

Creative Children's Center

The Turtle Times

May 2019

Reggio Influences at CCC

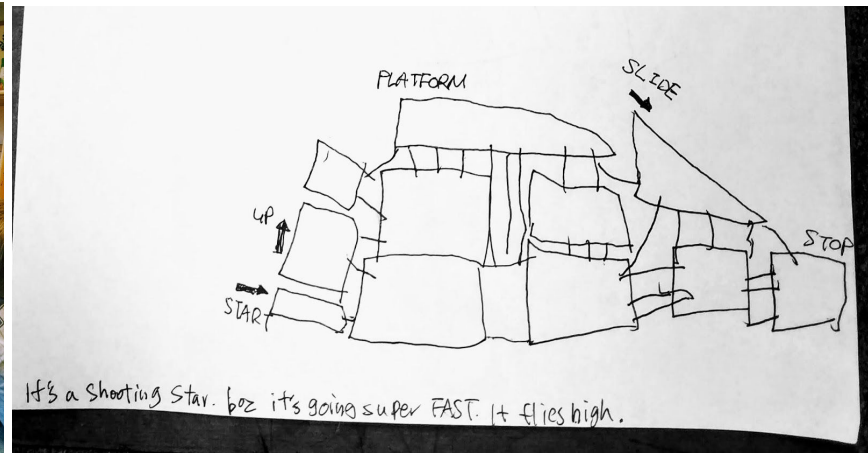
The Municipal Schools of Reggio Emilia, Italy Inspire learning in our school



“Our image of the child is rich in potential, strong, powerful, competent, and most of all connected to adults and other children.”

A Place of Relationships

Emerging initially from the rubble of World War II, the schools and teachers in Reggio Emilia, Italy spent decades developing a philosophy that views children as competent, capable protagonists in



What children learn does not follow as an automatic result from what is taught, rather, it is in large part due to the children's own doing, as a consequence of their activities and our resources. —Loris Malaguzzi, The Hundred Languages of Children

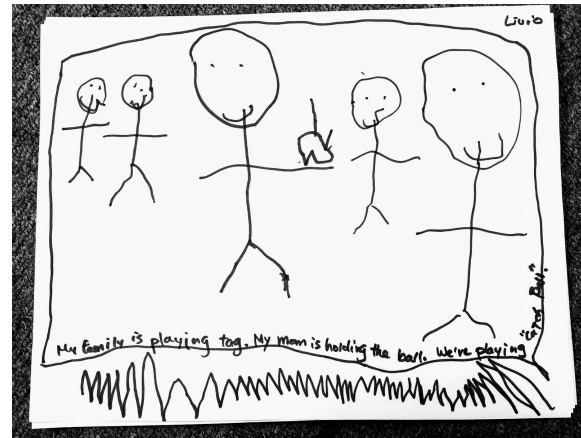
their learning. A child grows and learns through interacting and developing with others-- teachers, parents, children, and the environment. Central to this strong community and philosophy is building and developing relationships.

Children are surrounded by relationships. These relationships and the way children interact with them are viewed as teachers. Three teachers enrich the lives of children. The first teacher is the parents who are active partners in a child's learning. The second teacher is the classroom teacher--teaching through provocations, dialogue, co-researching, and intentionally engaging the child in meaningful work. The third teacher is the environment. Designed to engage children, to inspire learning, and to be responsive to the needs of teachers and children. The environment is an active and evolving space. "Fostering creativity through the work of young hands manipulating objects or making art, it is an environment that reflects the values we want to communicate to children." This is a space for them. A space for learning. A space for inventing and investigating. This is where their ideas come to life.

Children feel ownership and autonomy within the spaces--they feel the freedom and flexibility to explore, share, create and connect with others and ideas. Our environments at CCC are designed to



foster children's curiosity and creativity. Teacher Vivian shares: If you look closer, you will often see a collection of interesting materials peppered or being rotated throughout the classroom different time of the school year. Individual containers that hold ordinary materials like corks, rocks, paper, buttons, beads, and natural materials are offered to bring an invitation of possibilities and of wonder to the children – an invitation to explore and play.



