

# The Reggio Emilia Approach in Hong Kong



**Betty Yau, Principal, Fairchild Kindergarten  
10 December, 2021**

# NO WAY. THE HUNDRED IS THERE



**Loris Malaguzzi (translated by Lella Gandini)**

(A poem)

Source:

<https://www.reggiochildren.it/en/reggio-emilia-approach/100-linguaggi-en/>

**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.**

# **NO WAY. THE HUNDRED IS THERE**

**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.**

**REGGIO  
EMILIA  
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# **NO WAY. THE HUNDRED IS THERE**

**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 Christmas.**

**They tell the child:  
to discover the world already there  
and of the hundred  
they steal ninety-nine.**

**REGGIO  
EMILIA  
APPROACH®**

# NO WAY. THE HUNDRED IS THERE

**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.**

**REGGIO  
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# The One Hundred Languages



*the 100  
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 mouths  
To discover  
A hundred mouths  
To invent  
A hundred mouths  
To dream.  
The child has  
A hundred languages  
(and a hundred hundred  
hundred more)  
But they need ninety-nine.  
The school and the culture  
Separate the hand from the  
body.  
They tell the child:  
To think without hands.

To do without hand  
To listen and not to speak  
To understand without joy  
To love and to marvel.  
They tell the child  
To discover the world already  
there  
And of the hundred  
They need 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 that they tell the child  
That the hundred is not there.  
The child says:  
No way. The hundred is there.

*Loris Malaguzzi, Founder  
of the Reggio Emilia  
Approach*

# Sir Ken Robinson

Creativity is as important now  
in education as literacy and we  
should treat it with the same status .

”

SIR **KEN**ROBINSON



# What is the Reggio Emilia Approach

- ★ Reggio Emilia approach developed in Italy over 70 years ago
- ★ The **child as knowledge maker**, capable and competent
- ★ **Self-guided curriculum**, projects based on the interest of the children
- ★ Multi Symbolic Languages (**100 languages**) - how to express yourself
- ★ **Teachers as researchers**, partners in learning – questioning important
- ★ **Environment** as the third teacher
- ★ **Documentation** showcases the learning
- ★ **Collaboration** and cooperation, building school community





# Reggio Emilia, Northern Italy

- ❖ The small town of Reggio Emilia was impressively progressive when they initially established their schools.
- ❖ An education model now adopted in thousands of schools around the world.
- ❖ This philosophy places the child's knowledge at the centre; flips the modern classroom ideal of teacher led learning.
- ❖ Great economic crisis and recession affected Italy, especially after WW2
- ❖ **Education is a human right, a right that belongs to children from the day they are born - if education is a right of all children, education is the responsibility of the whole community.**



# Reggio Emilia, the Town

- ❖ Every place has its own spirit, it's past and aspirations - in RE, investment in ECE formed part of the rights that citizens have
- ❖ Knowing who we are helps to build identity, uniqueness and our place in the world - isn't possible to understand the schools of RE if you don't understand that city that created them
- ❖ RE idea of education - a center is a place where children build a **culture of childhood**
- ❖ **A holistic approach - learning is a process by which we come to share the culture, this conviction teaches us to stress the importance of discovery and invention but also exchange and co-participation** (Jerome Bruner)



# Strong Image of the Child

- ❖ Places the interest and focus on the image of the child
- ❖ **Culture of children = culture of human beings**
- ❖ **Children seen a capable of building their own learning**
- ❖ Children bring creativity with them - creativity is in the world around them - their words and actions of understanding the world around them.
- ❖ **Learning is an active process**, built on exchanges



# Emergent Curriculum

- ❖ Following **children's interests** helps make the learning process much more relevant, and provides the opportunity for **deeper investigation** and inquiry
- ❖ **Interweaving of languages** (disciplines) - weaving together fields of knowledge
- ❖ Working together on large projects helps children share a common project
- ❖ When children work, they **reflect** on their work by discussing it with other children - this is the process of evaluation and self-evaluation
- ❖ True Reggio Emilia inspired classrooms reflect the interest of children, which changes all the time



# One Hundred Ways for Children to be Creative

Children can be exposed to many different hands on learning experiences:

- Nature play
- Sensory play
- Music & Movement
- Drama & Dance
- Physical Activities
- Cooking & Food
- Using all senses e.g. light and shadow play
- Science experiments
- Numeracy
- Literacy
- Language
- **And many, many more**





# Teachers as Partners

- ❖ **Learning alongside the children, as a collaborator in their learning journey**
- ❖ Teachers are interested in and take care of different intelligences of children
- ❖ Teachers are careful listeners and enter into dialogue with children - interested in the children's culture, thoughts, questions, wonderings
- ❖ When working with children - if children are the focus of attention, you understand more how children work, and relationships and strategies they use to know the world
- ❖ Working alongside children and updating parents on their progress through thoughtful observations



# Environment As the Third Teacher



<https://www.fairchild.academy/>

# Environment



- ❖ Children are **active participants** in all relationships
- ❖ No hierarchy of importance - different places in the school have different uses, every place has its own importance
- ❖ At the centre of the school = piazza/square/plaza - a place conducive to meeting people and connecting everyone in the school
- ❖ Use “codes of writing or numbers” - don’t use the term ‘literacy’ e.g. ‘code of numbers’ or ‘code for writing’ - the different languages for children to explore
- ❖ Exchanges of knowledge between children working together put at the center by adults - focus on the curiosity children have - **adults are curious about the ways children put knowledge together from the world around them.**
- ❖ Making use of the local setting, including natural resources - schools should be a place of encounter, inquiry and interaction



# Documentation To Make Learning Visible

- ❖ To make learning visible - in the form of photos, newsletters, children's work, videos
- ❖ Provide a point of reflection for children and adults
- ❖ Regular feedback for parents on a child's learning journey
- ❖ Process of evaluation together are acts of metacognition - give value to processes 'why I made that choice'
- ❖ Storypark, Seesaw, Online Tapestry etc - online learning journeys to see learning in action



# Community Collaboration

Schools are a system of relationships and communications

- ❖ Strong relationships within the school - teacher to teacher, student to teacher, parent to teacher
- ❖ Working with service providers, e.g. Watchdog for diverse needs - inclusiveness
- ❖ Wider collaborations with the community - local facilities
- ❖ Support to small businesses, social enterprises
- ❖ Research undertaken by tertiary institutions, hosting of student teachers for teaching practicum; sharing of experience and best practice
- ❖ Networking opportunities with partner schools
- ❖ Commitment to sustainability and working towards UN sustainable development goals



# Hong Kong & Macao Reggio Emilia Study Group

- ❖ A Professional Learning Community
- ❖ Exploring the application of Reggio Emilia for the HK & Macao
- ❖ A great way to capture and build on knowledge of the Reggio Emilia approach to learning, a philosophy which is becoming more prevalent in HK schools.
- ❖ There is no specific training on the approach, and so we learn from each other's practice as a professional learning community
- ❖ Bi-monthly meetings - 2 hours each meeting, every 2 months during term time



# Why Use the Reggio Emilia Approach?

Today's students need 21<sup>st</sup> Century Skills:

- Creativity & innovation
- Collaboration & teamwork
- Information and ICT literacy
- Critical thinking/ problem solving
- Citizenship – local and global
- Life and Career Skills
- Learning to learn
- Personal and Social Responsibility

Reference: <https://www.oecd.org/site/educeri21st/40756908.pdf>

& Time Magazine Cover, Dec. 18, 2006



# The Language of Play



“Play provides a crucial foundation for children to learn, develop new skills, and build relationships with others. We understand that children are innately curious and, when given the space, time and guidance, they are able to learn naturally in an authentic and safe environment, which allows them to make sense of the world around them.”

**- Kathy Nutting, Educational Consultant & Founding Head of Early Childhood Education, Fairchild Canadian Academy Ltd.**



# A K2 Turtle Project



# The K2 Turtle Project - Week 1

- ❖ Children expressed interest in the classroom turtles - discussed what they could add to the tank so the turtles have toys to play with.
- ❖ An 'authentic idea' - a topic for the children to take on, which is a real idea, very relevant to their world, and something they actually care about.
- ❖ Children spoke about how the turtles needed a bigger home. To investigate more, they started to learn as much they could about turtles so they could design them the best possible turtle tank!



