

# Applying the Reggio Emilia Philosophy to a Museum Context

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KIDZU'S NEW EARLY LEARNING ENVIRONMENT



# Learning Objectives

- Participants will understand core tenets of the Reggio Emilia educational philosophy and how they are integrated into three different museum contexts
- Participants will apply their understanding of these tenets while engaging with Reggio-inspired, open-ended materials at their tables
- Participants will discuss opportunities for community outreach in their own contexts after hearing examples of community outreach from the presenters

# What do you know about Reggio?



# Reggio Emilia, Italy



LCM

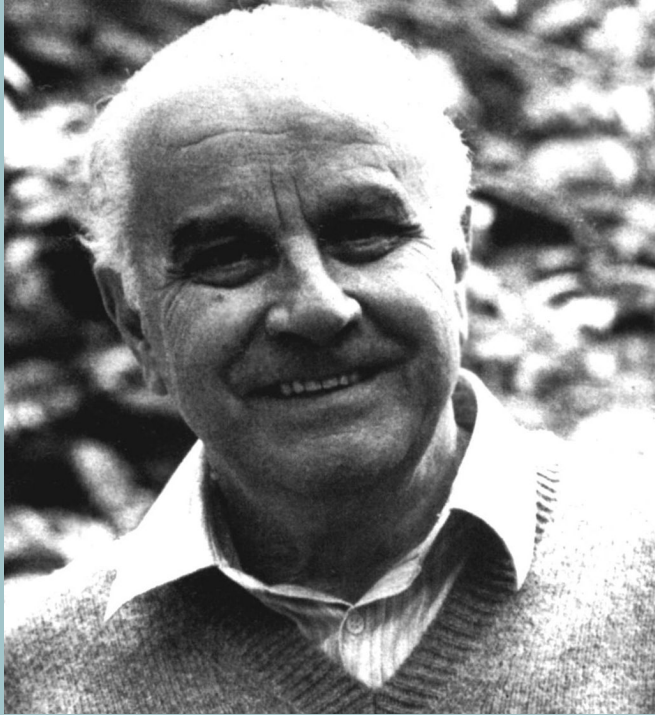
LOUISIANA  
CHILDREN'S  
MUSEUM



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LOUISIANA  
CHILDREN'S  
MUSEUM

# Loris Malaguzzi





1920-1994

*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 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.  
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, Founder  
of the Reggio Emilia  
Approach*



LOUISIANA  
CHILDREN'S  
MUSEUM



**Our task is to help children  
communicate with the world  
using all their potential,  
strengths, and languages,  
and to overcome any obstacle  
presented by our culture.**

**LORIS MALAGUZZI**



**LCM**

LOUISIANA  
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# Image of the Child

- Capable** of constructing knowledge
- Powerful
- Curious
- Has an inner joy for learning
- Innately creative
- Wants to explore
- Wants to be loved



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LOUISIANA  
CHILDREN'S  
MUSEUM

# Pedagogy of Listening

The pedagogy of listening means helping children and adults search for meaning and understanding in what they do and what they experience. Listening to children's theories enhances the possibility of discovering how children think and how they question and develop a relationship with the world around them.



## MAKING THINKING VISIBLE

### Pedagogy of Listening

Listening to children's theories enhances the possibility of discovering how children think and how they both question and develop a relationship with the world around them.

#### Ask Open-Ended Questions!

**Open-ended questions** are questions that allow someone to give a free-form answer. Closed-ended questions can be answered with "Yes" or "No," or they have a limited set of possible answers.

There are many benefits of open-ended questions. For example, asking open-ended questions boosts:



What a great question.

Why do you think ....?

Let them share their schema  
(background knowledge) on the  
topic. Listen to their theory.

Ask other kiddos around what  
they think.

Where can we find out more  
about that?



# In Dialogue Threads



# Making Learning Visible through Documentation



# Documentation

- Helps children solidify concepts and their ideas
- Celebrates their work and shows that their thoughts and ideas are valued
- Honors process instead of product (process is important)
- Helps educators see the “What, So What, Now What?” (from Samantha Shannon at Kidzu)



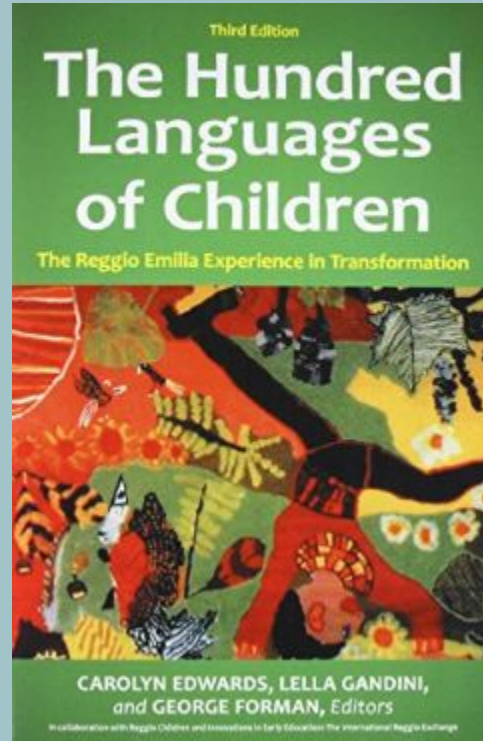
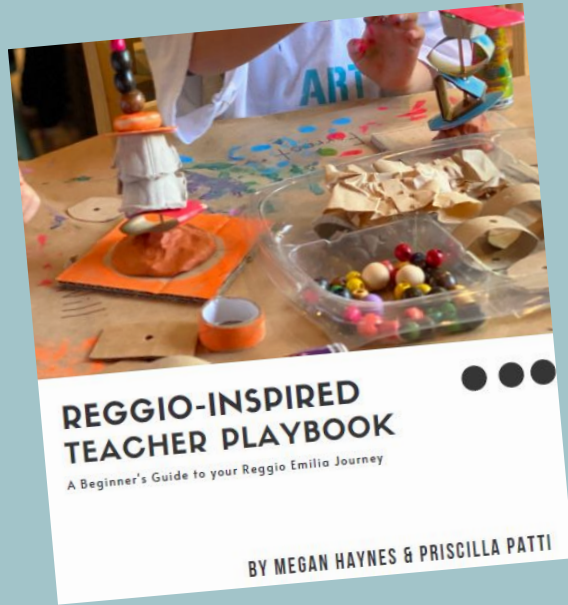
# Environment as the Third Teacher