Everyday as children meet, in Rainbow Rascals and around the school, students are invited to work with materials to express their interpretations, observations, wondering and growing relationships with the world around them.

The environment and materials help children think, create, invent, plan and do. Materials surprise us with images we couldn't have considered through words alone. New images nurture the words we have and help us to become comfortable with the complexity of multiple perspectives. In a learning community, images help us build relationships with one another. Materials open the door to The Hundred Languages of Children.

The Role of the Teacher

The teacher also plays an important role in learning. But rather than direct or dictate how to learn, in Reggio and at CCC, teachers help guide learning based on student interest. Teachers help students follow an idea, dig deeper, and find resources or materials. Teacher Niki explains: "One of my favorite pillars of the Reggio philosophy is the idea that teachers and students are co-learners. In short, the adults are learning alongside the children and don't always have all the answers! It is



through meaningful collaboration that we construct new knowledge together.”

You can see this in the unique and creative space that the Rainbow Rascals class designed after their field trip to Spectra Gymnastics. The children were interested in creating a gym space in the classroom. Like most, they imagined how the space might be. Teacher Niki explained, “The teachers wondered, would creating an open gross motor space in the classroom become too chaotic? What would the boundaries be and how would they be enforced? Will the space make the whole classroom become a high energy gym?”

Moving back to the strong image of the child--one that is capable and full of potential, the teachers went back to the students. “We approached the conversation openly with the children, letting them know that we weren’t sure how to make the space work in our classroom, and we asked them for thoughts and ideas.” Niki reflected. With the children’s input and the teachers guidance, the class experimented with their spatial awareness and asking, “How much space do we need to play in the gym? How many children can fit in the space doing these activities at once?” The whole class got in the gym at the same time to see how it felt! The class experimented with flow asking, “What happens when we don’t have a plan and we all go different directions? How many jumps on the trampoline will be just right for the jumper, but not too long for the person waiting?”

Rather than through teacher created and enforced rules, the children helped design an environment that honored their ideas, their learning, and supported them as they co-created the space. In the end the children came up with a list of agreements. Having a say in creating their own agreements made them simple to follow as the children felt ownership. The children have been protagonists in this learning experience. The older children were teaching the younger children how to do jumping jacks and push-ups. Rather than



creating chaos as adults might imagine, Teacher Niki reflected, “The space gave the children a safe and positive outlet for their energy, which brought a calm and intentional focus to activities outside of their gym.”

As Mary Anne Biermeier describes in *The Young Child*, “To teach well, educators must ensure that creativity and innovation are always present. Although good teaching requires organization and routines, it is never inflexible and rarely routine. It dances with surprise. It pursues wonder. It find joy at every turn.” (*The Young Child*, V. 70, No. 5, 2015)

Creative Children's Center has its own unique community of learners. We work alongside parents to create a community that is child centered and full of curiosity and creativity. We aim to inspire joy and wonder and dance with the excitement of possibilities. The schools of Reggio Emilia, Italy inspire our work as we continue to believe in a strong image of the child-- one that is a protagonist in their learning. An aesthetically interesting and engaging environment is a teacher that promotes learning and relationships among children. And remembering that we as adults do not have all the answers. We are researching, guiding, and supporting unique and individual children as they learn alone and together. What a rich learning community.



**"NOTHING
WITHOUT
JOY."
~MALAGUZZI**



Spring Explorations around the School

Spring is in the air! The flowers are blooming, the birds are singing, and the kids cannot wait to be outside again. Here at CCC, kids across the age levels have ventured out to discover spring and brought things back into the classroom to study more closely.

Play Pals

The two and three year olds have been preparing for spring in their class. The kids are so excited about flowers, bugs, birds, and their little plants they are growing in the window. Every day of class the kids come in and check on their plants. Big changes can be seen after 4 days of not being at school over the weekend. On



Tuesday, the students shared about not just what they see, but also how they can interact with their plants.

“That’s why they grow! They get big!” Celestine shared

Namo noticed, “There’s a little part--looks like a seed!”

