



**Reggio Emilia Preschools, Infant-Toddler Centers, and Primary School at the International Center and Children's Museum Teams:  
A Special Opportunity for Children's Museum Teams  
As Part of the North American Study Group  
November 9–16, 2013  
Reggio Emilia, Italy**

**Organized through the Louisiana Children's Museum (New Orleans) and Wheelock College (Boston)  
in collaboration with Reggio Children**

*A simple, liberating thought came to our aid, namely that things about children and for children are only learned from children. We knew how this was true and, at the same time, not true. But we needed that assertion and guiding principle; it gave us strength and turned out to be an essential part of our collective wisdom.*

-Loris Malaguzzi, 1993, p. 44

### **Why Reggio Emilia?**

The Reggio Emilia philosophy of early childhood education has its origins in a particular place and time, namely Reggio Emilia, Italy in 1945, just at the end of the Fascist dictatorship and the Second World War. It was a moment when the desire to bring change and create a new, more just world, free from oppression, was urging women and men to gather their strength and build with their own hands schools for their young children. Adults began to envision what a community could offer when focused deeply on young children, and they explored various educational models. Over 50 years later, educators around the world regularly travel to witness the impact — a city that exemplifies what happens when adults and community leaders understand and care about children's learning. The result is a very good city for children — one that *requires* distinctive learning experiences for them. Reggio Emilia is a powerful example of such a city.

### **Why Children's Museums?**

Throughout America and beyond are institutions created specifically for young children and their caregivers — and open to the public. These institutions — children's museums — celebrate the first steps and everyday moments of a child's expanding world. They provide environments rich in open-ended experiences and designed for self-directed learning of the curious toddler and elementary school student. And, they provide these experiences and environments for the parents and caregivers of the young children themselves — the child's first coaches and teachers. Children's museums hold a unique place in American culture — part educational, part cultural, part social — but all interactive and child-centered. It is through this lens of the family learning unit in the environments and experiences fostered by children's museums that our study will unfold.

### **Why Bring a Team?**

The adage that "it takes a village" is one we recognize as valuable. Strategic partners of children's museums, including higher education professionals, early childhood experts, civic leaders and more, are part of the team who honor child-centered learning and that investment's return. With carefully constructed teams, children's museums will learn from Reggio educators and from each other how best to move their individual cities and towns forward on their journey to become healthy, vibrant, resilient communities.

### **Time Period and Schedule**

Plan to arrive in Reggio on Saturday, November 9, 2013. Flights to Bologna (Marconi Airport; distance from Reggio Emilia: 45 minutes by car) or Milan (Malpensa Airport; distance from Reggio Emilia: 2 hours by car) are suggested. Our first gathering will be a welcome lunch and orientation meeting on Sunday, November 10 from approximately 12:00 p.m. – 3:30 p.m., to learn about each other's backgrounds. A walking tour of the town will be offered by volunteers from the Reggio Children Foundation and citizens of Reggio Emilia. Our group may hold a gathering afterwards. A brief bio of each participant will be submitted in advance for inclusion in a shared networking document.

### **Study Group Program Highlights**

Facilitated reflection will be offered for our group each day from Jeanne Vergeront (Vergeront Museum Planning) and Dr. Ben Mardell (researcher, Project Zero at the Harvard Graduate School of Education; associate professor, Lesley University).

**Other Highlights Include:**

- Presentations by early childhood specialists and educators, as well as studio teachers, on the identity, aims and principles of the educational philosophy
- Presentation and analysis of research projects realized inside the preschools and infant-toddler centers
- Visits to the infant-toddler centers and preschools
- Time at the Loris Malaguzzi International Center to see the current exhibitions and studios, and to visit the Documentation and Educational Research Center
- Tour and observe the environments and experiences of Reggio Emilia
- Workshops and discussion groups
- Sharing experiences among the participants
- Exploring the town of Reggio Emilia from a social, cultural and political context

The Istituzione Scuole e Nidi d'Infanzia (Institution of Nursery and Preschools) includes: 23 preschools (of which five are affiliated cooperatives), 26 infant-toddler centers (of which 13 are affiliated cooperatives), 570 staff (teaching and other) and 43 school buildings. Optional excursions may be planned as well.

Special opportunities will be arranged for our children's museum teams. A collective look at the role of the environment as a teacher, of the parent in the child's learning, and of documentation of the child's learning will be the primary areas of focus.

**Program Cost**

**Core program costs of \$2,720 per person/shared double room or \$2,980 per person/single room include:**

- Introductory meeting and welcome lunch on Sunday, November 10
- Reggio Children 5-day study tour
- Daily Facilitated Reflection fees
- Hotel (7 nights). Hotel is within walking distance (20-30 minutes) of the International Center.
  - A block of rooms has been reserved for the group for 7 nights at the 4 star Albergo delle Notarie [www.albergonotarie.it](http://www.albergonotarie.it). Check-in will take place on Saturday, November 9. Check-out will take place on Saturday, November 16. Arrangements can be made for additional nights and accompanying non-participants.
- Organization and presentation of the study group program for the week
- Informational folder for each participant with materials about the town of Reggio Emilia, its municipal infant-toddler centers and preschools, Reggio Children and the Loris Malaguzzi International Center
- Private bus transportation to and from the centers in Reggio Emilia when required by the program
- Professional interpreters when required by the program
- Insurance as specified in Responsibility Clause (later document)
- Refreshments during coffee breaks each day
- Coordination of the registration process and study group experience to support professional development, collaboration and collegiality among participants
- Facilitation of communication across the group prior to departure and while in Reggio Emilia
- Meals: daily breakfast at hotel, three (3) lunches during the week at Il Pause Restaurant at the Loris Malaguzzi International Center
- Credit card services, administrative services and foreign currency transfers

**Additional Costs (to be paid independently) Include:**

- Airfare transportation to Italy (Bologna Marconi Airport or Milano Malpensa Airport)
- Transportation between Reggio and your selected airport (directions will be provided and private transportation for groups traveling together can be arranged upon request)
- Meals not included above (three (3) lunches, all dinners)

**Next Steps**

Complete the separate Registration Form and return with deposit by August 1, 2013.

Questions? Please call or email Angela Ferrario, U.S. Liaison for Study Groups to Reggio Emilia, 508.473.8001 or [aferrario@comcast.net](mailto:aferrario@comcast.net).