# Sharing Resources





- Deep Dives
- Staff Training Sessions
- Workshops





## Teacher Workshops

- Reggio 101
- Environment as Third Teacher
- Open-Ended Learning



# Reggio Emilia – How a small town in Italy inspired LCM

January 3, 2023

*By Shannon Blady PhD, LCM Chief Learning Officer*

Children have 100 languages. That's 100 ways to express themselves and 100 ways to show us what they are thinking and learning. That's one of the Reggio Emilia principles that we firmly believe here at the Louisiana Children's Museum. These "languages" can be found all through our galleries as our exhibits encourage children to paint, sing, experiment, build, act, dance, and play. There are plenty of other Reggio principles that manifest throughout our Museum. In fact, we were designed with Reggio principles in mind. So, what is Reggio Emilia exactly?

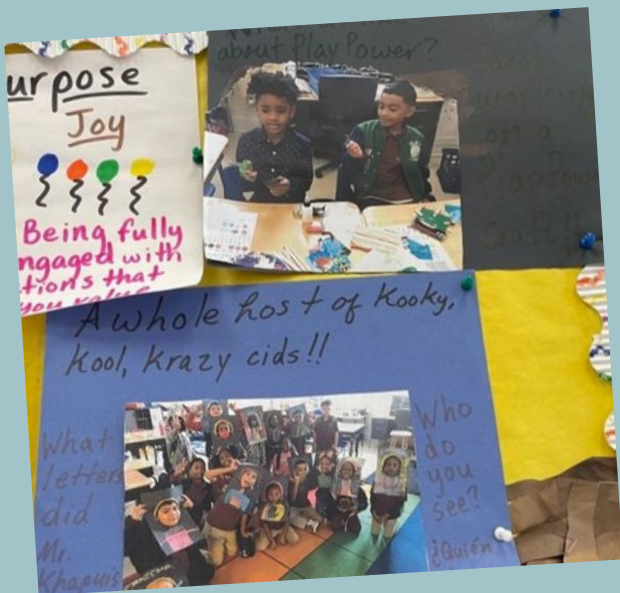


**Play Power** is an embedded program delivered by LCM designed to empower children to grow, develop, and heal through play and the arts. We are currently in three schools, grade K-2.



... I have seen many changes in his classroom after he attended the last Play Power PD. He immediately began implementing things that we talked about that night. And he said it was the motivation he needed to finally get his classroom cleaned up and organized. He told me that it was something he has tried to do for 7 years but after hearing it here he knew he had to do better for his students. He has cleaned up the clutter and made 1 central teacher area. He has also taken unnecessary things off the walls. **Now his walls contain purposeful items. He has created areas for students to chose to display their work. He has also brought in a display shelf where students can put their creations...He has made room for 2 discovery/early finisher areas and today I saw that he has added provocations to these areas. One of these areas contain open ended items and a collection of loose parts with a provocation. The other discovery area is changed as the students' interests change, he is very in tune to what the students are wondering about, and he tries his best to make it available.**

Today when I was there, I noticed he has made documentation displays with pictures and a brief explanation of what was happening. These are placed around the room and when the students saw me take an interest in them, they told me stories related to the pictures...





**Living With Water** is an immersive experience in environmental stewardship for New Orleans third graders.



# LCM Staff Discussing Student Projects from Living With Water



# Nola Mark Makers



**“Children’s Museums are  
about people, not stuff.”**

**- Michael Spock, Boston CM**



# Environment as a Third Teacher



**“There are three teachers of children: adults, other children, and their physical environment.”**

**- Loris Malaguzzi**

# Environment as a Third Teacher



# Environment as a Third Teacher



# Environment as a Third Teacher



# Materials



**The wider the range  
of possibilities we  
offer children, the  
more intense their  
motivations and the  
richer their  
experiences.”**

**-Loris Malaguzzi**



# Materials



# Materials



**“Nothing lights up a  
child’s brain like play.”**

**- Stuart Brown**



# Provocations



# Child-Centered Advocacy



## symposium

*Building a Child and Youth Centered Community*



**APRIL 19, 2023**

8:30 A.M. - 12:30 P.M.

MCGAVICK CONFERENCE CENTER AT CLOVER PARK TECHNICAL COLLEGE

### **Giant Kid-Powered Bubble Machine**



**Category:** Kinetic

**Target Age:** 2–4 years

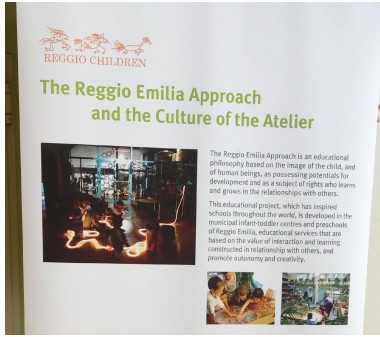
**CORE IDEA:** The Bubble Machine is something that would be found in playgrounds or splash pads, and it encourages kids to play with each other and exercise. The machine can be powered by bikes or some kind of fitness activity (it can be an event, too), or something that involves teamwork. It can also work so that the more kids that participate, the more bubbles there will be.