Hunter reflected, “I won’t jump with it.”

“I will put it on my head!” Ava shared.

Namo stated, “I’ll look at it. It will get big and big and big! As big as me!”

Adam thought, “at my house.”

Thinking more about the differences between his plants and the others, Hunter observed, “Mine won’t grow big, big, big. It’s a small one. It has corn in it.”

Through conversations like this, the kids are connecting with each other, learning to share and listen to other’s ideas, building a relationship with the things growing and each other.



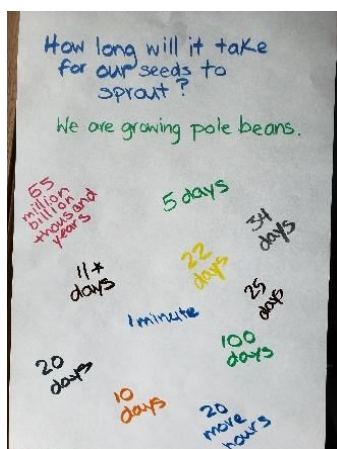
Sunshine Kids

Sunshine Kids have been embracing the change of seasons and using both our indoor and outdoor classrooms to connect to the changing natural world. Outside, students sought signs of spring around the yard with scavenger hunts and nature walks. Inside, the kids have been learning about the structure of seeds, what plants need in order to grow, and more. With gardening supplies brought in by families, they planted peas, pole beans, morning glories, and other seeds and we are excited to watch them sprout, bloom, and grow! Observing closely, they notice the differences in the seeds but also the plants too! The class digs into

inquiry questions, building theories about how the plants will grow.

The class is united in our cooperation and collaboration in nurturing our seeds and the children have many thoughts, ideas, and predictions to share at circle with each other. It is truly wonderful to see how our efforts to cultivate plants also cultivate relationship between the children.

There are some fantastic books the kids are reading too, such as *A Seed is Sleepy* and *The Reason for a Flower*, and have been enjoying springtime songs by Hap Palmer, Ella Jenkins, Laurie Berkner, and other great children's artists. From literacy connections to dance and rhyme, spring is everywhere in our room these days!



An Ear hearing the Bird Sing. By Henry

Elementary

In our elementary class, the kids are scientists all the time. Here, we discussed how do scientists observe the world and how it is changing? How do they remember what they see and hear? Kids gathered clipboards and pens and set out to

document their discoveries. They slowed down, observing closely, and discussing together as they moved about the yard.

"I hear birds! Birds are back because it is spring!" Henry shouted.

Pointing at a small tree, Caiden shared, "I drew the buds on there."



The Buds on a Tree.
By Caiden



Corbin took the job very seriously. Intricately drawing each observation, Corbin loved studying the different flowers that were scattered across the yard. At each age, these naturalist are learning more about the world around them and theory building about how things work. They are growing ideas!

Students across the ages engage with the changes they see in their world. They act out and imagine how a bird hatches in Play Pals--pecking, pushing, and stretching their little wings. They observe and study differences they see in seeds and plants and imagine what is possible hiding inside that small shell in the preschool classes. And they research and investigate, documenting their findings--slowing down to really SEE this world in Elementary. Spring brings new life to the world and a renewed enthusiasm for learning and discovering at CCC.

CCC Class Graduations Schedule

Tuesday, June 11th

- Play Pals 10:00am

Wednesday, June 12th

- Rainbow Rascals 10:00am
- Sunshine Kids 11:15am
- K-Third 12:15am

END OF THE YEAR POTLUCK

Join CCC Families and Teachers to Celebrate our year together with an evening BBQ at the Park.

At Orenco Woods Nature Park

7100 NE Birch St, Hillsboro, OR 97124

**BRING A DISH TO SHARE
AND/OR AN ITEM TO GRILL**

6:30pm-8:30pm

Upcoming Events:

- Teacher Inservice--No School May 24
- Memorial Day--No School May 27
- CCC Class Graduations June 11 & 12
- End of the Year Potluck June 12 from 6:30-8:30
at Orenco Woods

