

**Reggio Emilia Survey  
Teachers, Staff and Parents 2002  
Presidio Child Development Center  
San Francisco, California**

*“The environment is the third teacher, collaboration among staff, making connections with other classrooms, projects go more in depth, based on the children’s interests.”*

Presidio Site Teacher

**Prepared by: Hirsch & Associates**

## Introduction

Hirsch & Associates was retained to implement a survey at the end of year one of a three-year pilot project for the Reggio Emilia Approach pilot program at the Presidio Child Development Center, San Francisco, California.

Reggio Emilia is one of several small affluent cities in Emilia Romagna, a region in northern Italy with a history of collaboration and political activism. The groundwork for what is now regarded as "the Reggio Emilia approach" was established shortly after World War II, when working parents built new schools for their young children. Parents did not want ordinary schools. Rather, they wanted schools where children could acquire skills of critical thinking and collaboration essential to rebuilding and ensuring a democratic society ([http://www.ed.gov/databases/ERIC\\_Digests/ed447971.html](http://www.ed.gov/databases/ERIC_Digests/ed447971.html). September 3, 2002, Rebecca S. New). The early childhood program in Reggio Emilia is run by the municipality, with the provision of 12% of the town's budget to be used for quality childcare for children six years and under.

The key features of the internationally acclaimed Reggio Emilia early childhood program include, the role of environment-as-teacher, children's multiple symbolic languages, documentation as assessment and advocacy, long-term projects, the teacher as researcher, and home-school relationships.

The Reggio Emilia Approach is taught in several cities in the U.S. – Chicago, Illinois; Santa Monica, California; Boulder, Colorado; Miami, Florida; Burlington, Vermont; and San Francisco, California.

The Presidio Child Care Development Center, part of the San Francisco Unified School District is a year-round program with over 40 teachers/staff, serving a diverse population of 200 – infant, pre-school, and school age children (after-school program).

The first year of a three-year privately funded pilot has been completed at the Presidio Child Care Development Center. The survey was developed to assess what, if any changes occurred during year one, inform planning for year two, plan for potential additional sites, and communicate with the SFUSD/private schools/other funders.

A total of 92 surveys were disseminated among the total population of teachers (37), other staff (5), and a random sample of parents (50). The parent survey was provided in English and Chinese, reflecting the primary populations served at the school. Additionally, the parent survey was disseminated to parents with children in infant/toddler, as well as pre-school rooms. The three survey instruments were designed reflect on the teachers' participation in the pilot in year one, and observational involvement of other staff and parents.

All surveys responses were confidential, but respondents were offered the option to provide their name for further discussion. Teachers and staff returned their surveys to the site and parents returned surveys to Hirsch & Associates.

We appreciate the opportunity to provide these findings about the Reggio Emilia approach at the Presidio Child Development Center.

## Analysis and Findings

The survey population is teachers, other staff and parents of the Presidio Child Development Center, San Francisco. The total population of teachers and staff at the Presidio site were surveyed. A random sample of fifty parents of Presidio school children were also included (infant and preschool classrooms). The response rate is as follows:

37 teachers – 46% response rate (17 surveys returned)  
5 staff – 20% response rate (1 survey returned)  
50 parents – received a 28% response (14 surveys returned)

Analysis is provided for each individual question for both the teacher and parent surveys. Direct quotes are categorized where possible, and provided in aggregate form when too varied. A summary is provided for the one staff survey returned.

A Conclusion (at the end of the report) summarizes recurring themes found in all of the responses.

## Reggio Emilia Analysis Teacher Survey

### *Question 1*

*You have been introduced to the Reggio Emilia approach over the past year. Briefly describe your experience. What worked well? What did not?*

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**Findings:** Strengths of the experience were mentioned roughly twice as often as challenges. The challenges tend to be more diverse and harder to characterize than the strengths.

