reggio children
In this publication we present the mission, the values, the projects and actions of Reggio Children to communicate years of experience, future activities and dreams elaborated together by the teachers, pedagogistas, children, parents and staff of the municipal infant-toddler centers and preschools of Reggio Emilia.

To this end, with its continuous work in relations, Reggio Children has built up a vast network of contact and sharing, to make exchange possible with all those people, women and men, interested in childhood. This especially with: people from the school world (teachers, parents, pedagogistas and researchers); public, private or service sector organisations working in social and educational services; universities, research centers and ministries for education, national and international culture.

It is our conviction that the world of childhood should not be confined inside specialist literature and constructs, but should offer itself as an opportunity and commitment for each one of us, and so the public we address embraces all those who wish to approach the universe of childhood with a sensitive eye and the desire to act.

Our communication is at the same time a listening: to children and adults, with no boundaries of geography, ideology or culture. Our aim is to make ideas, practices, theories and experiences available and shareable so that childhood should be more visible, more audible.

The creation of the Loris Malaguzzi International Centre can be seen from this point of view and perspective; a place dedicated to encounter for children and families, men and women, teenagers and young people, a place for learning and educational opportunity, for study and research. An international place where every culture’s own original nature can be welcomed and dialogue with other identities and other cultures in generative, reciprocal exchange.

If it is impossible for a culture to exist without a social idea of the child, it is also true that culture, apart from its abstract qualities, is measurable only by its physical manifestations and inside the same country different cultures are generated.

The deciding factor then is how social ideas of children take shape in different places, changing in the course of transactions with culture and with cultures.

Loris Malaguzzi
On 11 March 1994, from an idea by Loris Malaguzzi, indefatigable promoter of Reggio Emilia’s educational institutions, the municipality of Reggio Emilia, together with other parties, founded Reggio Children - International Center for the defense and promotion of the rights and potential of all children. This was also a response to the numerous requests for exchange coming from teachers and researchers all over the world who were interested in making contact with the educational experience elaborated and practised in the infant-toddler centers and preschools of Reggio Emilia.

In an international context characterised by widespread cultural poverty in educational systems and scarce attention to children’s rights, Reggio Children offers itself as an opportunity for re-launching dialogue and sharing around a culture of childhood based on the necessity of respecting each child’s identity so promoting his/her potential and rights.
Taking its inspiration from the contents and values of the Reggio educational experience, Reggio Children sustains the valuing and spreading of the heritage of knowledge developed in that experience with the following aims:

- spreading a strong idea of childhood\(^1\), of the rights, potentials and resources of childhood still so often unacknowledged or avoided;
- promoting study, research, and experimentation around the themes of education giving priority to active, constructive and creative learning by children;
- defining more advanced professionalism and culture for teachers and in general for people operating in childhood and family services, through the creation of professional development initiatives for work and in work;
- highlighting the value of research, observation, documentation, interpretation of the children’s processes of action and thought;
- encouraging the value of documentation of children’s and teachers’ work using all the techniques of multimedia, especially the processes in the formation of ideas, hypotheses and theories by children while engaged in various areas of knowledge and experience (from the Statute).

All these things as we keep clearly in mind the scenario of values, culture and politics determining and making ever more urgent the necessity for intercultural education and education for environmental respect in children. Educating for the world, for us means building on the values of respect and promotion characterising the Reggio experience.

\(^1\)According to the definition by the UNO, the word “childhood” includes ages 0-18 years
company structure

Reggio Children is a company with limited responsibility, and mixed private and public capital. The alliance between the municipality and the citizens of the city, which has always strongly characterised the activities and commitment of the preschools and infant-toddler centers, is also reflected in the composition of the company which is made up of sixty partners: individual citizens, associations, institutions and companies. These include:

The Municipality of Reggio Emilia, major shareholder, with 51% of shares

The Emilia-Romagna Region, one of the Italian regions investing most in educational and social policy

Pietro Manodori Foundation, founded as an ideal continuation of the Cassa di Risparmio di Reggio Emilia, it is a non-profit making body with social objectives including the promotion of economic development and of the Reggio district

C.I.R. Italian Co-operative of Caterers, one of the largest Italian companies in the catering industry operating in various sectors of the market, from public catering to commercial restaurants

Coopselios, a non-profit social co-operative in the social assistance and education sectors, the company has been operating for some time in old-age, childhood, disability and psychiatric sectors

The International Association “Friends of Reggio Children”, gathering around one thousand individual members many of whom have contributed to the founding of or the development of the Reggio educational experience and who, by continuing to actively collaborate with Reggio Children and the municipality on various projects, confirm the solidity of the links forged between the experience itself and the city. The association also manages Remida – center for creative re-cycling of recovered materials supplied by companies and factories and made available to infant-toddler centers, schools and play-centers.
The Shareholders’ Assembly Made up of 60 partners

The Board of Directors Made up of nine members elected by the Assembly, It is presided over by a President
Carla Rinaldi
Board Members
Eletta Bertani, Gianluca Borghi, Riccardo Ferretti,
Silvia Grandi, Ivan Lusetti, Antonio Malaguzzi,
Sandra Piccinini, Italo Portioli, Luciano Rondanini

Board of Auditors Made up of three members
Valerio Fantini, Adele Marani, Riccardo Pasini
And two reserve members
Loretta Giglioli, Marina Marino
data summary

Reggio Children is a society with a rich range of diversified activities. It is a meeting place for numerous lecturers and researchers visiting from universities, foundations, ministries and organisations which work with childhood in the world and with whom joint research projects are carried out. To this end it organises courses in professional development, seminars, study meetings in Italy and abroad, and oversees the publication of books and video cassettes which are translated into several languages. It also carries out consulting to organisations in cultural and educational fields.

A large amount of the earnings from these activities is re-invested in projects for increasing services for childhood and educational experiences managed by public and private institutions at local, national and international level.

Funds granted to The Istituzione for Preschools and Infant-toddler Centers of the Municipality of Reggio Emilia by Reggio Children constitute the Childhood Fund assigned to the activities of the municipal infant-toddler centers and preschools and, more generally to the promotion of initiatives supporting childhood in Italy and in the world. From the year of its foundation to the year 2007 Reggio Children invested about 2,000,000 Euro in this fund.