# Time to Play!

Spend 5 minutes playing with the materials at your tables



# From Reggio Emilia to Rural North Carolina: Kidzu Children's Museum



**Geography of Connections:  
Children as Creators of Community**

An Educational Project and Exhibit

When: 2019-2020 school year, the exhibit of the children's work will be held during the winter/spring of 2021

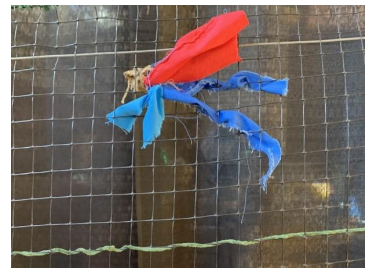
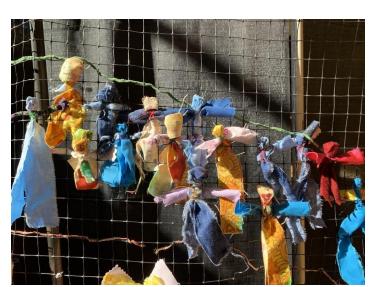
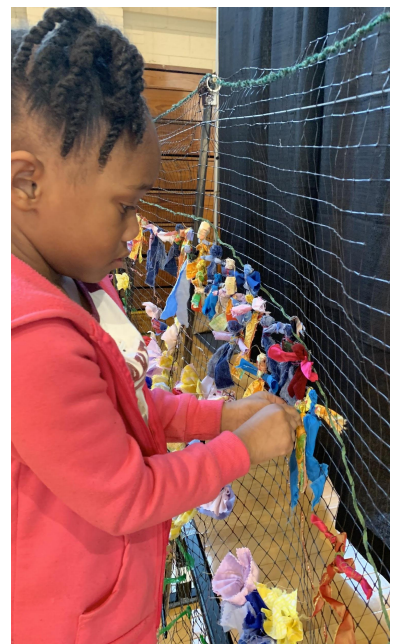
North Carolina Educators are invited to join us in this intelligence of all children through a year-long support of a year-long support to the Reggio Emilia approach including:

- online workshops
- in-person meetings
- resources
- mentorship

Participating educators will have access to a statewide traveling exhibit highlighting Children's curiosity, wonderings, and theories of the Reggio Emilia approach including:

- online workshops
- in-person meetings
- resources
- mentorship

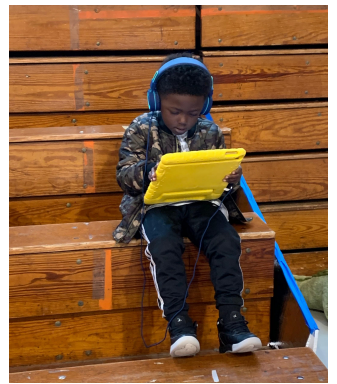
For more information about our initiative: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/geographyofconnections>  
Or contact Corren Taylor at: [nccolab@ncwonderlearning.com](mailto:nccolab@ncwonderlearning.com)



What makes a good school?

What makes a good museum?

NC Wonder of Learning [www.northcarolinawol.org](http://www.northcarolinawol.org)



"Weaving Community"

## WHO?

Among our 16 participants, here is how they identified:

Early childhood educator (Pre-K/Kindergarten), current or past

6

Higher education educator (university professors+), current or past

4

Government Agency

3

Non-profit agency, independent organization

3

Early childhood researcher, current or past

2

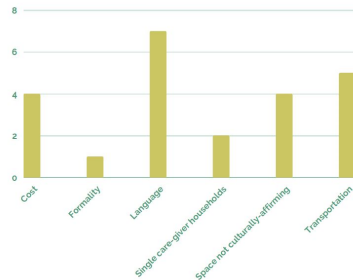
Later childhood educator (1st grade+), current or past

1

Childhood mental health professional

1

## BARRIERS TO ENTRY



# Community Needs Assessment

## GREATEST NEEDS

Our participants identified what they believed to be the greatest needs of infants and their caregivers in Orange County. Here are those needs ranked:

### #1

- Age-specific educational resources and school preparation

### #3

- Opportunities for social connection and community among caregivers
- Opportunities to build parent-child connection
- Opportunities to build social connection among infants

### #5

- Structured and unstructured play

### #2

- Affordable learning opportunities

### #4

- Access to non-English/bilingual educational opportunities/services
- Safe and creative physical environment
- Online resources

## ACTION ITEMS

Action Items describes, as suggested by our participants, how The Nest can better meet the needs of infants and their caregivers as we transition into our physical museum space.

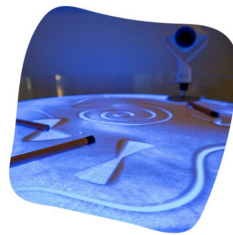






# The Nest

## KIDZU'S NEW EARLY LEARNING ENVIRONMENT



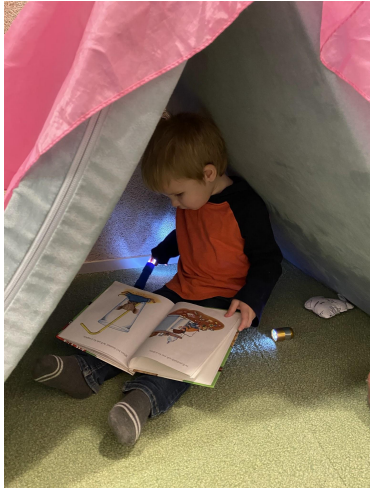
*“The role of space: The infant-toddler centers and preschools convey many messages, of which the most immediate is: this is a place where adults have thought about the quality and the instructive power of space. The lay-out of physical space fosters encounters, communication, and relationships.”* -Lella Gandini, Fundamental Values of The Education of Children in Reggio Emilia



## museum

"To make a lovable school,  
industrious, inventive, liveable,  
documentable and  
communicable, a place of  
research, learning,  
re-cognition and reflection,  
where children, teachers and  
families feel well - is our point  
of arrival."