# The K2 Turtle Project - Week 1



- ❖ Reading many different books and writing down the information they learned - made lots of different connections - the importance of camouflage and animal habitats.
- ❖ Principle of 'improvable ideas' - children discussing their ideas together in a safe classroom environment, and also the building of 'community knowledge' through sharing of their ideas about camouflage and animal habitats.
- ❖ each child in the class as a "protagonist, a collaborator and a communicator," **active learners** with the freedom to choose what they work on and to express their own ideas and views.
- ❖ There is no established curriculum, this project is occurring from the real interests of the children.



# The K2 Turtle Project - Week 2

- ❖ The students used the idea of the turtles and creating a new home for them. A lot of thought was put into how to set each home up. For example, one child who learned that turtles like shallow water, took dark blue paper and put it down to represent deep water and light blue paper to represent shallow water, and “that is where the turtles live”
- ❖ “Knowledge building discourse” and “rise above” principles



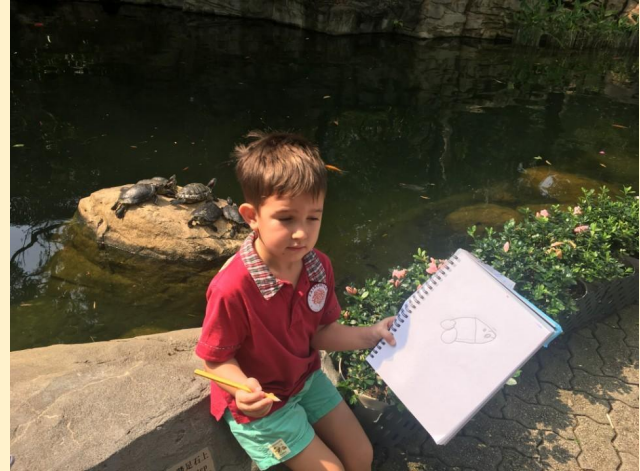
# The K2 Turtle Project - Week 3

- ❖ The class visited Hong Kong Park, as part of their investigation into how to make a better turtle environment. The children explored and discussed between themselves all the incredible creatures they saw in the pond at Hong Kong Park.
- ❖ The children mentioned how the turtles needed more rocks because "they were on top of each other"
- ❖ They liked how there was "deeper water so they can swim if they like."



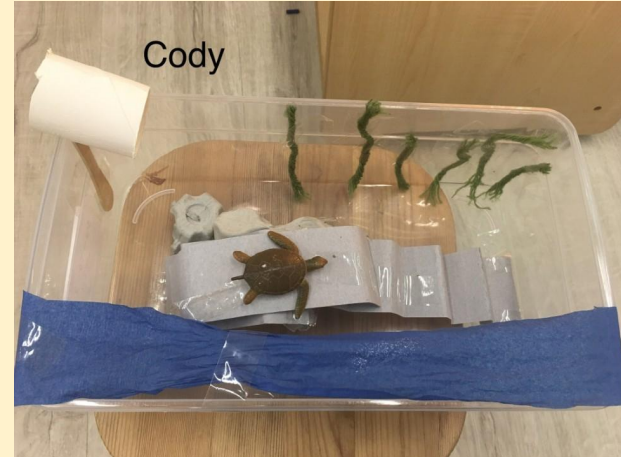
# The K2 Turtle Project - Week 3

- ❖ The children this week created their own documentation in the form of their drawings at the park, which will provide a point of reflection later on.
- ❖ Their ongoing discussions placed the children as true researchers, allowing them “multiple learning possibilities” through their project - involved generating hypotheses, testing them out, reflecting on the, revisiting and documenting the learning at stages



# The K2 Turtle Project - Week 4

- ❖ Documentation, used to make the learning visible
- ❖ Photos of the completed turtle tanks shared on 'Storypark' provide a point of reflection for the child, and for the parents to discuss with their child at home. Parent comment: "Thank you for sharing the models. James has enjoyed looking at them all through the photos as well and commented "they are all so cool!". Well done everyone on their efforts."





