

The new exhibition has a narrative and communicative structure that reflects the contemporary, interwoven, and plural points of view that have always characterised the work carried out in the infant-toddler centres and preschools of Reggio Emilia.

It is divided into sections conceived as 'micro-places' that are interconnected; they do not follow a predetermined path and can be viewed in any order by visitors according to their own personal interests.

#### Setup structure

An innovative element of the exhibition is its setup structure, whereby the basic modules can be composed and combined in many different ways depending on the characteristics of the available spaces. (A minimum space for the layout is around 480m<sup>2</sup>.)

#### Contents

The Wonder of Learning is composed of six sections, six thematic nuclei around which the 23 projects described revolve:

- Introduction
- Dialogues with places
- Dialogues with material
- Ray of Light
- The enchantment of writing
- Ideas and projects

#### The levels of depth

The various projects are communicated through different levels of depth by means of three-dimensional objects, video films, publications on paper and audio recordings.

The aim is to afford visitors a personal approach according to the degree and focus of their interest, and to examine with different media the processes of the children and of the teachers, the role of the adult, the work tools, and so on.

## Sightlines Initiative

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Among the many movements children use to explore space, running is the one they use most ...  
*Dialogues with Places*

In past years (1997, 2000 and 2004) Sightlines Initiative has organised and curated the national touring exhibition of work from Reggio *The Hundred Languages of Children*, and developed accompanying discussion programmes. It was shown in 13 cities in the UK and been visited by many thousands of educators and citizens. It proved widely and lastingly inspiring in early childhood education and prompted significant change, including influences on the Foundation Stage Curriculum, the development of many new projects, attitudes in schools, Creative Partnerships, and much more.

We are now keen to bring the new exhibit from Reggio, *The Wonder of Learning*, to the UK as a catalyst for further change and debate.

Our audience will certainly be the field of early childhood services in the UK, but the exhibit will also be relevant to the wider community which is increasingly asking fundamental questions about education, childhood and society - what is it for? who owns it? who decides?

We will contextualise the exhibit with an international programme of conferences, seminars, workshops.

#### Seeking interested partners venue

We anticipate a single national venue, with availability of two months or more. This might be a bespoke exhibition venue, or a space which could be converted for the purpose.

#### advocates

We believe that this proposal will strike a chord with other professional and advocacy organisations, and are seeking links in order to raise its profile.

#### funders

We are of course, also seeking funding for the project. We believe that there will be significant interest from all those who seek a new experience of education for children, and to renew our shared understanding of childhood.

**There is more on our website ... Please call us with your ideas!** Robin Duckett, Director

#### The exhibition

# THE WONDER OF LEARNING: THE HUNDRED LANGUAGES OF CHILDREN a rallying call

An expression of creative thinking and action in early childhood education: a narrative of the possible ...

The exhibition speaks to all those involved in schooling – teachers, pedagogues, psychologists, families – and to all who believe that learning can be wonderful, liberating and engaging.



If we believe that children possess their own theories, interpretations and questions, and that they are co-protagonists in their knowledge-building processes, then the most important verb in educational practice is no longer to talk, to explain, to transmit, but to listen.

*Carla Rinaldi, President of Reggio Children*

What is unique about human learning is its dedication to possibility. When we human beings learn, the act of learning carries us beyond what we have encountered and propels us into the realm of the possible. The human learning process is not simply about acquiring knowledge about what we have encountered: it is dedicated to 'going beyond the information given.'

There is no other species on the face of the earth so dedicated to the pursuit of the possible.

*Jerome Bruner, New York University*

... an invitation to make things better for our children

About the exhibition

Loris Malaguzzi, founder-educator of Reggio's approach to early childhood education

Here there are children and adults, seeking out the pleasure of playing, working, talking, thinking and inventing, together in friendship.

The thesis is for a culture which brings together, relates and connects children's encounters and experiences - the ways they happen, their different qualities, their places - with the multiform nature of social and physical realities, rather than separating them.

Thinking, reasoning and words, together with feelings, creativity and aesthetics thrive on action and mutual exchange. There is an energy driving children, and that energy multiplies when children are convinced that facts and ideas constitute a resource. Just as their peers and the adults they frequent are also an invaluable resource.

Utopia, dreams and desire must be part of the quality of everyday life, making it possible to bring about that "rich normality" which goes beyond an idea of exceptional experience, and re-establishes a new, positive value for normality.

For children, and for adults, understanding means being capable of putting together interpretive theories that make sense of events and the things of the world. All theories, from the simplest to the most elaborate, must be narrated and listened to in order to exist.

Children represent their theories by different means, thanks to which those theories may be better known, understood, enriched and re-defined. This makes it possible for children's imaginings and intuitive ideas to take shape and evolve through their actions, their emotions, their forms of expression, representations of an iconic or symbolic nature and through the hundred, the thousand, languages they use to narrate and explain the world to themselves.



An educating community

Graziano Delrio, Mayor of Reggio Emilia

We are a medium-sized city in northern Italy with a history and tradition of solidarity for weaker layers of society and children. Here unity, brotherhood and liberty were invoked at the end of the 18th century as the Italian tricolour flag came into being in Reggio Emilia's town hall.

The desire to give concrete reality to early years education was manifested in Reggio Emilia in the period immediately after the Second World War, in a spirit of liberation from dictatorship, and thanks to the resolve of women and men who wanted a "new and different" school for their children.

Even at that time a sense of individual commitment to the collective community and clear regard for people were already very present in the city.

Loris Malaguzzi was witness to this; at the time a young schoolteacher, he later became both the inspirer and irreplaceable guide of our project, which in the early 1970s began to gain particular intensity.



Today sees the diffused presence of a mixed system of public and private schools: in Reggio Emilia ninety percent of children aged 3-6, and forty-one percent of children aged 0-3, have the opportunity to attend a preschool or an infant-toddler centre with common standards of quality. The more my years in office pass by, the more, in turn, I look on in wonder at this important educational experience we hold in our hands like a magnolia flower. Children in infant-toddler centres and preschools receive the dignity and respect of very important people.

What I mean by this is we know the children are competent. Children are competent to do research, construct knowledge and knowingness, to express themselves through all they have - hands and thoughts - thanks to the hundred languages they possess and to which ateliers - forging places not of aestheticism, but of beauty and meaning - have given shape and substance. Children then, bearing culture. Children competent at discovering places, as we can see in the exhibition's happy images of children running in the hall of columns; at discovering the city and reclaiming their place in it, as already seen in the first exhibition. Children competent at entering into dialogue with different generations they meet each day. Children, lastly, who know how to construct relations in their community of learning, to learn.

KEYWORDS

- COMMUNITY LEADERSHIP
- ENVIRONMENT AND AESTHETICS
- CREATIVE EXPRESSION
- INCLUSION
- SPIRIT OF ENQUIRY
- COLLEGIALITY
- CHILDREN'S RIGHTS
- CHILDREN AS CITIZENS
- INSPIRATION
- LIFELONG LEARNING
- INTERNATIONAL EXCHANGE
- EDUCATION: LISTENING AND RESEARCHING