-Loris Malaguzzi



# What is documentation?

- A way to make learning visible for and to:
  - Children
  - Families
  - The larger community
- A visible history of a museum community's play and learning

## Types of Documentation:

- Art work
- Pictures and videos
- Recorded and dictated conversations
- Recorded and dictated stories
- Caregivers' thoughts, ideas, and questions



# Why do we document in a museum context?

- To construct a story or identity of a particular space
- To co-create the space with our visitors
  - By making the play and learning visible to ourselves and the community, we are able to make changes to the environment based on our observations
  - In this way, the children are informing the space and leaving traces of their learning for other children to interact with
- To advocate for the rights of children
  - By inviting children into our space as co-curators, we are amplifying their voices and modeling for our community how to respect and listen to our youngest community members

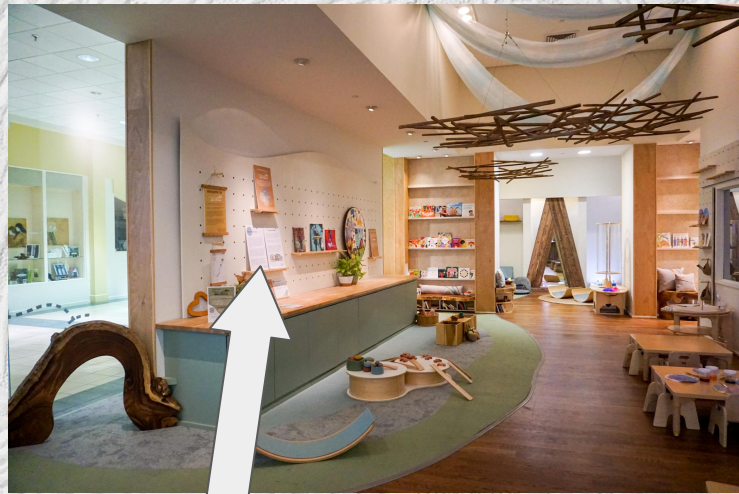


With objects?

How do young children develop their understanding of *motion* and *gravity*?



In their bodies?



This documentation is displayed in the main playspace

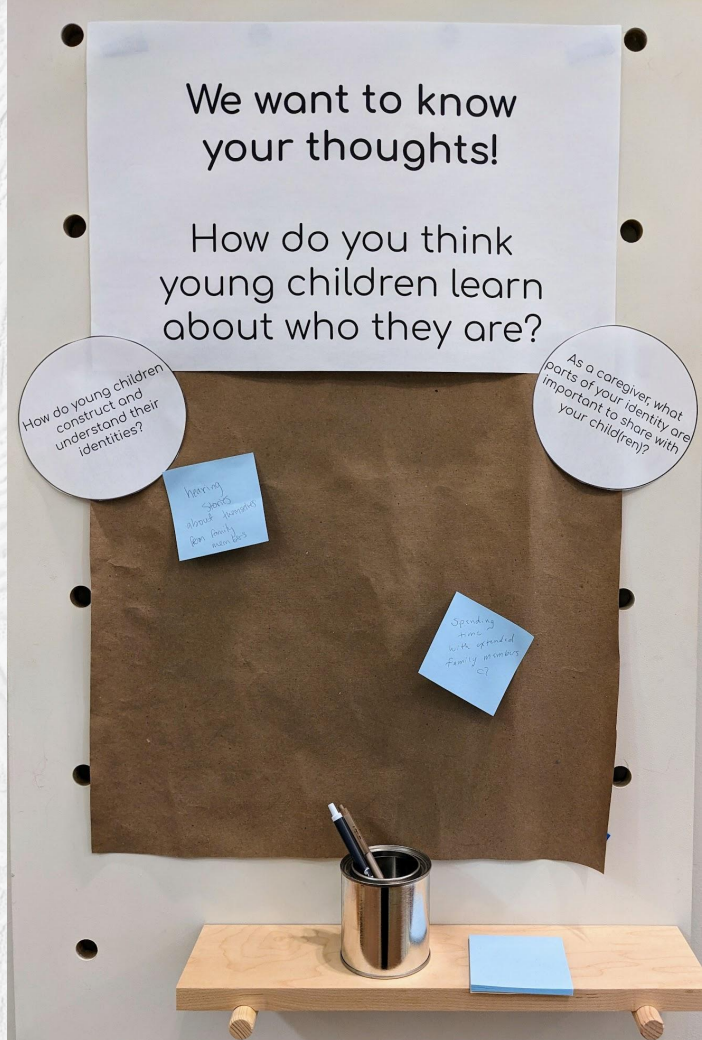
# Caregiver Participation Documentation

## Questions:

- How do you think young children learn about who they are?
- How do young children construct and understand their identities?
- As a caregiver, what parts of your identity are important to share with your child(ren)?

