, centers, universities, and colleges in North America and beyond who are actively engaged in the study of the Reggio Emilia Approach with children, colleagues, and families in their community.

## AN ANNUAL PEER-REVIEWED ISSUE OF *INNOVATIONS* RATIONALE AND DESCRIPTION

In an effort to include more and diverse voices in an increasingly democratic dialogue among early childhood educators, *Innovations* publishes one peer-reviewed issue annually. The annual peer-reviewed issue includes articles that are meant to support collaboration among educators by integrating interpretation and example within reciprocal research and inquiry of teachers, children, and families. In addition, the peer-reviewed issue includes reflections related to each article that are written by one of the consulting editors with the goal of inviting readers to relate what they have read to their own contexts. Our intention is to support the work of Reggio-inspired educators in North America by thinking together through deeper and more complex interpretation and reflection of our own work and that of our colleagues.

*Innovations* endeavors to reflect a view of learning as a process of individual and group construction and to support the learning processes of children and adults through educational documentation, which includes listening, observation, and interpretation. Our goal is to establish a collaborative partnership among educators, children, families, and community members for systems change and social justice that recognizes the rights of children to quality education.

For the peer-reviewed edition, and in the full richness and spirit of Loris Malaguzzi's concept of the hundred languages, we encourage proposals from all early childhood communities. This includes those who have been traditionally marginalized. We affirm and elevate voices of historically resilient communities including indigenous people, immigrants, and descendants of enslaved people.

## TOPIC FOR THE SEPTEMBER 2022 ISSUE

### THE LENS AND THE MIRROR: CO-CONSTRUCTING THE MEANING OF COMMUNITY WITH CHILDREN

The practice of creating pedagogical documentation is much more than telling stories of children's learning – more than narratives and photos affirming that children have gained skills. It is both lens and mirror. Ansel Adams said "You don't make a photograph just with a camera. You bring to the act of photography all the pictures you have seen, the books you have read, the music you have heard, the people you have loved" (Adams, 1989, p. ix).

So, when we take a photo, it says as much about us as about the subject. This is also true about pedagogical documentation. A narrative encompasses the perspectives, biases, history, and assumptions – the subjectivity – of the narrator, who brings all of these elements to his or her telling about the subject(s). “What we document represents a choice, a choice among many other choices, a choice in which pedagogues themselves are participating. Likewise, what we do not choose is also a choice” (Dahlberg et al., 2007, p. 147). Documentation shows our view of the teaching and learning child as a citizen of the world. In addition, documentation enables us to see how we ourselves understand and ‘read’ what is going on in practice. When we document, we can also see the contexts we have created, the interventions we have made. And when documentation is shared with others – our colleagues, children, and families – we can open dialogue, invite reading against the grain, and create the opportunity to recognize our own biases and assumptions while expanding our knowledge. The Reggio Emilia educators speak of “*confronto*”, inviting generative discussion, the coming together of different perspectives, putting our heads together so that we can learn from each other. Documentation contributes to and motivates discussions, debates, and co-constructed meaning making.

In addition to the subjectivity of what is observed and recorded, the readers of documentation bring all their views, experiences, values, contexts, and knowledges to the reading. It is a complex web of relationships. The recognition that our knowledge is always partial, that there are always other perspectives that should be invited and considered, underlies the ongoing collaboration on meaning-making in the schools in Reggio Emilia. “I have never believed, nor do I believe now, that a story belongs to only one person. Stories are always plural and their origins are infinite” (Malaguzzi, 1991, p. 10). The value of many perspectives is transversal in the work of the educators in Reggio Emilia – a democratic thread running through every aspect of their work.

In many ways, children are rendered almost invisible in our society, recognized for deficits and the need to be readied to be successful individuals and consumers in a competitive world. “We know that the first people to suffer when rights are not at the center of attention are the people in difficulty, people with fragilities, and children” (Maccaferri, 2021).

But there is an antidote to this. As educators, one of our roles is to create contexts where children can make their thinking visible through the hundred languages they possess. “The children’s thinking, the children’s theories, emerge in their words but also very much in their drawings” (Maccaferri, 2021). In parallel, the research and thinking of the educators is made visible through what and how they document. It reveals their subjectivity, intentions, the contexts they have co-created, the interventions they make, and the impact.

Being in a reciprocal learning relationship with children calls upon us to consider opportunities that arise to valorize relationships among children, among adults, and with the community. We can build community that is both aware of children’s potential and rights and engaged in welcoming children’s perspectives and active participation.

We often hear the voice of adults, interpreting for children what they might want or need. “The younger the child, the less importance and credence their views and opinions are given” (James, 2005, p. iv). We consider how we talk to children and listen to them as an essential way of working:

**With this in mind, when you document:**

- What are children saying and doing as they make meaning of their lives?
- As neighborhoods and communities open up post pandemic, how are children participating as protagonists?
- What does participation in a community look like from children’s point of view?
- What are the vibrant alternative narratives we can offer to unsettle the dominant discourses that diminish children and challenge the sustainability of life on this planet?

- What do children draw our attention to?
- How do we involve children in making decisions in our schools about matters affecting their daily life?
- What are their opinions?
- How are we listening to their perspectives, both verbal and non-verbal?
- How are we seeing, feeling, and hearing the children so that we are not missing important messages they are giving us?

**When you are creating pedagogical documentation:**

- What does your documentation reveal about your own views, assumptions, and values?
- In what ways are others invited to participate as pedagogical companions in thinking with you, to help you to recognize your views and assumptions?
- What strategies do you use to support your ability to listen to children?
- In what ways do you make room and give time to children's voices?
- What stories from your context illustrate times you listened to children about something in your school and community and changed something as a result?
- What have you learned and how have you changed as an educator after listening to children?

