

What is "Reggio Emilia"?

Reggio Emilia is an educational approach or philosophy that comes from Italy. It is named after the Italian city that it originates from. It is based on these four principles:

- Children must have some control over the direction of their learning;
- children must be able to learn through experiences of touching, moving, listening, seeing, and hearing;
- children have a relationship with other children and with material items in the world that children must be allowed to explore;
- and children must have endless ways and opportunities to express themselves.

A Community of Learners

The Reggio Emilia philosophy sees the teachers, parents and families as learners, as well as the children. Teachers can see themselves as researchers who document the work and development of children. Parents are encouraged to engage in dialogue with their children to further develop and extend their learning experiences. This develops a strong connection between home and school.



Group Work and Project Work

Project work, with small or large groups of children, is a key aspect of the Reggio Emilia philosophy. Children investigate topics which stem from the interests of the children or sometimes the teachers to further develop their knowledge in that area. Projects are often based on questions which the children have asked and could take from a few hours to several months. Group work, discussions and "meetings" play a big role in project work.

Documentation of Learning Experiences

The documentation of learning experiences and projects is an important tool in the learning process for children. Photographs, observations, children's voices and art are all displayed beautifully to show children that we value their work and experiences. It is made available to them in their learning environment so that the children are able to revisit past learning experiences and work and build on these.

Learning Environment

The learning environment is seen as the "third teacher" in the Reggio Emilia philosophy. Care is often taken when designing the structure of the class rooms and teachers carefully plan the set up and how the furniture and learning areas are placed. An aesthetically pleasing environment is important with an emphasis on natural materials and calming colours.