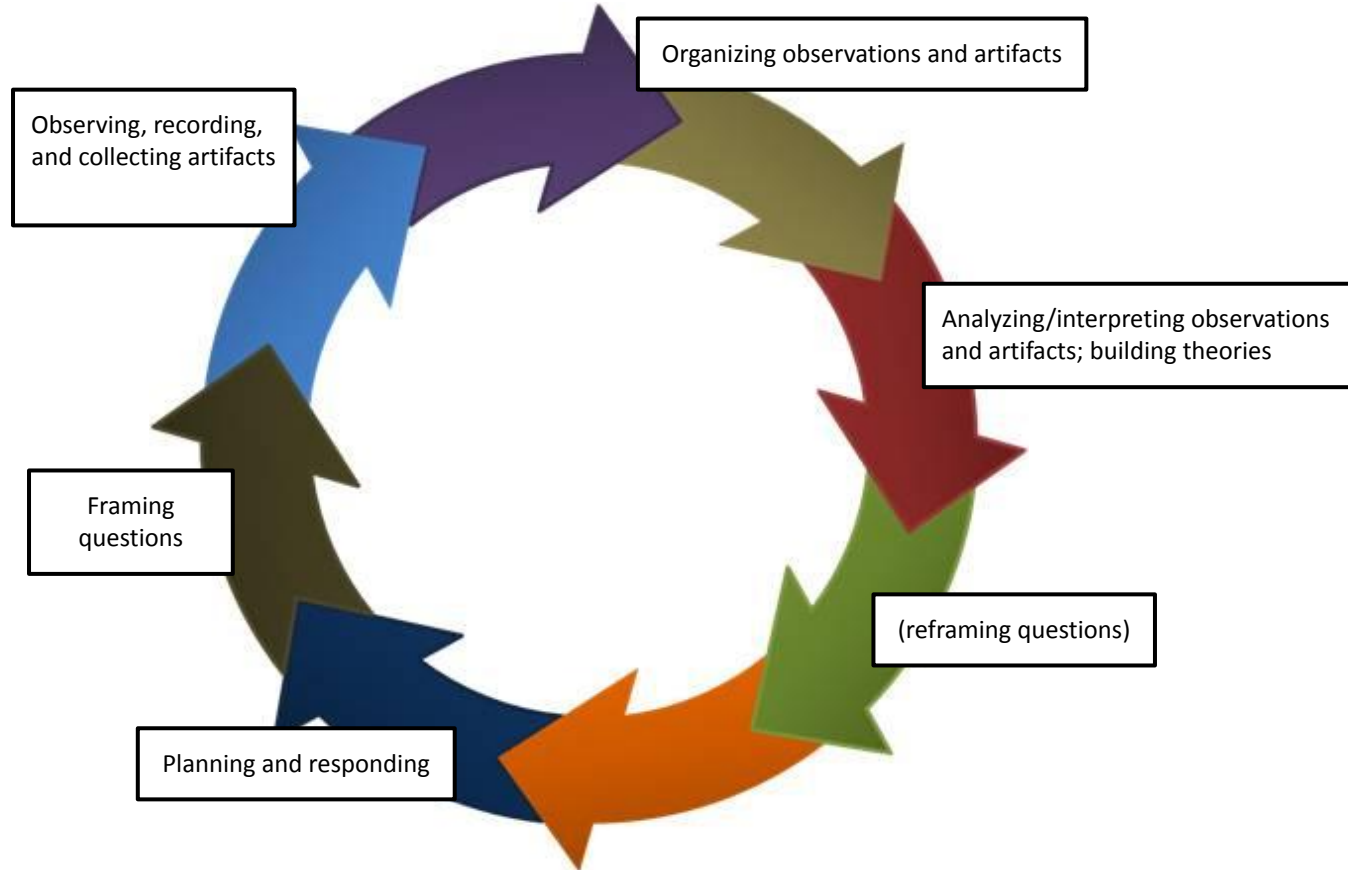
## Responses:

- Spending time with extended family members
- Hearing stories about themselves from family members
- Exposure to various activities, books, places, family/friends. Exploration
- Parents provide them with the moral values/code of which to live their life. Then they provide space for the child to explore independently within that moral code. And exposure to important cultural/religious daily life, education, events



