

Curriculum

Love To Grow On is Accredited by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC). We utilize Creative Curriculum which is based on research by renowned psychologists and theorists, as well as, current studies. Creative Curriculum consists of five components which create a foundation. They are: How Children Develop and Learn; What Children Learn; The Learning Environment; Caring and Teaching; and Partnering With Families.

Our centers are deeply inspired by the schools of Reggio Emilia, Italy. At the heart of the Reggio Emilia approach is the powerful image of the child. We believe children are strong and capable learners full of potential.

History of Reggio Emilia

After World War II the Italian government gave a small amount of money to each town to help restore the sense of community lost during the war. The towns could use the money as they chose and most of them created community centers where they could gather.

However, in Villa Cella, slightly outside the center of Reggio Emilia, the town chose to build a school for young children. They saw this as an investment in the future. During the week women would gather bricks from bombed out buildings, and on the weekends, the men would build.

Loris Malaguzzi had graduated with degrees in Pedagogy and Psychology and was working as a child psychologist and educator. When he heard about the project, he thought the rumor was “impossible”. Malaguzzi got on his bicycle and went to see for himself. He stayed because the town had “changed the definition of the word “impossible”. The citizens were literally building a school brick by brick.

Malaguzzi became the driving force and is known as the founder of the Reggio Emilia philosophy. The world learned about the approach in 1991 when Newsweek identified the Reggio schools as the best early childhood programs in the world.

Reggio Emilia Fundamental Principles

Children are capable of constructing their own learning. They are driven by their interests to understand and know more.

Children form an understanding of themselves and their place in the world through their interactions with others. There is a strong focus on social collaboration, working in groups, where each child is an equal participant, having their thoughts and questions valued. The adult is not the giver of knowledge. Children search out the knowledge through their own investigations.

Children are communicators. Communication is a process, a way of discovering things, asking questions, using language as *play*. *Playing* with sounds and rhythm and rhyme; delighting in the process of communicating.

Children are encouraged to investigate and explore and to reflect on their experiences. They are listened to with respect, believing that their questions and observations are an opportunity to learn and search together. It is a process; a continual collaborative process. Rather than the child asking a question and the adult offering the answers, the search is undertaken together.

The environment is the third teacher. The environment is recognized for its potential to inspire children. The space encourages collaboration, communication and exploration. The space respects children as capable by providing them with authentic materials & tools. Our learning environments intentionally include our outdoor space which is cared for by the children and the adults.

The Teacher is a mentor and guide

Our role as teachers/adults is to observe (our) children, listen to their questions and their stories, find what interests them and then provide them with opportunities to explore these interests further. The Reggio Emilia Approach takes a child-led project approach which emerges based on the child's interests.

An emphasis on documenting children's thoughts

You'll notice that there is an emphasis on carefully displaying and documenting children's thoughts and progression of thinking; making their thoughts visible in many different ways: photographs, transcripts of children's thoughts and explanations, visual representations, all designed to show the child's learning process.

The Hundred Languages of Children

This is probably the most well-known aspect of the Reggio Emilia Approach. "One Hundred Languages of Children" is a poem written by Loris Malguzzi. The poem is filled with joy, exuberance, sadness and truth. In the first half of the poem he explains that, to the child, there are a hundred ways of doing many things like thinking, speaking, loving and understanding. Children also have a hundred ways to create and explore their own worlds. Malguzzi stressed the importance of not only allowing children to learn in their own way, but also the freedom to express themselves in a "language" of their choosing.

The second half of the poem details the destruction of the child's languages by adults. Malguzzi describes "school and culture" as "stealing ninety-nine" of the languages by teaching children to "think without hands," to "listen and not speak" and to "discover a world that is already there."

The Hundred Languages

No way. The hundred is there.

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 marveling, 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

Reggio Inspiration at Work at Love To Grow On

The Reggio Emilia Approach is an innovative and inspiring approach to early childhood education which values the child as strong, capable and resilient; rich with wonder and knowledge. Research has proven that this approach prepares children in the best possible way for kindergarten, creating a passion for lifelong learning. We know that every child brings with them deep curiosity and potential and this innate curiosity drives their interest to understand their world and their place within it.

We want children to retain their wonder of the world as well as the belief that they really can do anything. At Love To Grow On we see the positive effects of free exploration and expression every day, and every day it becomes easier to see the importance of honoring the languages of children.

We see languages spoken every day that we don't even hear. There are languages of smiles and secrets, wonder and excitement, sadness and joy. The truth is we know that even our youngest children "speak" with a variety of languages.

Pablo Picasso once said, "Every child is an artist. The problem is how to remain an artist once he grows up." At Love To Grow On we value and nurture each child's way of thinking, discovering, and learning. These languages, or ways of learning, are all a part of the child. We offer materials and opportunities for children to show their understanding and express their thoughts and creativity. Painting, drawing, sculpture, dance, puppet play, block building, water play, make-believe and drama, dressing up, collage work, conversation, and music are some of the activities we provide that engage children in a rich environment.

At Love To Grow On we value "play" and we know that learning and play are not separated. We emphasize hands-on discovery learning that allows each child to use all of their senses and all of their *languages* to learn. During "play", children form an understanding of themselves and others through their interactions.

Our teachers observe the children, listen to their questions and their stories, find what interests them and then provide them with opportunities to explore these interests further. Our learning journeys often take a child-led project approach. The projects emerge based on the child's interests.

In a world where children have less and less opportunities to explore nature and have undefined, creative play we are intentional about providing daily opportunities for children of all ages to be outside and to explore natural materials. We embrace opportunities for messy outdoor exploration and we see children thrive in this environment.

Our teachers display and document the children's thoughts and progression of thinking; making their thoughts visible in many different ways. Photographs, transcripts of children's thoughts and explanations, visual representations (drawings, sculptures etc.), are all designed to show the child's learning process and are displayed for parents and children to revisit.

Parents are always welcome at the center. We value the insight and information parents have about their child. Our staff is here to support parents in their most important role. Our center directors are here to answer any questions you may have regarding our curriculum.