The data from the 2007 balance sheet can be summarised as an explanation of the financial working of the society: that year Reggio Children had an income of more than Euro 2,000,000.

In the field of publishing, Reggio Children has been active and has sold more than 220,000 copies of books and audio-visual materials, of which 180,000 in 15 different languages.
A culture of participation, co-responsibility and collegial work are values Reggio Children’s organisational structure aspires to and a context for activities. In real terms the structure’s existence and functioning are a choice of content, objectives and aims; a plurality of relations informed by multiple points of view and reciprocal participation.

It is a true system interconnecting Reggio Children, the Istituzione of Preschools and Infant-toddler Centres, Reggio Emilia’s Comunal Department of School, University and Youth and national and international partners. This close collaboration supports and strengthens the value of opportunities arising with the Loris Malaguzzi International Centre and manifests itself in the project-planning of activities and initiatives with full respect for the value of working in networks and the strong culture of exchange this generates.

**Board of Directors**

- **President**
  - Carla Rinaldi

- **Responsible for Project Promotion and Development**
  - Amelia Gambetti
  - International Network co-ordinator
  - Fund Raising
  - Communication and media relations
  - International liaison and consulting

- **Responsible for Supporting Functions**
  - Francesca Marastoni
  - Administration, finance and budget control
  - Information and communication systems, certification, health and safety

- **Management Committee**
  - Paola Cavazzoni, Amelia Gambetti, Claudia Giudici, Francesca Marastoni, Paola Riccò, Vea Vecchi.
  - **Co-ordinator**
    - Marco Storchi

- **Responsible for Research and Professional development projects**, Claudia Giudici

- **Responsible for Exhibitions, Publishing, Ateliers**, Vea Vecchi

- **Responsible for Study groups, Meetings and Hospitality**, Paola Riccò

- **Reggio Children Staff**
The International Network is a formal network built up together with reference representatives in the various countries Reggio Children has been interacting with longest in a consistent and sustained way. The network is founded on an idea of movement, exchange and reciprocity and for this reason is open to welcoming new countries that wish to assume the responsibility of participation.

It has been decided to organise regular meetings of all network representatives to further qualify the network’s activities of promoting quality education through deepening values of collaboration and dialogue in relation to identity of the new Loris Malaguzzi International Centre. These meetings will be held alternately between Reggio Emilia and the different network countries - one year in Reggio and one year abroad - to give opportunities for reciprocal exchange and professional growth. The first of these meetings was held in July 2006 in Reggio Emilia and the second was in Sweden, the first country to enter into dialogue with Reggio Children, in Stockholm. The latest meeting was held once again in Reggio Emilia in June 2008.

An international network is a challenge. This we think is the most important challenge for the new network. To become a network that respects diversity but at the same goes beyond a superficial sharing of experiences to become a mutual learning society with the courage to challenge each other in our interpretations of our different strategies in our different countries. Not to become simply a coordinating network.

Harold Gothson
International Representative
of Reggio Emilia Institutet, Stockholm

Birgitta Kennedy
Chairman of Reggio Emilia Institutet,
Stockholm
The Reggio Children network today.
A space has been left for countries joining the network over the next years, a network open to new possibilities and responsibilities.

**nordic network**
- **Sweden**
  Reggio Emilia Institutet
- **Denmark**
  Det Danske Reggio Emilia Netværk
- **Finland**
  Elisse Heinimaa
- **Iceland**
  Gudrún Alda Hardardóttir
  KristÍn Dyrjfjörd
- **Norway**
  Kari Carlsen

**NAREA**
North American Reggio Emilia Alliance
- **USA**
  Angela Ferrario
  Lella Gandini

**red solare**
Latin American Association for the diffusion of Reggio Emilia’s educational proposal
(latest addition to the Network, 2006)
- **Argentina and Paraguay**
  Maria Victoria Alfieri
  Carlos Tomasini
- **Brazil**
  Marília Dourado
- **Colombia**
  Tulia Gomez
- **Mexico**
  Sausan Burshan
- **Peru**
  Ana Maria Barrantes

**Australia**
REAIE
Reggio Emilia Australia Information Exchange

**Korea**
KAREA
The Korean Association for the Reggio Emilia Approach

**Germany**
Dialog Reggio

**New Zealand**
ReProvocations

**Netherlands**
Stichting Pedagogiekontwikkeling voor het jonge kind 0-7

**United Kindom**
SightLines Initiative

**Spain**
SAREL
Spanish Association in dialogue with the Reggio Emilia Approach

**Thailand**
Jackie Alexander

...
International dialogues
Over the years, as well as its own International Network, Reggio Children has activated exchange and relationships with educators, researchers, designers, architects, professionals from different backgrounds, various public bodies, NGOs, publishers and other situations in different parts of the world. Professional development initiatives, showings of The Hundred Languages exhibition, translating texts and distributing published material have all been opportunities for starting dialogue, collaboration and research projects.
It is known that childhood is an interpretation, a cultural construction. Each society, each historical period defines its own childhood, what it means, dedicates to and expects from childhood...

The image of the competent child is, I believe, by now familiar to all those present, the image on which the very experience of the infant-toddler centers and preschools of Reggio Emilia is founded. Competent at doing what? At forming relations with the world.

Carla Rinaldi (from “Questions in educating today” – published by the Municipality of Reggio Emilia, 1999)
Coherent with its mission, by means of a vast network of cultural agreements, the activities of Reggio Children are effected in a series of specific areas:

**research**
Promotion of research projects on childhood, education and children’s and adults’ quality of living and of inhabiting spaces

**professional development**
Study and exchange groups
National and international seminars and conferences
Specialisation courses for graduates
Workshops
Professional development courses

**consulting and collaboration**
Design and pedagogical and managerial supervision of infant-toddler centers and preschools
Consulting for the design of environments, places and objects dedicated to childhood

**exhibitions**
Designing and setting up exhibitions with related pedagogical initiatives in collaboration with other organisations
Management of the various editions of “The Hundred Languages of Children” and “The Wonder of Learning” exhibitions

**publishing**
The international newsletter Rechild
Publications on pedagogical experiences
Catalogues
Audio-visual materials
Portfolios, posters and various artefacts

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**Loris Malaguzzi International Centre**
Since February 2006 co-ordination and management of activities and projects in collaboration with Reggio Emilia Istituzione for preschools and infant-toddler centres and the Friends of Reggio Children Association
Either education is a research situation and the research produces new pedagogy, or it is the performance of an offer delivered to small children and subduing them inside a message which is in some way already prefabricated and encoded.