# How do we document?

## The Documentation Process as a Cycle of Inquiry

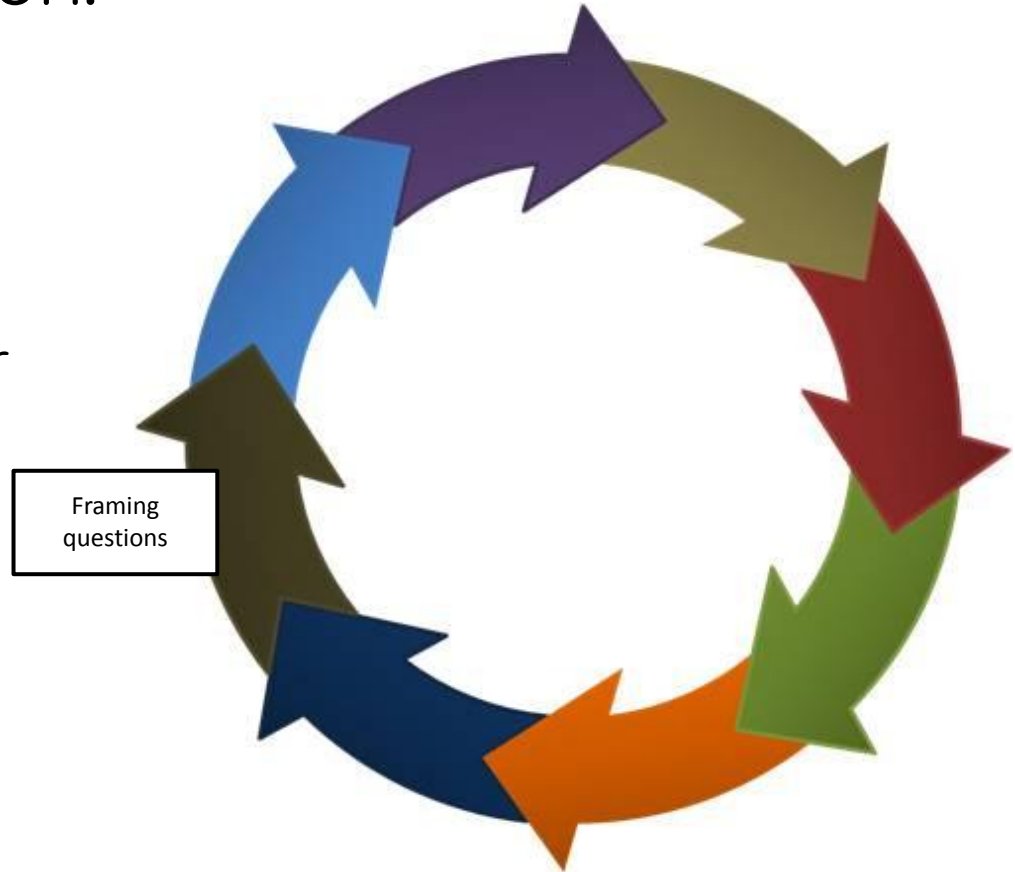




# Cycle of Inquiry in Action!

Initial Question:

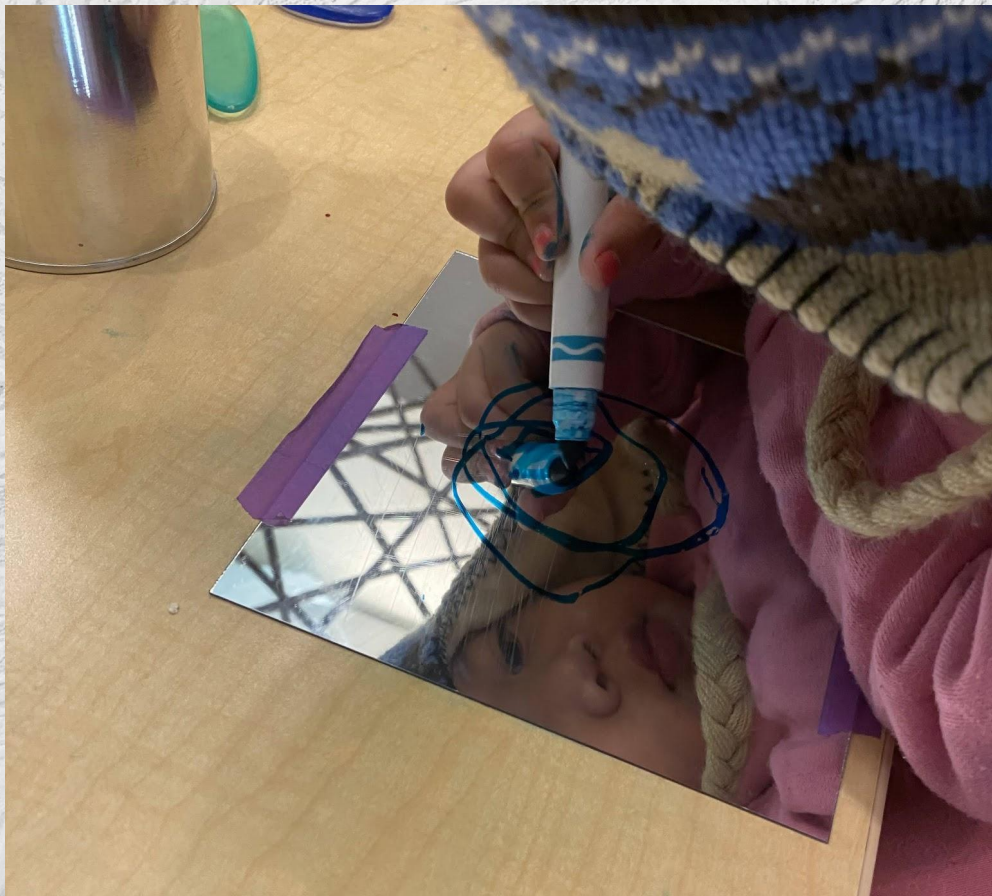
How do young children  
construct and understand their  
identities?



Observing, recording,  
and collecting artifacts

Organizing observations  
and artifacts





Analyzing/interpreting  
observations  
and artifacts; building theories

# Observation Template

- What?
  - Objective description
- So What?
  - Why is this important, meaningful, interesting?
  - What question might this answer?
- Now What?
  - How can we build on/expand on this observation?



