

Key Points of the Reggio Emilia Philosophy

Children

- ★ Seen as innately strong, competent, learners capable of constructing their learning through a multitude of experiences, relationships, and methods of expression,
- ★ Operate in the “scientific method” (hypothesizing, experimenting and shifting perspectives)
- ★ Children with disabling conditions do not have “special needs”, they have “special rights”
- ★ Drive the curriculum with their observations, insights, and questions

Teachers

- ★ Are seen as researchers, working in non-hierarchical pairs
- ★ Spend much time observing and documenting children’s work both in words and photos.
- ★ Are collaborators with their colleagues, the children, and the children’s families in the learning process
- ★ Remain with a group of children for a three year cycle (birth to 3, or 3 to 5)
- ★ Are educated with “on the job” training

Families

- ★ Are true partners in the life of the center
- ★ Are expected to participate in decision making
- ★ Are reflected in the documentation throughout the center

Program/Curriculum

- ★ **The Reggio approach is a philosophy, not a curriculum.**
- ★ Centers have an artist on staff who works in concert with the children and teachers
- ★ One administrator with an education background oversees one or more schools
- ★ There is a regular routine to the day, but the schedule for activities is not fixed.
- ★ Children are encouraged to take multiple perspectives. They look at things from different aspects and angles.
- ★ All of the arts (visual, dance, music, etc.) are integrated into the daily life of the center, giving the children multiple ways to represent their experiences.
- ★ Children represent and re-represent their impressions through different media (drawing, writing, sculpting, etc.), building on their knowledge through in depth projects over time.

Environment

- ★ Thoughtfully prepared to function as the “third teacher,” designed to promote wonder and communication
- ★ Along with art areas in each classroom, there is an art studio in the building.
- ★ Classrooms are linked with windows and doors so that children see the center as a whole, not as a series of independent, isolated rooms.
- ★ The outdoor area is as important as the inside as a learning environment.
- ★ Natural light and plants abound.
- ★ Documentation of the children’s work is displayed throughout (and left up for a long time).
- ★ Lots of mirrors and places to climb up and under (to allow children to see things in a different perspective)
- ★ Attention paid to use of light and shadow
- ★ There is a welcoming area for parents and children to transition from home to school, setting the tone for slowing down, conversing, and building relationships.