



in depth study weeks

Municipality of Reggio Emilia
Loris Malaguzzi International Center
Istituzione Preschools and Infant-toddler Centers
Reggio Children
Friends of Reggio Children International Association

Preface

The Preschools and Infant Toddler Centres of the Municipality of Reggio Emilia are world wide recognized as high quality educational experiences.

The aspect of innovation that characterizes the pedagogical experience of Reggio Emilia has been appreciated in the world. Its study in depth has encountered the interest of many teachers, pedagogistas, atelieristas, educators and researchers in the educational field.

The Reggio Emilia experience receives numerous requests to realize researches and in depth study of its work.

For these reasons it was decided to make a new proposal of professional development opportunities that could go deeper into the organizational structures, contents, strategies, study and research of the Reggio Emilia philosophy.

This proposal will offer opportunities to study in depth the experience of the Municipal infant-toddler centres and preschools through different modalities of professional development occasions.

Through the revisiting of past experiences with study groups and dialogues with colleagues at national and international level we could see that there was an increase in requests for more in depth Study Groups that included the possibility also to explore only one topic for an entire week.

All the topics that were pointed out to our attention had the aim to reinforce elements of the values of the Reggio Approach and to develop more the aspect of study, analysis and research.

We took time to reflect on the observations and suggestions the participants shared with us as well as the development of research projects done in Reggio Emilia and here are the proposals for the Fall Semester 2009.

Four weeks of study, research and analysis in Reggio Emilia.

They will take place in Reggio Emilia at the International Centre Loris Malaguzzi starting from October 11, 2009 through November 6th, 2009.

First week: October 11th to 16th - The role of the teachers, the pedagogista and the atelierista. Which kind of relationships and strategies of collaboration? (max 70 participants)

Second week: October 18th to 23rd - Documentation and assessment: Which kind of relationship? (max 70 participants)

Third week: October 25th to 30th - The experience of the Preschools and research contexts and continuity with Primary School (max 70 participants)

Fourth week: November 1st to 6th - The experience of the Infant Toddler Centres and its contexts (max 100 participants)

Participants can register in one or more of the four weeks.

The individual participation fee for each week is : 1.000 Euro + VAT (taxes 20%).

Registration forms can be downloaded from Reggio Children website www.reggiochildren.it

Professional development strategies

The strategies of professional development we found have the aim to develop and support a deeper knowledge on the different themes that will be studied. Therefore for each theme of the week a bibliography will be given in advance before coming to Reggio Emilia.

The texts should be read and studied in order to develop thoughts and questions that then in Reggio Emilia, will find a place capable to welcome them, to give value to them.

All this will provoke thoughtful discussions and conversations among the participants, but also with the presenters that will speak as part of the different contexts that will be encountered.

Beyond lectures the participants will listen to, there will be also workshops, working in groups, role playing. The construction and elaboration of working tools through the visibility of the work (video clips, documentation panels, etc...) will offer the participants the opportunity to share their different points of views on experiences and projects realized inside the Infant Toddler Centres and Preschools.

Visits to the Infant Toddler Centres and Preschools will be included in the programme of each week.

The four weeks of in-depth study will be in English.

The participants are expected to have a good knowledge of the language in order to facilitate exchanges among them and to support active interactions and communications.

First week: October 11th to 16th, 2009

The role of the teachers, the pedagoga and the atelierista.

Which kind of relationships and strategies of collaboration?

(max 70 participants)

The infant-toddler centres and preschools are a system of relationships between the protagonists of the educational experience and the environment/physical space. They are an open system, flexible and dynamic that welcomes everybody and everything. Therefore the role and relationships among all the ones that are part of it is at the centre of the action.

Inside an infant-toddler centre and preschool seen as a system, which kind of relationships are different among the role of the educators (teachers, atelieristas, pedagogas), that are part of it?

If we think of a school as an ongoing workshop/laboratory in which children and adults' research processes are interwoven in a strong way, daily evolving, which kind of meaning do we give to collegiality of the work and to the alliances that determine a sense of common responsibility among all the ones who work and live in the centre?

The week of in depth study has the aim to give a contribution to answer to these and other questions deepening in the different professional profiles (teacher, atelierista, pedagoga, but also cook and staff helper) from many different points of view: responsibilities, roles, organization, strategies of work, collegiality, professional development and self-professional development, research (theory and practice), projections of the work.

Second week: October 18th to 23rd, 2009

Documentation and assessment: Which kind of relationship?

(max 70 participants)

Inside the concept of a pedagogy of listening the documentation of what has been observed during the work with the children, is one of the Reggio Emilia educational experience main keys.

Documentation is interpretation.