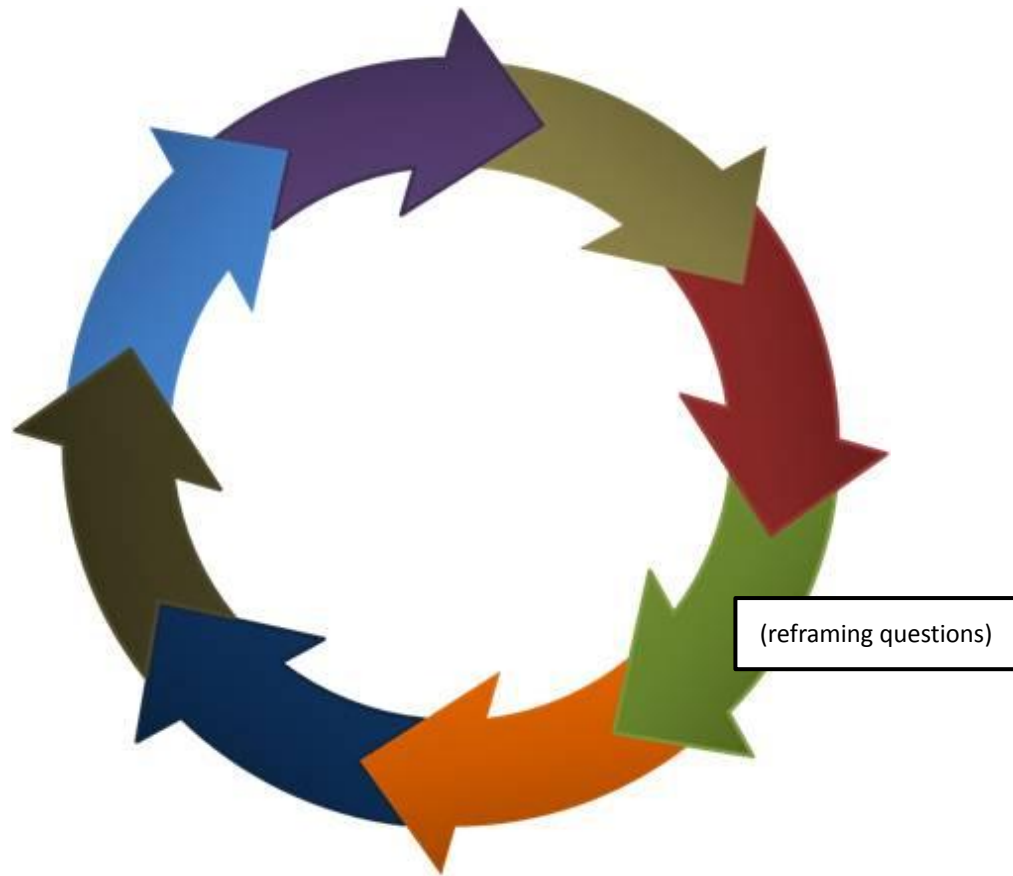
What?  
O walked over to the table and sat down / offered him a marker - he didn't take it. He noticed his reflection in the mirror, touched the mirror, looked again. With a big smile, leaned down and touched his head to the mirror, seemed to make eye contact with his reflection

So What?  
• I'm curious about O's interest - does he recognize the reflection as himself?  
• Question - when do children recognize themselves in pictures? Reflections?  
• How would he interact w/ a pic of a friend? Or himself - is it interesting bc it's dynamic?

Now What?  
Ideas -  
• print pics of him + his friends to put on table  
• show videos of himself  
• web cam - 'reflection' in real time, on larger scale.

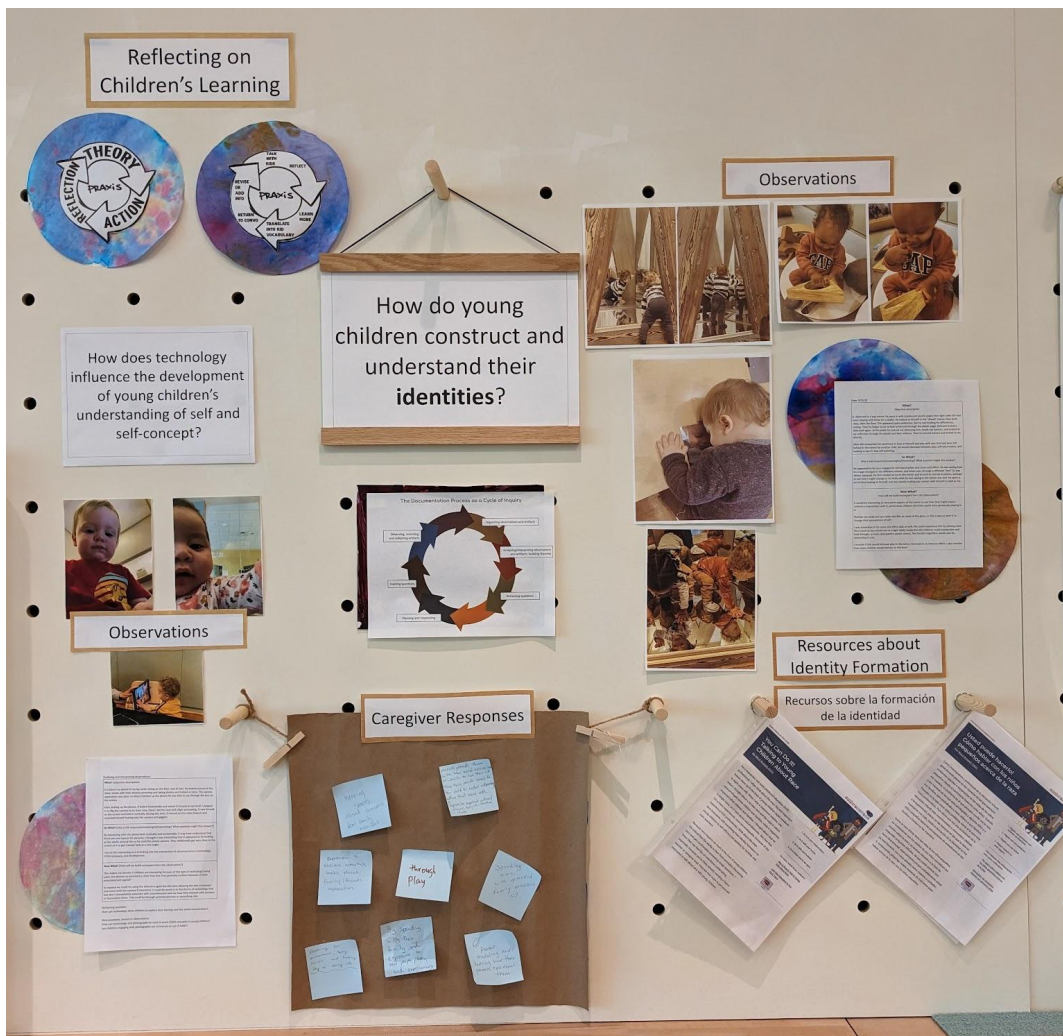
## Reframing questions:

- Original question:
  - How do young children construct and understand their identities?
- New questions, based on observations:
  - How do mirrors help young children develop their understanding of themselves?
  - Do other mediums of seeing themselves hold the same level of interest?