The four areas mentioned most often as strengths to the approach:

- Benefits of working with the children (41%)
- Productive meeting time (41%)
- Positive changes to the environment (35%)
- The addition of the art studio (29%)

The three areas most often mentioned as challenges (mentioned 2 or more times):

- Documentation (24%)
  - Stress level on the children while teachers are in meetings (12%)
  - Providing more practical than theoretical tools for teachers (18%)
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## Categorized Teacher's Comments

### Introduction to Reggio Emilia Approach

#### Strengths

- I find the work I have done with the Reggio Emilia approach very rewarding and serves to reinforce how I see children and my relation to our work together.
- I believe the approach, philosophy and implementation is being done by teachers who care about their job – only now these techniques/philosophy are being introduced in a more formal way to American teachers.

#### Challenges

- The integration of this approach with district constraints (children's schedules, staff shortages, meal & nap time considerations, and literacy expectations) was not adequately addressed.
- It was somewhat difficult to get started because it didn't seem as if the staff had a clue or any input about moving towards this approach.
- Many changes.

## **The Environment**

### Strengths

- **Environmental** changes went well and opportunity to see other schools brought inspiration.
- Cleaning up and painting the classroom has helped with removing clutter and organizing the space for the children.
- We created a more educational and beautiful classroom environment for the children. These things enriched the learning opportunities for the children and made the community more aware of that.
- The overhead projector & light table was a hit with the kids.
- The environment worked well.
- **We worked well in the changed environment.**

### Challenges

- To maintain the environment is challenging.

## **Art Studio**

### Strengths

- **It was good to have the art studio available to us.**
- Working with art studies teacher – Andrew.
- Worked well -- Having the art studio.
- By going to the art studio and working together on the same kinds of things as in the classroom.
- The art projects, i.e. clay, light projector, finger painting, worked really well to bring out the children's creativity.

### Challenges

- Not enough time with Andrew/no scheduled time with Andrew and the children.

## **Documentation**

### Strengths

- **Documentation is important, but not being done much.**
- Observations and documentations worked, but documentations started off vague and hard to pinpoint.

### Challenges

- Having to document everything has been difficult due to lack of time.
- A lot of time spent outside of working hours for documentation.
- Documentation panel is time consuming.
- We're not so good on documentation – seems like the parent don't look at it, and it takes hours and hours after normal work time to do the documentation. We need to find some way to streamline the process of documentation to get it done during work hours.

## **Meetings**

### Strengths

- Meeting time worked well except sometimes fragmented (no connection from one meeting to next) – team meetings.
- Ability to exchange ideas/learn from colleagues during team meetings.
- School staff meeting and sharing ideas work well.
- By having staff meeting time when we have to read assignments from the Reggio Emilia book, we are able to discuss the materials at the staff meeting.
- Discussed the philosophy and its applications in our classrooms at meetings.
- The Reggio philosophy was well presented in books and meetings.
- Staff collaboration worked well.

### Challenges

- Having subs in the room during our (out of room) meeting time is distressing to the children.
- What did not work well -- We had no classroom staff meeting to discuss among ourselves.
- The stress level of the children when there were weekly meetings. The meetings were beneficial to staff.

## **Readings**

### Strengths

- Well presented.

### Challenges

- Not related to practice in meaningful ways.
- Too theoretical to some people.
- Not enough depth (go back study – reflect – practice, and so on, therefore some people don't understand what they're doing/why).

## **Training**

### Strengths

- The training of this approach helped and more time (paid) for teachers to do prep would be beneficial.
- We studied from 100 languages of Children, Bambini and the Fountain.
- By visiting the classrooms, talking to the site manager, Susan and their (?) helps with the classroom.

### Challenges

- Not enough involvement with Reggio Emilia educators.
- People's roles – unclear, e.g. Andrew.

### Ambiguous

- A lot of work away from the site

## **Working with the children**

### Strengths

- Having a closer relationship with the children.
- Following the children's interest and supporting it.
- Working with smaller groups of children.
- Curriculum based on children's interest worked well.
- It worked well to follow children's interest to design the projects.
- The concept of taking cues from the children worked.
- New ways of looking at teaching and getting children involved with self-knowledge.

### Challenges

- We are not always accurate on which cues to follow and build on.

## **Parents**

### Challenges

- To have parent understand Reggio Approach and give support is challenging.

