



Children need the freedom to appreciate the infinite resources of their hands, their eyes and their ears, the resources of forms, materials, sounds and colours.

# the hundred languages of children



## reason and imagination

Our experience... confirms that children need a great deal of freedom: the freedom to investigate and to try, to make mistakes and to correct mistakes, to choose where and with whom to invest their curiosity, intelligence and emotions. Children need the freedom to appreciate the infinite resources of their hands, their eyes and their ears, the resources of forms, materials, sounds and colours. They need the freedom to realise how reason, thought, and imagination can create continuous

interweavings of things, and can move and shake the world. Children must have the freedom to do all this without anyone arbitrarily setting the timing, rhythms, and measures for them. Yet this valuable apprenticeship, which cannot be left to chance, can only be accomplished when children are assured of the broad and active co-participation of adults.

**LORIS MALAGUZZI**

From the introduction to the exhibition

## 2004 UK Exhibition

An inspiring and celebratory display of young children's creative potential from the preschools of Reggio Emilia in Northern Italy.

The ideas, feelings, knowledge and understandings of the children are stunningly visualised through photographs, painting, drawing, collage, video and sculpture, with explanatory scripts and panels.



Images © Reggio Children & the Municipality of Reggio Emilia

## further information

About the preschools of Reggio Emilia, the exhibit and Reggio Children: [zerosei.comune.re.it](http://zerosei.comune.re.it)  
 A review by Reggio Children of the exhibition and its history: [zerosei.comune.re.it/pdfs/rechild05.pdf](http://zerosei.comune.re.it/pdfs/rechild05.pdf)  
 About the UK interest in Reggio Emilia and about SightLines Initiative: [www.sightlines-initiative.com](http://www.sightlines-initiative.com)  
 A report on the UK2000 Hundred Languages tour is at: [www.sightlines-initiative.com/docs/uktour.pdf](http://www.sightlines-initiative.com/docs/uktour.pdf)  
 A Times Educational Supplement review of the exhibition shown in Newcastle, 1997 [www.tes.co.uk](http://www.tes.co.uk)  
 (search for *the italian job*)

## AN EXPRESSION OF CREATIVE THINKING AND ACTION IN EARLY CHILDHOOD PROVISION

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**BIRMINGHAM** 8 NOV - 15 DEC 2004



**ReFocus**

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Il bambino è fatto di cento. Il bambino ha cento lingue cento mani cento pensieri cento modi di pensare di giocare e di parlare cento sempre cento modi di ascoltare di stupire di amare cento allegrie per cantare e capire cento mondi da scoprire cento mondi da inventare cento mondi da sognare. Il bambino ha cento lingue (e poi cento cento cento) ma gliene rubano novantanove. La scuola e la cultura gli separano la testa dal corpo. Gli dicono: di pensare senza mani di fare senza testa di ascoltare e di non parlare di capire senza allegrie di amare e di stupirsi solo a Pasqua e a Natale. Gli dicono: di scoprire il mondo che già c'è e di cento gliene rubano novantanove. Gli dicono: che il gioco e il lavoro la realtà e la fantasia la scienza e l'immaginazione il cielo e la terra la ragione e il sogno sono cose che non stanno insieme. Gli dicono insomma che il cento non c'è. Il bambino dice: invece il cento c'è. **LORIS MALAGUZZI**

The child is made of one hundred. The child has a hundred languages a hundred hands a hundred thoughts a hundred ways of thinking of playing, of speaking. A hundred always a hundred ways of listening of marvelling of loving a hundred joys for singing and understanding a hundred worlds to discover a hundred worlds to invent a hundred worlds to dream. The child has a hundred languages (and a hundred hundred hundred more) but they steal ninety-nine. The school and the culture separate the head from the body. They tell the child: to think without hands to do without head to listen and not to speak to understand without joy to love and to marvel only at Easter and at Christmas. They tell the child: to discover the world already there and of the hundred they steal ninety-nine. They tell the child: that work and play reality and fantasy science and imagination sky and earth reason and dream are things that do not belong together. And thus they tell the child that the hundred is not there. The child says: No way. The hundred is there. **LORIS MALAGUZZI** (translated by Lella Gandini)



## images and impressions

Several times during the period that the exhibition was in Exeter, I was moved to tears. It seems to me to have had a presence, a life of its own. During April 2000, I somehow experienced something powerful, something that will have an impact on me for ever. I lived and breathed the Reggio experience... How can it be that an exhibition, a static series of images, could conjure up such raw emotion? I cannot begin to answer that question... I can only say that if you were there, you too would

have been touched by the experience brought to you. I have a sense of anticipation, of excitement, a feeling of belongingness/connectedness/linkedness with a family of people, some of whom I have never met before but had a real sense of kinship with... This is the stuff of dreams and Reggio: co-operative, collaborative and respectful.

**MIRANDA NORRINGTON**  
exhibition steward 2000

## key words

inclusion education: listening & researching collegiality  
 children's rights creative expression spirit of enquiry  
 community leadership lifelong learning children as citizens  
 environment and aesthetics inspiration international exchange

**Reggio Emilia, a small town in politically stable, prosperous northern Italy, has become an international focus of interest for educationalists working with young children.**

The preschools there were originally established immediately after the Second World War by parents, and parents continue to have an integral part. Now the preschools are part of a network run by the Municipality which caters for almost 100% of three- to six-year-olds and 37% of under-threes. These democratically run centres offer full-day provision for children and families from all sectors of the community. The education of all children, including those with disabilities, is continually explored and developed by the staff, who always include an artist – an atelierista.

A sound and explicit philosophy, much inspired by the late Loris Malaguzzi who coordinated and taught in the Reggio preschools, underpins rigorous practice and has led to the inspiring, thought-provoking and beautiful documentation displayed in the exhibition. Children, however, are not seen as isolated and egocentric individuals; they are envisaged as members of families and communities, who in turn are connected with the preschool as part of that community.

What you will experience in this exhibition through the Reggio children's encounters with rain, shadows, light, birds, etc. will also remind you of the intensity, the joy, the probing curiosity, the creativity of children everywhere, as they learn about the world.

It is not helpful to think of the Reggio preschools as a new educational recipe. Educators there insist that visitors should not try to reproduce their methods, but rather that every preschool, through their own observations, develop their own unique culture and research approach. What we can and should do is to examine Reggio's powerful ideas, and consider their potential in the UK for redeveloping early childhood services with fresh insight. This is especially relevant at the present time when our society is looking for sustainable quality (e.g. *Foundation Stage Guidance: QCA/DfES 2000; The Learning Country: National Assembly for Wales*).