Planning and  
responding





## Identity Documentation

### Components:

- Original question
- Observations
- Caregiver Responses to the original question
- A concurrent cycle of inquiry produced by a Nest intern
  - How does technology influence the development of young children's understanding of self?
- Resources for caregivers

# What? So What? Now What? Documentation from Across North Carolina

Padlet

Samantha Shannon + 8 • 21d

## Kidzu Needs Assessment

How to work within state childcare regulations yet stay true to the Reggio Emilia philosophy.

education/training

More Trainings and collaborate with other teachers.

Lots of trainings, educations, different kinds of resources

De-escalation, conflict resolution and early childhood behavior modification training

**Prompts**  
What? So what? Now what?

- What are your needs, as educators?
- How do these unmet needs affect your work (So what?)
- How can Kidzu/The Nest meet some of those needs? (Now what?)

more insight, face to face trainings.

needs: really just more information about Reggio and how we can get started implementing it.

**More collaborative opportunities**

**More training for educators will be nice as some of us are scared of not knowing certain methods such as Reggio E. :D**

A lot of time and energy is spent on researching by ourselves to learn about these methods

Responses from A.S.K. Conference, February 2023

Where are you located within North Carolina?

Which role do you most identify with?

Parent/caregiver

Early childhood educator (Pre-K/Kindergarten) Elementary educator

Secondary educator

Higher education professor/educator

Care coordinator

Early childhood researcher

Other

What are your greatest needs as an educator/someone who works with children ages 0-3?

How do these unmet needs affect your work?



# Documentation Practice - 10 minutes

- Find a partner at your table (or a group of three, if needed)
- Assign roles
  - Experimenter(s): engage with and manipulate the materials
  - Documentor: using the Observation Template, take notes on how your partner is using the materials
- How can the addition of the flashlight change your play? Can this technology help you learn new things about the materials, or a new way of engaging with them?

After 5 minutes, switch roles!

# Share your reflections!

- What was your experience with the Observation Template?
  - Did it help you notice things or pay attention in a different way?
- Were you surprised by how your partner used any of the materials?
- Were you surprised by how *you* used any of the materials?

# Outreach and advocacy discussions

Outreach to and advocacy for our communities is common thread between our three museums:

**Louisiana Children's Museum:** Nola Mark Makers and Teacher Workshops

**Greentrike:** Annual Symposium and Child and Youth Centered Community

**Kidzu Children's Museum and The Nest:** Statewide Needs Assessment and Outreach

We'd love to hear from you:

- What outreach and advocacy work are you already doing?
- How can the Reggio Emilia tenets shared today inform and expand this work?
- What are your hopes and goals for the future of your outreach and advocacy work?



Questions?

Thank you!

Stay connected!

Samantha: [samantha@kidzuchildrensmuseum.org](mailto:samantha@kidzuchildrensmuseum.org)

Melanie: [levinson@kidzuchildrensmuseum.org](mailto:levinson@kidzuchildrensmuseum.org)

Shannon: [sblady@lcm.org](mailto:sblady@lcm.org)

Alyssa: [alyssat@greentrike.org](mailto:alyssat@greentrike.org)

# Some of our Documentation of the Presentation



“What were you inclined to do with the materials when you first saw them?”  
-Julia to her tablemates

*Touch*

*Stack*

*Think*

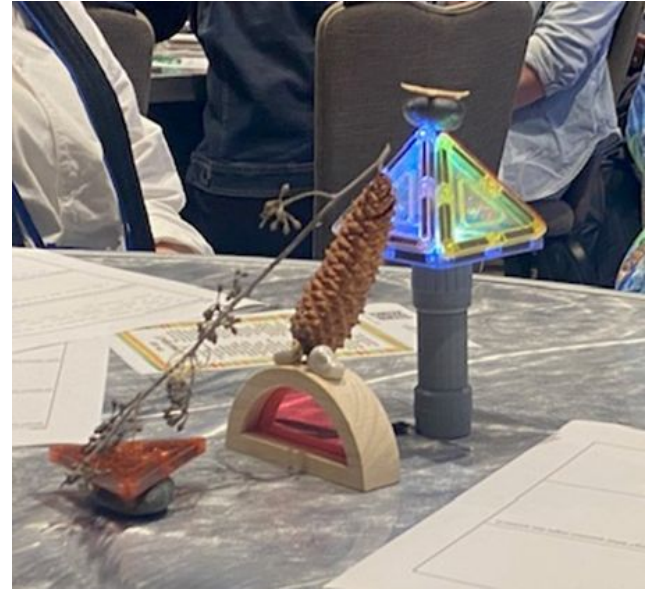
*Play*

*Make Connections*



Adding another element  
to the mix...









“How about this side of the table plays first and this side documents and then we’ll switch?”



Sharing our experiences with and wonderings about the materials.





Thank You!