Loris Malaguzzi (from a lecture held in Bologna for the occasion of the opening of “The hundred languages of children” exhibition, February 1990)

Research has been developed as a way of learning/teaching inside the Reggio pedagogical project since the very beginning, and has been taken up by Reggio Children as a fundamental concept for its own activities. So it becomes a deepening of experience, inquiry, description, documentation, sharing, consolidation, cultural growth and professional development.

Research as a term capable of describing the straining to know which is activated each time authentic processes of knowledge are created. Research to describe the individual and common journey in the direction of new universes of possibility... in the attempt to define the vital effort that can bring together children and adults inside and outside the school. Because I am convinced that only this “attitude of research” is worthy of proposition as an existential and ethical attitude in our world which is so subject to change and fracture, to positive but also dangerous hybrids of race and culture.

Carla Rinaldi
Research–professional development activated in infant-toddler centers and preschools is also structured inside projects promoted with the participation of universities, ministries and organisations in many parts of the world.

Working documents, tools for deeper inquiry, and publications are derived from the exchange and from the dialogue between such experiences. These include:

The meta-project for childhood environments
In collaboration with Domus Academy, which gave rise to the book:
*Children, spaces, relations.*

The project on family participation in the educational process in collaboration with the Municipality of Reggio Emilia, the American University of New Hampshire, the “Bicocca” University of Milan and with the cities of Parma, Trento, Milan and San Miniato.

Research as a way of making visible individual and group learning by children, in collaboration with Project Zero and the University of Harvard with the ensuing publication *Making Learning Visible.*

Alongside these publications and research a project has been developed since 2005 on experimentation with the physics of light - the Ray of Light Atelier - in the Atelier/Laboratory area at the Loris Malaguzzi International Centre in collaboration with Reggio Emilia municipal infant-toddler centres and preschools and the Engineering faculty of Modena and Reggio Emilia University. This Atelier is run by the Re.Search co-operative.

The Ray of Light Atelier is a place of research, experimentation and immersion in environments where light in its different forms can be investigated through exploration capable of causing wonder and curiosity, stimulating creativity and deeper enquiry. It is also a place for working on research into new teaching practice for the sciences with children of all ages.
This constitutes the activity of major commitment and is one of the fastest growing areas. It could be said that it constitutes the activity of Reggio Children because of that “inseparability between professional development and research, as a permanent method of elaborating new culture for education” which Carla Rinaldi recognises as peculiar to the Reggio experience (from Rechild no.0 June 1997).

From an organisational point of view initiatives on a national and international level are grouped in two main categories: short term professional development and long term professional development.

**short term professional development**

Organised both in Reggio Emilia and in other places in Italy and abroad, this includes different types of initiative:

**Study groups** in Reggio Emilia for Italians and foreign visitors. These are organised in collaboration with persons of reference in the various countries.

From March 1994, when Reggio Children was founded, to May 2007 more than 150 groups visited Reggio Emilia totalling almost 20,000 people coming from Italy and over 90 other countries around the world.

Winter and Summer Institutes are special initiatives, international weeks held alternate years in Reggio Emilia and other countries and whose “primary aim is to marry time for study with opportunities for meeting community and context that allow participants to get to know the local culture”. Amelia Gambetti

**Initiatives for exchange** between different educational experiences existing in the region. These have been intensified with the help of a Convention with the Emilia Romagna Region.

**Professional development** and consulting actions for teachers and pedagogues in municipalities and educational districts in several Italian regions, aided in particular by the stipulation of a three-year Convention between the Municipality of Reggio Emilia and the Italian Ministry for Education (1996-1998). Particularly significant dialogues have been initiated with some local education organisations as a result of these actions.

**Workshops** open to everyone involved in the school world on pedagogical and teaching topics and themes.
No-one in Reggio wants to teach others how to “do school”. What we want to do rather is to try and deepen our understanding, together with others, of why it was possible in Reggio Emilia for an (educational) experience founded after the war, to grow and consolidate with time...What we want to do is look together for the values we might have in common, in order to build a better tomorrow.

Amelia Gambetti

personalising the range of professional development

This is a defining feature of all our activities which are constructed from the starting point of participants’ knowledge requirements and their professional background, to favour real, reciprocal enrichment. Not only teachers, pedagogistas, students, researchers and university lecturers take part in the initiatives, but also politicians, administrators, town planners and architects.

In accordance with the philosophy which Reggio Children has loaned from the Reggio pedagogical approach, the work on professional development is always an interweaving of theoretical discussion and concrete examples and also always includes visits to municipal schools.

Reggio Children also organises Meetings which are open to the public held by personalities from the world of culture, politics and the arts including Luigi Berlinguer, Andrea Branzi, Jerome Bruner, Dario Fo, Howard Gardner, Kenneth Gergen, Susanna Mantovani, Roberto Maragliano, Alberto Oliviero.

Reggio Children also participates in Conferences and Seminars organised by institutions, cultural centers and universities in Italy and abroad.

long term professional development

This is financed principally by the European Social Fund, the Ministry of Employment, the Emilia Romagna Region and the Province of Reggio Emilia and includes courses for qualification and specialisation in the field of education.

Courses available up to the year 2004 offered specialisation in the science of education, qualifications for atelieristas, professional development for educators in early childhood centers and for the start-up and running of services in the non-profit sector.

Cultural and educational subjects of study in the courses are inspired by the experiences of the municipal infant-toddler centers and preschools of Reggio Emilia. The lecturers are directors, pedagogistas, educators and teachers from those schools along with professionals and university lecturers. Internships in the schools and infant-toddler centers are an important part of the curriculum.