**By way of example, Jeanne Goldhaber shares this story from the University of Vermont's Campus Children's School's early days that elucidates the transformative power of the documentation process as both lens and mirror:**

When the Center opened and plans were being made for the infant room, we had many conversations about choosing and organizing a space in which the babies were less likely to be intruded upon by the activity of the building, essentially a dormitory with offices and classrooms – just an incredibly busy place.

But after several years of documenting the infants in their space we realized that the babies actually wanted out – they didn't want to be isolated, they wanted to be in the midst of things! (One of my favorite observations is of three babies crowding around and knocking on the door until one of the teachers finally opened it and accompanied them out into the hall for a walk to visit their favorite offices in the building.) We slowly realized we needed to deconstruct the idea of who babies are. Engaging in the process of documentation as a community served as our lens and mirror. We looked and we listened to what the babies had to say and in doing so, we learned not only that infants are strong, curious, and social but also that our particular point of view about them had been driving our pedagogical decisions and indeed, limiting their opportunities to grow and flourish. This experience forever changed the culture of the school and the ways in which we saw babies as true members of the community.

**And so we ask:**

- What stories do you have to share about co-constructing community with children while documenting their voices and viewing them through the lens and the mirror?
- What are you learning about yourself and your subjectivity through the processes of documenting and creating documentation, and what strategies do you use to invite others to think with you?

We are interested in manuscripts that focus on some of the questions asked here in this proposal. Manuscripts should include citations and references to published work by Reggio educators and others that support the authors' ideas and are accompanied by a layer of interpretation by the authors.

## PROPOSALS FOR MANUSCRIPTS

Interested educators must submit a proposal for the manuscript they would like to submit to Nora Thompson by November 1, 2021: [nora@reggioalliance.org](mailto:nora@reggioalliance.org). Those submitting will receive responses regarding approval by mid-December. Proposals must include:

- a (1–2 page) summary of the documentation, research, and inquiry of teachers, children, and families to be shared in the manuscript;
- which aspects of the topic listed above will be featured in the manuscript;
- a summary of the images (photographs and children’s representations) that will support the manuscript;
- information about the authors and school, university, or center and community that is the context of the manuscript; and
- a statement regarding whether the manuscript has been submitted or published elsewhere.

## GUIDELINES AND REQUIREMENTS FOR SUBMITTED MANUSCRIPTS

Those whose proposals are approved must submit their manuscript by February 17, 2022. When submitting a manuscript to Innovations, please follow the following formatting and submission guidelines:

- Write in an informal, conversational style rather than in an academic style, characteristic of university term papers. Manuscripts written in active voice rather than passive voice are preferred.
- Submit unformatted, double-spaced article in an electronic Word file in 12-point
  - » Typical article length is 3,000-4,000 words.
- Include the name of the author(s) as well as title, affiliation, and history of interest in the Reggio Emilia Approach. In addition, each author is asked to submit a thumbnail photograph
  - » Head and shoulders, 1.25”w x 1.5”h, 300 dpi in original JPG or TIFF file.
- Support article with photographs and drawings/representations. Photographs should be submitted in high-resolution images
  - » (8” x 10”, 100% @ 300 dpi in original JPG or TIFF file).
- Drawings should also be submitted electronically in JPEG or TIFF files. **Authors must submit written permission for all photographs and images from parents or legal guardians. The NAREA Photographic Release form is available upon request.**
- Provide accurate and complete information for references and resources, formatted in APA style.
  - » Please review these APA guidelines and check your work before submitting: [APA Guidelines for Written Documents](#)

## PEER-REVIEW PROCESS

Details of the September 2022 issue peer-review process will be published in the summer 2021 issue of *Innovations* and posted on the NAREA website.

## REFERENCES

- Adams, A. Preface. In A. Gassan. (1989). *Exploring Black and White Photography*. Wm. C. Brown Publishers.
- Dahlberg, G., Moss, P., & Pence, A. R. (2007). *Beyond quality in early childhood education and care: Languages of evaluation* (2<sup>nd</sup>. ed). Routledge.
- James, A. (2005) In A. Clark, P. Moss, & A. T. Kjørholt. (Eds.). *Beyond listening: Children's perspectives on early childhood services*. Policy Press.
- Maccaferri, E. (2021, June 18). Conference presentation. NAREA 17<sup>th</sup> Summer Conference, Virtual.
- Malaguzzi, L. (1991). In the post-war city. In P. Cagliari, M. Castagnetti, C. Giudici, C. Rinaldi, V. Vecchi, & P. Moss (Eds.), *Loris Malaguzzi and the schools of Reggio Emilia: A selection of his writings and speeches, 1945–1993*. Routledge.
- Preschools and Infant-Toddler Centres — Istituzione of the Municipality of Reggio Emilia. (2010). *Indications: Preschools and infant-toddler centres of the municipality of Reggio Emilia*. Reggio Children.

### NOTE:

1. Previously published manuscripts will not be accepted
2. More than one proposal from the same author group will not be accepted

Please contact Thresa in the NAREA office for further information: [thresa@reggioalliance.org](mailto:thresa@reggioalliance.org)  
Or visit the NAREA website at: [www.reggioalliance.org/resources/innovations-new/](http://www.reggioalliance.org/resources/innovations-new/)

1131 Canton Street | Roswell, GA 30075  
[www.reggioalliance.org](http://www.reggioalliance.org) | 770.552.0179

Feb 2022