## **Question 2**

*From the perspective of learning Reggio Emilia, what could be provided to make you a better practitioner for the future?*

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**Findings:** The responses fell into four categories as to what they need to be better practitioners:

- 71% -- would like more training, meetings, prep time
  - 47% -- would like more practical readings, more practical guidance
  - 29% -- provided various comments
  - 12% -- would like more tools for documentation
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## **Categorized Teacher's Comments**

### **Practical materials/guidance**

- A better understanding of which path we should be on for more feedback about progress that has already taken place.
- More of a push to take work further/guidance on where work can go.
- Perhaps hearing ideas of how others have been able to implement the ideas of Reggio could be helpful, especially in regards to how to find time to document and still care for the children.
- The ways we look at the way children learn, from the inside out, I would say self-discovery – a new way of teaching and learning.
- Readings -- not related to practice in meaningful ways.
- Readings -- too theoretical to some people.
- Readings -- not enough depth (go back study – reflect – practice, and so on, therefore some people don't understand what they're doing/why.
- More video and slides of actual Reggio-Emilio school sites and observe the daily lives of the teacher and children interactions.

### **Documentation**

- Need help to do the documentation panel in order to have better communication.
- We need an adult computer with word processor capabilities in the classroom. Or at the very least we need word processing software program with a keyboard, that's real keyboard, and a disc we can print from, right in the classroom. With this, we can easily and effectively type up names, lists, documentation, flyers, information about class activities and so on. Some of the children might even learn keyboard skills, who knows?

### **Workshops, training, team meetings, classroom meetings, prep time**

- Workshops.
- **More hands** on workshops, training.
- To have team meetings and workshops.
- More hands-on, practical.
- **Provide time to discuss** and share ideas among classroom staff.
- When we try to work together and get along with each other in a team environment.
- More workshop and team meetings are a plus.
- Ongoing meeting time and prep time.
- Having staff/room staff meeting time on a weekly basis so that AM/PM staff can effectively combine their joint efforts to implement progressive documentation, projects, etc.
- Planning time is needed!!!! (Staff paid for their extra hours of prep)
- The opportunity to attend the NAEYC conference was great. The evening discussions and presentations were also quite inspiring, and beneficial.
- The amount of time that we actually have to collaborate and prepare, seemingly a cornerstone of the work, seems, woefully inadequate. I would like to be able to discuss issues more often and more in depth with my colleagues and have more regular evaluations.
- More time for documentation.

### **Various**

- It would be great if we could group children by age and stay with them until they were three.
- More respect for teachers' experience and expertise in working within specific classrooms.
- More teachers input in designing children's spaces and purchasing materials.
- Better cooperation in the classroom.
- I am using one child's idea to develop another's and to explore something new that encourages children to share activity, communication, cooperation, and even conflict, children, co-construct their knowledge of the world.

### **Question 3**

*What are the benefits of the Reggio Emilia approach over other methods of teaching you have experienced?*

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**Findings:** The responses fell into one of several categories. The respondents noted the following areas as the benefits of Reggio over other methods of teaching:

- 94% -- Exploration, listening/seeing and respect for the children
  - 35% -- Community building
  - 24% -- Environment
  - 12% -- Documentation
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### **Categorized Teacher's Comments**

#### **Documentation**

- The documentation has been great personally, for the parents, the children.
- Documenting observations.

#### **Environment**

- Attention to detail in the environment.
- It seems that taking clutter out of the classroom helps with a sense of calmness.
- The environment is the third teacher, collaboration among staff, make connections with other classrooms, projects go more in depth and based on children's interests.
- Simplicity and organization.

#### **Children – 94%**

##### *Exploration – 41%*

- Children's work.
- Following the ideas and interests of the children seem to keep them more engaged.
- Expansion and freedom of exploration for children as well as staff regarding projects based on children's interest, not as formal, the flexibility of the learning process.
- Children are able to explore with more natural open-ended materials.
- It allows the children to be able to explore different materials.
- I have been studying the Reggio Emilia approach and have been implementing this approach in the classroom by doing projects based on the children's interest. And that project encouraged children to discover their own answers.
- Reggio Emilio is more labor-intensive and more product-oriented than say Bank Street, High-Scope or Montessori.

