

Call for Proposals

Fall 2023 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, founder of the Reggio Emilia educational project, and continues to be developed in solidarity with the Preschools and Infant-Toddler Centers, *Istituzione* of the Municipality of Reggio Emilia, Italy; Reggio Children; and the Reggio Children—Loris Malaguzzi Center Foundation.

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 and interpretation of the Reggio Emilia Approach with children, colleagues, and families in their community.

RATIONALE AND DESCRIPTION

To include more and diverse voices in an increasingly democratic dialogue among early childhood educators, *Innovations* publishes one peer-reviewed issue annually. This issue includes articles 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 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 that recognizes the rights of children to equitable and just 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 2023 ISSUE

COMMITTING TO AN IMAGE OF THE CHILD THAT RESISTS THE GRAVITATIONAL PULL TO 'GET BACK TO NORMAL'

What does it mean when we commit, every day, to a strong image of the child? How do we excavate the layers of meaning of this term through every aspect of our pedagogy? How do we work intentionally with this image toward a vision of humankind and planetary well-being that nurtures our children and generations to come? Peter Moss (2019) has described the perfect storm of extreme inequality, climate change, and financial crisis that is entrenched in that "normal" that we can resist. "What sort of political questions and, therefore, what sort

of political choices might early childhood education involve? For Malaguzzi and the schools he worked with in Reggio Emilia . . . the first such question has to be “What is your image of the child?”” (p. 49).

We firmly believe that no matter how many years one has been studying the Reggio Emilia Approach, whether one is a new teacher or a seasoned veteran, there is no doubt about the importance of the fundamental principle of the image of the child as a protagonist:

- Children are active protagonists of their growth and development processes.
- Children possess extraordinary potentials for learning and change.
- Every child is the subject of rights.
- Every child, individually and in their relation with the group . . . constructs experiences to which [they] are capable of giving sense and meaning. (Preschools and Infant-toddler Centres—*Istituzione* of the Municipality of Reggio Emilia, 2010, p. 10)

This image goes far beyond the description of the child as capable, strong, powerful, and full of potential. The concept of the child as protagonist does not leave out the role of the teacher in the co-construction of knowledge—children learn and adults learn concurrently. As Loris Malaguzzi (1994) stated:

There are hundreds of different images of the child. Each one of you has inside yourself an image of the child that directs you as you begin to relate to a child. This theory within you pushes you to behave in certain ways; it orients you as you talk to the child, listen to the child, observe the child. (p. 52)

For many of us, the opportunity to truly watch children and reflect on the meaning of their words, gestures, drawings—their hundred languages—allows us (in some cases for the first time) to recognize the depth and breadth of the children’s spirits, intellects, and relationships. The stories that the educators of Reggio Emilia share inspire us to want to learn more, to listen with a more attentive eye and ear, to reflect on the meaning of what we are documenting, all in a culture of collaboration and exchange.

Tiziana Filippini (2012) tells us:

Documentation is able to transform your point of view, your way of looking, your knowledge, your image of the child, your meaning of teaching. Any sign, any material, even a picture can be a way to make visible the image of the child.

We are seeking *your* stories, North American stories that might serve to inspire and nurture those who are beginning their journey as students of the Reggio Emilia Approach. At a time when many seasoned teachers are leaving the field of early childhood through retirement or choice, we are asking you to look deeply at what sustains you in this work. How does being in close relationship with children cultivate a deeper sense of both the child and of yourself as an educator with your colleagues and families?

So, what are we looking for from prospective authors of the 2023 peer-reviewed issue of *Innovations*?

- Consider the fundamental principle of the child as protagonist, explain your understanding, give an example through a story, and expand on it. We are not seeking a long-term investigation but rather a detailed story of a moment, big or small. “Storytelling is the art that is specific to humans. And it’s the way in which we connect and foster community and build empathy and get closer to one another” (Hu, 2022).
- The story could be a transcript reflecting a conversation with children and their visual expressions through photographs and graphic languages. Make sure to include both the children’s voices and the educators’ voices.
- Be selective in the images you share to express depth of interpretation over image quantity. We recognize that it is often in the ordinary moments with children that educators experience growth. Sometimes these growth

moments can be expressed in a brief series of images (McKeag et al., 2016).

- As you are conveying your story, reflect on what you learned and the transformation you experienced rather than “here’s what the children did.”
- Include an explanation of how documentation was shared and reviewed with colleagues and/or parents to gain deeper insights. Dahlberg, Moss, and Pence (1999) illuminate the importance of this when they write, “we often return to the comment from Veia Vecchi, the *atelierista* at the Diana early childhood institution in Reggio Emilia, when we asked her how it comes about that they have got such a reflective and exciting atmosphere: *We discuss, and we discuss, and we discuss and we discuss*” (p. 139).
- You can share more than one story in your proposal.
- Finally, consider the following questions: How did the experience motivate you? How did it sustain your interest/engagement as an educator? What did you learn about the Reggio Emilia Approach? How might your story make a difference for teachers who are new to the Reggio Emilia Approach?

When we think of telling stories, we invite you to consider these guidelines:

- Compelling stories have some sort of transformation over the course of the story. What changed you and why? Often stories hinge on a decision where you decided to do or not to do something.
- How can you describe this experience so that the reader feels as though they are going through it with you?
- Think back to moments in your work that transformed you in some way. Why were they important to you? Spending time reflecting, by yourself and with others, may help you see the flow of your story.

PROPOSALS FOR MANUSCRIPTS

Interested authors must submit a proposal for their manuscript to Nora Thompson by **November 1, 2022**: nora@reggioalliance.org. Those submitting will receive responses regarding approval by late December. Proposals must include:

- the intentions for the manuscript (1–2 pages or approximately 1000 words);
- a list of the images (photographs and children’s graphic representations) that will support the manuscript;
- information about the authors and school, university, or center and community that is the context of the manuscript;
- a statement regarding whether the manuscript has been submitted or published elsewhere;
- a list of a minimum of four references that will be used to support the manuscript. This should include publications from Reggio Emilia educators and/or educators inspired by the Reggio Emilia Approach.

GUIDELINES AND REQUIREMENTS FOR SUBMITTED MANUSCRIPTS

Those whose proposals are approved must submit their manuscript by **February 17, 2023**. 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 vs. passive voice are preferred.
- Submit unformatted, double-spaced, electronic Word file in 12-point type.
 - » Typical manuscript 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” wide x 1.5” high, 300 dpi in original JPG or TIFF file

- Include with the manuscript a small collection of 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/representations 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 or from the NAREA website.
- Provide accurate and complete information for references and resources formatted in APA style. A **master reference list** of previously cited references within *Innovations* can be found on the NAREA website.
 - » Please feel free to copy and paste selected references into your manuscript if applicable.

PEER-REVIEW PROCESS

Details of the Fall 2023 issue peer-review process are published in the summer 2022 issue of *Innovations* and posted on the NAREA website.

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- Moss, P. (2019). *Alternative narratives in early childhood: An introduction for students and practitioners*. Taylor & Francis Group.
- 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