Courses in professional development activated so far have been seen to meet with employment requirements, as the high percentage of employment among former participants demonstrates.

The first edition of an International University Master course (level one) in pedagogical co-ordination of educational services for early childhood was activated in collaboration with Modena and Reggio Emilia University in September 2007.

Reggio Children is a certified Institution for Professional Development in accordance with UNI EN ISO 9001-2000 standards for design and creation of professional development activity and study groups. It is also credited by the Emilia Romagna Region for management secondary education courses, starter courses and continuous education.
The continuous exchange with the world of education on a national and international level over decades of activity has led not only to the sharing of experiences connected to preschools and infant-toddler centers but to the request for consulting from various parts of the world.

In collaboration with schools, institutions, universities, educational organisations, Reggio Children activates professional development courses, pedagogical, organisational and management consulting for infant-toddler centers and preschools.

Of particular importance in Italy was the three-year Convention (1996-98) with the Ministry for Education for the promotion of quality education in Italian preschools. This was carried out through exchange of experiences, conferences, seminars, study visits and publications and determined an increase in contacts and collaboration on a national scale with initiatives for exchanges and professional development for teachers in small, medium and large cities including Turin, Catania, Salerno and municipalities from the Ticino-Malpensa area.

Collaboration of a particularly interesting kind has taken place with Naples Comune for management of three Remida centres in the city and consultancy supplied to private and public bodies on design and management of infant-toddler centres and preschools in a context of ongoing research. Important collaboration has also taken place with the Giacomini Group in Novara for the opening of their company infant-toddler centre and preschool, with the Giulia Maramotti Foundation for the creation of a new infant-toddler centre in Reggio Emilia and the Benetton Group for the start-up of a Children’s Centre for the children of employees and residents in Ponzano Veneto (TV).

Ties with Sweden have been particularly significant and enduring: they began in the eighties and saw the foundation of the Reggio Emilia Institutet in 1993 in Stockholm together with which we carry out courses of professional development, consulting in schools and the organisation of exhibitions. A Nordic Network (Denmark, Norway, Iceland, Finland and Estonia) was subsequently set up.

From 1995 to 1997 Reggio Children provided consulting and supervision for the pedagogical project in the European Commission’s “Clovis” Childhood Center in Brussels which the Commission had entrusted to a group of Italian companies to manage.
In the school years 1993-94, 1994-95 and 1995-96 Reggio Children supported the starting up and development of the Model Learning Center in Washington DC (USA), as the first school strongly inspired by the Reggio approach.

In recent years consulting to infant-toddler centers and preschools in dialogue with the educational experience of Reggio Emilia has intensified in Albania, Denmark, Germany, Palestine and the United States where in November 2002 many of these important places of reference and research together founded NAREA (North American Reggio Emilia Alliance), a network of educators, parents and professionals with the aim of raising both the quality of life and the quality of schools and centers for childhood.

Exchanges and collaboration have been taking place for several years with various experiences in countries in the Asian Pacific area: Australia, New Zealand, Hong Kong, Korea, Thailand and Singapore.

A research and professional development project was started in 2006 with Japan on the topics of education and creativity in early childhood in collaboration with the Italian Institute of Culture in Tokyo and Shiodome Italia.

Consistent with our conviction that the world of childhood should not be confined to pedagogy but should contribute to a new quality of life for children outside educational institutions, Reggio Children participates in research projects with companies in various sectors which are interested in qualifying their knowledge and production in new directions for this age group. Some examples are: ALESSI, IKEA, ISAFF, LEGO, PLAY+, SONY.

In the same spirit we collaborate on the design of children's furniture and spaces, of accessories for homes and for environments and contexts inhabited by children, in the home, community and the city.
This new area of activity was developed following two courses for professional development which were promoted and carried out. At the end of 1999 Reggio Children started up the experimentation of a new service for children from 0-6 years through its first business incubation, the Panta Rei co-operative, made up of nine participants in the professional development courses.

In this way the “Choreia” infant-toddler center was founded based on innovative pedagogical and managerial strategies, using a new relationship between public and private and including Reggio Emilia’s municipal pedagogical team which was responsible for supervising the quality of the service.

Following this, in 2001, Reggio Children reinforced the actions of its business incubation by providing pedagogical support to a temporary business association between two non-profit co-operatives, Panta Rei and Totem, for the management of the “Otello Sarzi” infant-toddler center.

Since 2004 Panta Rei has also run the Faber infant-toddler centre/preschool. Over the years Panta Rei has also collaborated with chosen Reggio Children consultancy projects.

The Re.Search Co-operative was formed in July 2006 by a group of young people with support and assistance from Reggio Children after participating in a Masters course for qualification of atelierista promoted by Reggio Children. The co-operative has been entrusted with the day to day running of the Ray of Light Atelier. It also organises activities and events for schools and the public and produces documentation on processes enacted by children.
A special form of collaboration which we like to highlight is that of co-operation: in collaboration with the Municipality of Reggio Emilia, the Association “Friends of Reggio Children” and non-governmental organisations, Reggio Children participates in co-op initiatives with organisations for early childhood in various countries, including Albania, Bosnia, Cuba, Egypt, Kosovo, Nepal, Palestine, Sahrawi and Senegal.

There has in fact been a strong increase in requests from developing countries for varying motives: support in opening childhood services, requests for material help or pedagogical consulting. It is a demanding area, and we are aware of the difficulties always encountered in the meeting between such different cultures, but it is also a fascinating experience for the awareness of reciprocal human and cultural enrichment deriving from it. Once again, we concentrate on listening, sharing, respect, on the co-construction of meanings, on the action and reflection which identify the Reggio educational project.

A percentage of Reggio Children’s income is set aside each year for co-operative activity in helping to deal with emergencies that various countries bring to our attention. Although we prefer to work on projects constructed in collaboration with national and international institutions, with governments or non-governmental organisations, we feel it is also important to respond to requests of a less structured nature.