*Listening/Seeing – 41%*

- Listening to children carefully and respectfully.
- It really asks staff and children to think multi-dimensionally.
- Making observations of the children's interest and supporting it.
- Listening to the children – paying more attention to what they are saying.
- The basic philosophy of fostering children's creativity is a good one. If it is to be superimposed on a diverse, well-established educational system specific concerns must be met (district constraints – children's schedules, staff shortages, meal & naptime considerations, literacy expectations).
- We can listen to the children carefully and work better in a team with our staff.
- Reggio Emilia Approach – I think looks at the whole child, in the way children learn and think, looking at the whole picture of learning for the child and from the child's perspective.

*Respect – 12%*

- **More respect** for the individual child's thoughts, creativity, and way of learning.
- I personally feel that the core ideas of the Reggio Emilia approach are so close to my own thoughts and feelings as regards my work with children, namely: listening, observing, analyzing and respect.

**Community**

- Conversations have allowed for growth in children, parent relations and personally.
- More in depth work with staff, children, and families.
- Involvement with families.
- Community involvement.
- Collaboration with staff and families.
- It is community building, and teaches about the importance of early childhood education.

#### **Question 4**

*What aspect of the Reggio Emilia approach is most difficult to adapt to the Presidio site?*

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**Findings:** The answers fall within several categories:

- Various staff issues – 59%  
Substitute teachers, paras, collaboration, communication, no district support, staffing hours
  - Time/fragmented schedules – 24%
  - Documentation – 18%
  - Parent Involvement – 19%
  - Environment – 12%
  - No difficulties – 6%
  - The Approach itself – 6%
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#### **Categorized Teacher's Comments**

##### **Documentation**

- Documenting and displaying work in timely manner.
- Documentation.
- Too much paperwork (children's folders, observation records, panels and photos).

##### **Parent Involvement**

- Getting parents more involved and keeping them interested.
- Building a close knit community with the families.
- Because of the cultural diversity at Presidio site, it is a challenge to build bridge between different cultures. How many parents understand the Reggio approach and give support?

##### **The Approach**

- Moving forward without a specific goal

##### **Time/Schedules**

- No time to plan/meet.
- There is no time to work with the afternoon staff nor is there time with the morning staff at the same time.
- Staff schedules fragmented.
- Finding the time to do appropriately executed documentation/panels. It's always done on teacher's own time for the most part (the paid meetings vastly helped).

### **Environment**

- Changing the classroom environment to black and white.
- The actual space and size of each classroom and how the environment is set up with a wide array of materials and projects for the children.

### **Staff**

- Staffing.
- Staff communication and mutual respect.
- No structure for collaboration.
- Not getting burnt out.
- Not enough staff development opportunity on the topic of Reggio Emilia approach.
- Not much support from the city, state, or other government agencies as is done in Italy.
- The unequal, widely varied, extended staffing hours make communication, decision-making, equal sharing of workload, and relaxed, unworried, unhurried meeting-time impossible.
- Weekly substitute teachers stress out the children and we, their caregivers are stressed too, unable to completely relax well enough to be thoughtful.
- To me, the most difficult part is finding other teachers, paras, newer paras and substitutes who believe 100% in the approach. Or even 50%. Or else they don't understand the approach, bringing in all sorts of contrary issues around the theme of the kid leading the teacher instead of the other way around.
- It is my understanding that Reggio Emilia work is about collaboration. We have little or no time to do this. One, two or three hour meetings per month does not seem nearly enough. This is a challenge. I think being "creative" with time only goes so far.

### **No difficulties**

- I don't feel any thing is difficult to adapt to the school yet.

### **Question 5**

*Do you have ideas for sustaining the Reggio Emilia at the Presidio site over time?*

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**Findings:** Ideas for sustaining the Approach over time fell into several categories:

▪ Staff Development	65%
▪ No response/not at this time/not yet	35%
▪ Parent Participation	18%
▪ Staff Scheduling	18%
▪ Ambiguous	6%

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### **Categorized Teacher's Comments**

#### **Staff Development**

- Ongoing staff development.
- To have workshops.
- More staff meetings, more workshops.
- Work with other schools that will be working on the "Reggio Emilia".
- Ongoing training. