

ACT APPROACH

The ACT initiative draws its inspiration and beliefs from the early learning approach in Reggio Emilia, Italy, as well as the Provincial document, ‘How Does Learning Happen?’ (2014), which guides Ontario’s Pedagogy for the Early Years.

Early Learning Approach in Reggio Emilia, Italy

The approach to early learning in Reggio Emilia is based on a fundamental view of the child as a competent citizen, full of ideas and theories about their world and the ability to share what they know and are curious about through many materials. Children are viewed as active participants in their learning with the ability to construct their own knowledge as they collaborate with others and with their environment. This approach to early learning is grounded in relationships and deep listening to understand multiple perspectives and to make learning rich and meaningful for all involved; children, families, educators and the community. Artists or ‘atelierista’s’ as they are called in Reggio Emilia, are valued for the unique perspective and skills that they bring as they partner with educators to support children’s ability to communicate their ideas through varied materials and mediums. A process called Pedagogical Documentation captures the stories and experiences of the children and educators learning journeys together. It provides a way to make thinking and learning visible so that ideas and experiences can be studied collaboratively. This collective study can then inform and shape adults work with children. Documentation could include photos, videos, transcriptions of conversations, notes and children’s work. Artists and educators provide materials and an environment that provokes children’s curiosity and invites them to explore and represent what they know, wonder about and discover in many ways.

For more in depth reading and resources about the approach in Reggio Emilia, please see the Resources section.

How Does Learning Happen? (2014)

How Does Learning Happen? is a resource about learning through relationships for those who work with young children and their families. It holds a strong image of Children, Families and Educators, viewing everyone as competent, capable and curious. With this view, early learning programs are places where discovery and learning happens collectively, in collaboration with each other and the environment. This resource is organized around 4 Foundations that support children’s growth and development: Belonging, Well-being, Engagement and Expression. The 4th Foundation, Expression, talks about children’s ability to express themselves and communicate their ideas through a variety of ways such as visual arts, music, movement and dramatic arts. The resource highlights the importance of early childhood programs creating environments and offering experiences that support children in expressing themselves and communicating their ideas in multiple ways. Creating and collaboratively studying documentation (as mentioned in the Reggio Emilia approach) is highlighted in this resource as essential for learning more about how children think, learn and view their world.

For more information about **How Does Learning Happen? (2014)** or to read the document, please see the Resources section.