*I believe that there will be more and more of these relations, both because this is part of Reggio Children’s mission and because this idea of rights, not only for children but for social justice in general, is increasing rapidly in all economically advanced countries. These countries, in fact are going in the direction of giving help to developing countries not so much as charity any longer, but as a civil commitment, connected to this sense of justice.*

Giordana Rabitti
The exhibition “The hundred languages of children” is an itinerant exhibition about children’s creativity. It is as once a tool for professional development, research and communication. For many it is their first approach to the Reggio educational experience.

Created by Loris Malaguzzi and his closest collaborators the exhibition has its roots in the forty years of experience in Reggio educational institutions and testifies to their originality and to the extraordinary journeys of research in their everyday work.

It was set up in 1980 with the name “The eye, if it leaps over the wall – hypothesis for visionary didactics” and put itself forward as a testimonial, both internal and for the public, to how much has been produced through pedagogical and creative research in these schools.

From that first version in 1980, with different updates, in various versions and in various languages, the exhibition – with its new title “The hundred languages of children” – has been shown in many countries in Europe and other continents and is constantly being requested for future itineraries.

In its national and international passages, it has attracted thousands of visitors, allowing them to discover and follow lines of research developed by children, and has offered a space for exchange and reflection during the course of related initiatives for professional development organised for the occasion at each venue.

Since 1997 the exhibition in its various forms (digital and non) and in various languages (Italian, French, Spanish, Japanese, English) has been managed by Reggio Children.

Since 2002 Reggio Children has also participated in the setting up of other exhibitions, taken from projects carried out in collaboration with various institutions, especially with schools in Reggio Emilia of different types and levels (“Children, art, artists”, “Dialogues with places”...).

In June 2008 the new exhibition “The Wonder of Learning” was officially inaugurated in the United States where it will remain for some years with a pre-defined itinerary. The exhibition proposes to continue narrating the story of children, teachers and education today, re-confirming the values of the Reggio educational philosophy and communicate the latest developments.

Loris Malaguzzi
(from the speech held in Bologna for the opening of the exhibition “The hundred languages of children” February 1990)
the exhibition “The hundred languages of children” venues 1980 - 2008

**European edition**
- **Australia** Melbourne (2 showings) Perth Tasmania
- **Brazil** São Paulo (2 showings) 
- **Chile** La Serena Santiago Punta Arenas Valparais
- **China** Hong Kong
- **Croatia** Pola
- **Denmark** Odense Århus Copenaghen Aalborg
- **Finland** Vaikkaakoski
- **France** Blois
- **Germany** Berlin (2 showings) Brandeburg Bremen Bürghausen Düsseldorf Essen/Bielefeld Frankfurt/Main Frankfurt/Oder Hamburg Kyritz Stuttgart Weingarten
- **Holland** Amsterdam
- **Iceland** Reykjavik
- **Israel** Tel Hai
- **Italy** Alessandria Ascoli Piceno Bari Bergamo Bologna Fano Naples Palermo Reggio Emilia (5 showings) Rome Turin Udine Varese Verona
- **Japan** Fukushima Kanazawa Mishima Nagaizumicho Shizuoka Tokyo
- **Korea** Seoul (2 showings)
- **Luxembourg** 
- **Malaysia** Kuala Lumpur
- **Mexico** Merida Monterrey
- **Norway** Arendal Hamar Stavanger
- **Peru** Lima
- **Portugal** Lisbon
- **Spain** Barcelona Palma de Mallorca Madrid
- **Sweden** Stockholm (2 showings) Boras Eskilstuna Úmea Kalmar Göteborg
- **Switzerland** Cham
- **Turkey** Smirne
- **United Kingdom** Belfast Birmingham Bradford Bristol Cambridge Cardiff Coventry Exeter Glasgow (2 showings) Kent Liverpool London Manchester Newcastle upon Tyne (2 showings) Swansea

**North American edition**
- **Canada** Vancouver, British Columbia Calgary, Alberta, Toronto, Ontario
- **U.S.A.** Amherst, MA Atlanta, GA Austin, TX Boston, MA Boulder, CO (2 showings) Cambridge, MA Casper, WY Chicago, IL Columbus, OH (3 showings) Dayton, OH Des Moines, IA Detroit, MI Fort Worth, TX Fresno, CA Holyoke, MA Laramie, WY Lexington, KY Memphis, TN Miami, FL New York, NY Newton, MA North Darmouth, MA Norwich, VT Oakland, CA Oberlin, OH Oklahoma City, OK Omaha, NE Pittsburgh, PA Portland, OR Richmond, VA Salt Lake City, UT San Francisco, CA San Rafael, CA Santa Fe, NM South Bend, IN St.Louis, MO (2 showings) St.Paul, MN Syracuse, NY Washington, D.C. Westfield, MA White Plains, NY Winston Salem, NC
Reggio Children has taken up the commitment of making the thinking and work of the educational experience of Reggio Emilia accessible and circulating it on their behalf, giving a voice to childhood. It has chosen to carry out this work through publications of its own or created through agreements with institutions or publishing companies.

The title chosen for one of the first series of books, “The unheard voice of children”, effectively sums up the spirit of the publishing operation:

Few writers (maybe Mark Twain, Lewis Caroll, Ian MacEwan) have managed to render the true voice of children without falling into the fake or distorted. In books written by adults in fact, the words put into children’s mouths often take on a strange, sweet quality which causes them to lose freshness and originality.

Who can claim ever to have read or heard the real, live voice of children? Very few, almost no adult can answer this question in the affirmative, due also to the fact that in world literature children have certainly been amongst the most severely gagged and silenced. It almost seems that a real if maybe unconscious conspiracy of silence has been waged against them. But children talk, have always talked, though their words have left little trace and rarely been listened to. And even though children’s words seem strangely similar to our own they refer to unknown, far off worlds and meanings which all too often we adults have been deaf and insensitive to. So that giving a voice to childhood means crediting them with the right to be the primary authors of their lives. Letting children speak is the courageous adventure of this series of publications which hopes to solicit listening for “the unheard voice of children”.

Sergio Spaggiari, Director of the Istituzione for municipal preschools and infant-toddler centers in Reggio Emilia (from the preface to the series)

As Vea Vecchi emphasises, “the books making up the Reggio Children catalogue have been created from this listening and respect for childhood. Many bear the children’s voices directly, others have been created from research in locus on different topics, still others reflect on education, but all of them have children as protagonist and are generated by great respect for the identity of childhood and the desire to preserve its perfume and persistent vitality”.
Updated to the year 2008 the catalogue contains thirty or so titles, grouped in series. Along with the series “The unheard voice of children” there are also catalogues, writings on pedagogical experiences, audio-visual materials, portfolios, posters and artefacts.

In September 1999, Reggio Children signed an agreement with Feltrinelli bookshops for the distribution of publications, book presentations, organisation of meetings and exhibitions of materials.

A network of distributors is active in many countries abroad. Reggio Children editions are also translated into various languages, including Albanian, Castilian, Catalan, Chinese, Korean, Danish, Dutch, English, French, German, Japanese, Norwegian, Portuguese, Swedish and Taiwanese.

**Rechild, periodical review**

The number of requests from national and international quarters has made it necessary to create adequate instruments.

A particularly effective vehicle for internal and external communication is the Rechild newsletter, which comes out every six months in Italian and English to allow for an international readership.

The publication, which was founded in 1996, contributes to the construction and upkeep of the network of dialogue and sharing within the world of those interested in childhood topics.

Rechild can be downloaded from the web site www.reggiochildren.it

We would like to underline the existence of other newsletters, edited by co-ordinators in various countries in the Reggio Children network, which aim to contribute the experiences issuing from dialogue with Reggio to others in the network.
In 1998 Reggio Emilia Comune purchased the Locatelli cheese warehouses so they could become both home to the Loris Malaguzzi International Centre and at the same time a symbol of urban renewal in this northern area of the city where the first industrial area was located.

The Loris Malaguzzi Centre was opened in February 2006. It was created to give greater value to a strong and distinctive characteristic of Reggio Emilia; the ability to lend listening, visibility and support to the rights and requests of children, young people, families and teachers. The Centre is a place dedicated to those people in the world who wish to innovate education and culture, where professional development and research intersect. Although not yet completed it is an open place so that its potential can be appreciated; open to all ages, to ideas, different cultures, to hope and imagination. A place of the possible, both necessary and useful to the concept of city ascribing value to change.

In November 2007 work was begun on the second phase of renovation work. This will see completion of the building with creation of a preschool, reception area, dining areas and hospitality facilities during the year 2009.

The International Centre houses the following:

- Reggio Children
- Auditorium Annamaria and Marco Gerra
- Marco Gerra
- Exhibition Space
- Atelier Laboratories
- Ray of Light Atelier
- Research Innovation Space
- Documentation and Educational Research Centre

The International Centre project has a total surface area of about 12,000 mq of which:

- Music, theatre, dance, multi-media communication, ateliers and play areas
- Exhibition areas for temporary and permanent exhibitions
- Areas for professional development and research for teachers, academics and families, rooms for meetings and conferences
- Centre for documentation and educational research in infant-toddler centres and preschools
- Bookshop, library, audio library, journal library
- Restaurant, self-service restaurant, café
- Early childhood school and Primary School (first and second year)
- Reggio Children headquarters
A place of places taking inspiration from the Reggio educational experience but looking to the future and giving definition to the international and multicultural dimensions existing since its inception.

The Centre is a tool that helps changes in our teaching, thinking and in what we as a city - as world citizens - have to do. The Centre is a grand metaphor for what we are, for what we have been, what we wish and desire to be. It is a way of thinking, of thinking of ourselves differently. It is a “metaproject“, centre as Loris Malaguzzi defined it in his talk at the Kohl Foundation; port, place of places, place for exchange, for ships to anchor in the evening and take provisions. But above all a place where they come to tell stories and listen, for through narrating and listening we change and we grow.

The Centre therefore is a place of listening just as our schools are first and foremost places of listening. That is why the Centre takes the relativity of points of view, of dialogue and therefore of research as its primary value.

In my view the Centre brings the theory of the hundred languages to maturity and fulfilment because at the Centre I hope we will be able to explore the theory more deeply, a theory not only psychological and pedagogical in nature but that is above all a political and cultural theory exalting the value of plurality and pluralism, of differences and dialogue between differences. Pluralism as a premise for all discussion of quality and democracy.

It is a theory synonymous with freedom - the freedom that guarantees research and which only research can guarantee.

Carla Rinaldi
40 years ago the first municipal preschool in Reggio Emilia was opened. The school, named “Robinson Crusoe”, marked the beginning of a long and extraordinary experience in early childhood education.

Loris Malaguzzi (1920-1994)

Loris Malaguzzi was born in Correggio (RE) on the 23 February 1920, graduated in pedagogy and went on to specialise in psychology.

As a young man he was a primary school teacher and already in 1946, immediately after the liberation, he began intensive work in education volunteering to consult to eight “people’s preschools” under family management. The schools were of openly secular inspiration, and some of them continued to work until 1967, the year in which they became municipal and began working side by side with institutes already under Reggio Emilia’s municipal administration.

In 1950 Malaguzzi founded the Psycho-Pedagogical Medical Center where he worked as a psychologist for more than twenty years. He also acted as director of the Rinascita Institute for veterans of the war and resistance.

At the same time, together with Bruno Ciari, Lamberto Borghi, Francesco De Bartolomeis, Aldo Visalberghi and Ada Gobetti, he continued to dedicate himself to pedagogical work in the municipal educational services which were amongst the first to abandon the title “Scuole materne” (Maternal schools) and adopt the name “Scuole dell’infanzia” (Early childhood schools).

Consultant to the Ministry for Education, director of the journals “Zerosei” (Zerosix) and “Bambini” (Children), author of articles and publications, Malaguzzi founded the National Group for Infant-toddler Centers in Reggio Emilia in 1980 and with them organised numerous conferences throughout Italy.

Conferences, seminars, research projects with universities and foundations, the various venues of the two exhibitions conceived by him, “The eye, if it leaps over the wall” and “The hundred languages of children” saw Malaguzzi travelling through Europe and the United States, untiring promoter of a philosophy for innovative education capable of giving value to the patrimony of potential and resources laid out in the “hundred languages of children” which was to receive wide recognition in Italy and overseas.

The Municipality of Reggio Emilia began to set up its network of educational services in 1963, with the creation of the first preschools (for children from three to six years) and from the year 1970 added Nidi or infant-toddler centers to these (for children from zero to three).

Beginning in 1967/68 the Municipality began responding to requests for municipalisation by all those schools which had sprung up immediately after the end of the war through the initiative and action of local people. Through the singular meeting between women’s movements, administrators (women and men), teachers, pedagogistas, parents and the extraordinary figure of Loris Malaguzzi, a passionate educational dialogue was established in the city which continues to this day with the participation of families and local citizens.

These educational services have always been distinguished by the modernity of their theoretical reflections and their deeply rooted commitment to research and experimentation supported by permanent professional development for staff.

Other distinguishing features are: collective and relational organisation of work, the importance conferred on environment as a voice in educational dialogue, the existence of the atelier (studio), the vital and intensive co-participation of families and local citizens in the running of the schools and the relationship with culture in the city and the most lively experiences expressed in national and international research.

The early childhood services transform an organic educational project for 0 to 6 year olds into an everyday reality. This project is based on the image of a child equipped with enormous potential who is the subject of rights. It gives priority to the child rather than school subjects to be taught, cultural cross-overs rather than knowledge divided into sections, elaborating projects rather than working to a programme, the process and not just the final product, observation and documentation of individual and group processes, exchange and discussion as principal strategies for teachers’ professional development and participation by families.

For many years this experience has constituted a point of reference for interest, study and exchange on the part of teachers, pedagogistas, researchers, administrators and people from
political and cultural arenas coming from Italy and from all over the world.

These are encounters nourishing the experience itself which from its very beginnings developed through a culture of dialogue, of sharing and of exchange with other contexts.

The first overseas interest in the Reggio Emilia experience began in the seventies with delegations visiting from Bulgaria, Cuba, France, Japan, Spain, the United States and Switzerland.

1979 saw the beginning of intense exchange with representatives from Sweden and this culminated in 1981 with the showing of the exhibition which testifies to the work of the infant-toddler centers and preschools in Reggio Emilia, “The eye, if it leaps over the wall” at the Moderna Museet in Stockholm. The exhibition had its debut in Reggio Emilia the previous year.

The success of the exhibition developed from here and was progressively updated to its current version “The hundred languages of children” which has travelled the world for 20 years taking its message of hope for childhood with its potentials and its rights, to all continents.

This pedagogical experience has allowed us over time to characterise the schools as places for the enhancement of children’s educational rights and the promotion of a culture of childhood founded on strongly crediting children with capabilities and potentials.

Aware of the civil and cultural wealth represented by Reggio’s educational services, the Municipality of Reggio Emilia has chosen since the 1st October 2003 to manage this vast network of services (run either directly or by different types of affiliated co-operatives) through the working of a specific body named Istituzione.

A new form of management guaranteeing government by the public sector together with cultural and organisational independence and its own programme of activities. The Istituzione has its own budget and its own Board of directors which includes: Sandra Piccinini (president) Germano Artioli (lawyer), Amelia Gambetti (teacher in municipal preschools for over 20 years and currently International Exchanges Consultant for Reggio Children), Lucio Guasti (professor at the Università Cattolica di Milano), Giancarlo Lombardi (former Minister for Education), and as
general director Sergio Spaggiari (pedagogista succeeding Loris Malaguzzi as director of infant-toddler centers and preschools).

There is no overtone of “privatisation”, only a courageous choice for innovative management whose aim, amongst others, is to qualify and increase the potential of early childhood services in our city.

Belonging to the Istituzione Scuole e Nidi d’Infanzia are:

- **25 preschools** (of which 5 are affiliated)
- **27 infant-toddler centers** (of which 13 are municipal and 14 affiliated co-operatives)
- **540 staff** (teaching and other)
- **45 school buildings**.

A vast network of services which since 2004 has made it possible to create opportunity for every family requesting a place. In Reggio Emilia thanks to the existence of comunal, state and private facilities about 1,600 children attend infant-toddler centers and represent 40% of children in the 0-3 age group (this is one of the highest percentages in Italy). About 90% of children in the corresponding age group attend preschools (about 4,600 children).

All of this is owing to years-long commitment by the Municipality which faced with growth in recent years has continued to invest in childhood.

In fact Reggio Emilia has one of the highest birth rates in Italy and is today a younger city which can look to the future with greater confidence.
awards and recognition

Following on the itinerant exhibitions of “The hundred languages of children”, exchange with countries abroad intensified and year by year more and more people from all countries came to approach the Reggio educational experience and fostered its international “fame”. This literally took off in 1991 when a jury of international experts in the prestigious American publication “Newsweek” identified the “Diana” municipal preschool (representing the network of municipal infant-toddler and preschools) as the most avantgarde school in the world for education in early childhood.

Over the years numerous prizes have been awarded to this experience.
recognition by the City Council of Boston (USA) for the Reggio educational experience, on the occasion of the exhibition “The hundred languages of children”

1992 Ygdrasil–Lego award (Denmark) to Loris Malaguzzi for works of merit in favour of childhood

1993 Kohl Foundation Prize (Chicago, USA) awarded to the educational institutions for early childhood under management by the Municipality of Reggio Emilia

1994 H.C. Andersen International Prize (Denmark) to the infant-toddler centers and preschools of Reggio Emilia, as the sum of Loris Malaguzzi’s life work recognition by the Mediterranean Association of International Schools (Mais) awarded to the municipal educational institutions for early childhood in Reggio Emilia in memory of Loris Malaguzzi

1995 recognition by the Department for Education in the State of Ohio for the experience of the municipal infant-toddler centers and preschools of Reggio Emilia

1999-2007 the educational experience of Reggio Emilia (representing Italy) is chosen to be part of the committee for organisation and promotion of the World Forum on Early Care and Education, which each year sees the gathering of hundreds of people from around the world

2000 Klods Hans prize 2000 from the Danish city of Hirsthals, awarded to persons or organisations particularly committed to the defence and development of children’s rights, in particular in the field of education

recognition by the city of San Francisco and Mills College (Oakland, California, USA) for the experience of the municipal infant-toddler centers and preschools of Reggio Emilia, on the occasion of the showing of “The hundred languages of children” exhibition (1999 – 2000)

prize from the city of Blois (France) for the municipal infant-toddler centers and preschools of Reggio Emilia in recognition of the quality of the educational experience

gold medal for “merit in schools, culture and art” awarded by the President of the Republic of Italy, Carlo Azeglio Ciampi, to the memory of Loris Malaguzzi

Remida wins the 9th edition of the Eliano Galli Prize – school category, in Nichelino (Turin, Italy) for communication in the environment

certificate of the Next Generation Forum / Lego Company to the infant toddler centers and preschools of Reggio Emilia as a particularly significant example of place where creativity is promoted

2002 Nonino prize for an Italian Maestro of our times, awarded to the educational project for early childhood in the Municipality of Reggio Emilia

Cittadellarte – Pistoletto Foundation awarded the 2006 minimum prize to Remida for having married ethics with creativity in environmental, educational projects and transformed a dis-economy of industrial discards into cultural economy

2006 Official Recognition by San Francisco city and county for Reggio Emilia

2007 Comune’s infant-toddler centres and preschools
the city of Reggio Emilia

Italy is everything, Reggio is only a piece in the middle of Italy, because cities are pieces of the world. Chiara, 5 yrs.
(from “Reggio tutta - A guide to the city by the children” Reggio Children, 2000)

Reggio Emilia is in the heart of the Emilia-Romagna Region, which has some of the richest and most fertile land in Italy, traversed by the River Po, lapped by the Adriatic sea and protected by the Appennino mountain range. Aside from its large artistic and cultural heritage Emilia-Romagna also boasts remarkable and widespread economic wealth, favoured by the development of the agricultural, production and tourist industries. It is without doubt the Italian region which has invested most heavily in social policy and is especially committed to favouring the elderly and children.

...knowing where you are, where you find yourself, helps you to develop your sense of personal identity, your uniqueness, as well as your place in the world. After my first week of observation in Reggio Emilia, I was struck by the fact that these are not only “Reggio Schools”, but the expression of a kind of “Reggio spirit”. Every place has its own spirit, its own past, its own aspirations. This spirit comes straight from the land. In Greek they say “autoctono” – coming from the land. Jerome Bruner
(from his speech on the occasion of receiving honorary citizenship, Reggio Emilia, June 1997)
A long and adventurous journey connects childhood to the city... an extraordinary adventure of women and men (above all women) who with intelligence and passion, made it possible day after day... An experience that has been renewed with the passing of time, and which continues still today, not without fatigue, problems and hopes for the future, creating an uninterrupted dialogue between children and the city.

People have always built cities because without cities everybody would have to stand up all the time and just walk around

Silvia, 4 yrs. 7 mos.
(from “Reggio Tutta – A guide to the city by the children” published by Reggio Children, 2000)

Reggio Emilia has ancient origins. The territory was traversed by migrating Etruscans and Gauls and became consolidated in 187 BC with the construction by the Romans of the Via Emilia, an essential route and the symbolic road of the region to which it gives the name. Along this road after some years, a military castrum was constructed by the consul Marco Emilio Lepido on the site of a pre-existing Gaul village.
On the Roman structure of the town a medieval town plan was superimposed with typical narrow, winding streets. It was during this period, in 1077, to be precise, that a castle in the foothills of the Reggio mountains, formed a backdrop to one of the most dramatic moments of contrast between papacy and empire: the historic meeting in the stronghold of the great Countess Matilda between Pope Gregory VII and the excommunicated Henry IV, Emperor of Germany, who had come to Canossa to repent.

After a period of time as a free comune, Reggio – now under the dominion of the Estense family – was the birthplace of the poets Matteo Maria Boiardo and Ludovico Ariosto.

On 7 January 1797, following the descent of Napoleon on Italy, Emilian cities held a congress together in Reggio Emilia during which they proclaimed the Cispadana Republic and adopted a standard which would later become the national flag of Italy. The hall where this took place, called the Tricolor Hall, is today the meeting place of the city council.

Reggio Emilia participated in the Resistance and for its contribution to the struggle for Liberation was awarded the gold medal for military valour.

Reggio is a city of medium size for Italy and in 2006 counted about 162,000 inhabitants. In recent years Reggio has seen a sizeable increase in its population due to an increase in the average life span, an increase in birth rates and immigration both from other Italian regions and from overseas. For the first time in its history Reggio is witness to a multiethnic scenario, with the presence of people from over 112 different ethnic groups and more than 11% of the population made up of people from other countries drawn by a flourishing economy. The rate of unemployment is 1.9%, one of the lowest in Europe.

The traditional farming economy has in fact been integrated with flourishing industry centred on agricultural machinery, ceramics (tiles), yarns and clothing sectors all of which together produce widespread prosperity. The co-operative movement is consolidated particularly in the food transformation sector, and has its roots in the socialist credo of Camillo Prampolini, to whom the large city square is dedicated.
The interest of the Reggio people in the fields of art, culture and leisure is demonstrated by the vast number of associations and public libraries available. To this must be added an atmosphere of solidarity which runs through the social fabric of the city, as proved by the several voluntary associations present in the city numbering more than one hundred.

These factors, favoured by a highly evolved network of services, have for years placed the area of Reggio in the medium-high ranks of regions (on an international level) using demographic, economic and social indicators. In an age like ours of great changes, we cannot take for granted that these successes will last. The attention that the city has always given to the education of its youngest is even more important for a future where individuals will respect and attribute value to differences rather than fear them.

In fact in the city a public-private system of educational services and continuous research around innovative methods for responding to the requests of families allows Reggio to achieve a high level of school attendance from the earliest years. Behind this is the conviction that a city giving credit to childhood and recognising it as the subject of rights creates the premise for higher conditions of citizenship in its people, which is necessary for maintaining that atmosphere of civil cohabitation characterising the city. And which has ancient roots if Aretino sang in praise:

Reggio the good, Reggio the kind.

And Stendhal declared:

... one should be here during the days of the fair, in Spring.