It is a way to narrate, to communicate even a personal interpretation.

It offers to the ones who are documenting and to the ones who are reading an occasion to reflect and to learn how to know.

The documentation in all its different forms, represents a tool for establishing dialogue, for exchanging point of views and for sharing ideas, therefore it's a tool for working seen as a presence in every experience carry on in the Reggio Emilia Infant Toddler Centres and Preschools. The Reggio Emilia educational experience since many years ago, has had the aim to share its work using this strategy as a tool to assess and self –assess children and adults' learning processes. This experience puts emphasis on documentation that is the core to facilitate learning processes and to modify the relationships between learning and teaching.

What does it mean to document? What do we mean when we talk about pedagogical documentation? How do we document? Which kind of preparation the teachers need to learn the pedagogical documentation? Which kind of tools do we need to support processes of observation, interpretation and documentation? How much documentation can facilitate new modalities of learning? Which kind of relationships between documentation and assessment?

These are few questions that will orient the week of in-depth study in Reggio Emilia.

Third week: October 25th to 30th

The experience of the Preschools and research contexts and continuity with Primary School

(max 70 participants)

The specific identity of the Preschool 3 to 6 within the educational project 0 to 6 of the Reggio Emilia educational experience will be studied in depth through the aspects of:

- organization
- educational environment and physical space
- projection of the work and didactics
- observation, interpretation, documentation
- curriculum and didactics

The work in the week will also include a meaningful analysis of a Preschool organization also in a relation to continuity with the primary school.

We thought it was important to establish and build a dialogue with the Primary School that wanted to express the necessity to modify an approach to learning.

The aspect of continuity has been therefore interpreted not only as a connection between one experience to another one or a transition of children from one school to another school but it has been interpreted as a culture of dialogue and of sharing experiences able to build transitions between the two different educational projects.

The connection between theory and practice, the achievement of same goals have been shared during the different actions that took place.

The aspect of continuity not seen as standardization but seen as a coherent development of an educational process and a continuity of values.

During the week, different projects of continuity will be shared:

- the quality of living a school
- the quality of documentation
- the quality of education and nutrition
- the quality of children with special rights' inclusion
- the quality of the approach to writing and reading seen as an interdisciplinary zone of relationships with art, of new technologies, of multiculturalism.

The different projects refer to the introduction of digital technologies...

refer to documentation...

refer to strategies of projection of the work...

refer to the socio-constructivist approach to learning...

refer to the relationship among different expressive languages...

...and they refer to the acquisition of basic tools in the Primary Schools.

Another important aspect has been the one to have the possibility to experiment in the Primary School the presence and the collaboration with pedagogista and atelierista, that have such an important role in our experience.

Both pedagogista and atelierista function as a bridge in order to share experiences between the two different school systems.

How these projects have and are provoking meaningful changes not only in the teaching inside the Primary School, but also in the less formal approach to teach inside a Preschool?

How these projects make closer the two different school systems (Preschool-Primary School) making visible for the adults and children the research of continuity in the values we share?

How can we more interweave the learning codes including in them what we call "the many languages of children" (body, movement, exploration of materials, performances, different kind of expressive languages...) creating synergies between the "languages" and fields of knowledge?

These are some questions we will try to build and give answers about.

Fourth week: November 1st to 6th

The experience of the Infant Toddler Centres and its contexts

(max 100 participants)

The Infant Toddler Center is an educational experience that has its own characteristic and its own cultural and social identity.

The first Infant Toddler Center was open in Reggio Emilia in 1971.

It was one of the first Infant Toddler Center opened in Italy.

It gave a contribution to build a new identity of early childhood, a stronger identity to an educational project 0 to 6, redefining the image of the child.

What is an Infant Toddler Center? Which kind of educational identity does it have?

Who are the protagonists of an Infant Toddler Center educational experience?

Which kind of relationships are there among them?

Which kind of projection of the work is possible in these relationships?

How can we give quality in a meaningful and rich daily life that points out children's amazement, their capability to explore and to learn through more than "100 languages"?

Which kind of didactical projection of the work can be done inside an Infant Toddler Center?

The quantity and the quality of these relationships, the environment where they structure themselves, the times and the organization in which they take place, determine the quality and the identity of an Infant Toddler Center.

These are some observations, reflections and questions that will orient the organization of this week of in-depth study.

Some themes of contemporaneity in teaching will be then encountered in a transversal way in the programme of the four weeks of study. They are interpreted in a peculiar way inside the Reggio Emilia educational experience of the Infant Toddler Centers and Preschools.

Themes that are part of the contemporaneity in teaching are : multiculturalism, bilingualism, children with special rights, organization of the spaces, families's participation etc...