# The K2 Turtle Project - Week 5

- ❖ The children shared their turtle tank designs with each other
- ❖ Discussed what they liked about each other's diorama/prototype.
- ❖ Also discussed what might be needed for the new turtle tank in the classroom. There is a pet shop near the school, the class walked there together to buy a brand new turtle tank for the classroom!



# The K2 Turtle Project - Week 6



- ❖ The children have asked thoughtful questions, researched, planned and created models for the turtles' new home.
- ❖ The children finally reaped the benefits of all that hard work and the class walked over to buy a brand new turtle tank
- ❖ Before visiting the pet shop, the class decided they needed some seaweed, an area for the turtles to hide, and a slide to put into the new tank.
- ❖ On the walk over to the pet shop, the children commented: "it will be good exercise so we can become strong."
- ❖ As they walked over, they also noticed many other "sea creatures," some in the front of restaurants and some in other shops.

# Turtle mission accomplished!



# Knowledge building principles behind project:

- ❖ **Authentic problems** real ideas - relevant to the children's lives
- ❖ **Epistemic agency** - active learning and ownership of the learning taking place
- ❖ **Idea diversity** - opportunities for children to contribute different ideas
- ❖ **Community knowledge** - learning from each other - collaborative
- ❖ **Idea development** - children can enhance their work or add to it
- ❖ **Rise above** - deepening knowledge
- ❖ **Democratizing knowledge** - different viewpoints of children readily accepted
- ❖ **Knowledge building discourse** - ongoing discussions and inquiry from the children
- ❖ **Pervasive knowledge building** - school trip to explore further and delve deeper into a project



# REGGIO EMILIA-INSPIRED PRESCHOOLS IN HK

from:

<https://www.littlestepsasia.com/hong-kong/learn/schools/reggio-emilia-hong-kong/>

Blooming Buds Preschool, [www.bloomingbuds.com.hk](http://www.bloomingbuds.com.hk)

Fairchild Kindergarten, [www.fairchild.academy](http://www.fairchild.academy)

Fairchild Junior Academy, [www.fairchild.academy](http://www.fairchild.academy)

Italian International Kindergarten, [iikg.edu.hk](http://iikg.edu.hk)

Il Villaggio Dei Bambini, [www.villaggiodeibambini.com](http://www.villaggiodeibambini.com) \*Tai Po

Malvern College Pre-School Hong Kong, [www.malvernpreschool.hk](http://www.malvernpreschool.hk)

Mulberry Tree, [www.mulberrytree.com.hk](http://www.mulberrytree.com.hk) (Montessori & Reggio-Inspired)

Mulberry House Academy, [www.mulberryhouseasia.com](http://www.mulberryhouseasia.com) (Reggio Emilia inspired Mandarin Immersion School)

Mulberry House International Kindergarten, [www.mulberryhousekg.com](http://www.mulberryhousekg.com) (Reggio Emilia inspired Bilingual International Kindergarten)



# In Summary: Video - Reggio Emilia Education



Source: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7n2hCebmT4c&t=37s>

# Discovering Children as Active Citizens - Stephanie VanHouten



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CnIk-ciTHBU>

Let children explore the one hundred



The child is made of one hundred

**Welcome your questions**



***Thank you!***



**Let's connect on LinkedIn**

A screenshot of a LinkedIn profile for Betty Yau MEd (HKU). The profile banner features a chalkboard with the text "Welcome to Fairchild Kindergarten" written in white chalk. The chalkboard is decorated with colorful drawings of palm trees, a smiling sun, birds, and a fish. A circular profile picture of Betty Yau is overlaid on the left side of the banner. Below the banner, the name "Betty Yau MEd (HKU)" is displayed in bold black text, followed by her title "Principal, Fairchild Kindergarten, Hong Kong" and location "Hong Kong SAR". A blue "Contact info" link is visible. To the right, two organizational logos are shown: Fairchild Kindergarten and the University of Hong Kong.

**Betty Yau MEd (HKU)**  
Principal, Fairchild Kindergarten, Hong Kong  
Hong Kong SAR · [Contact info](#)

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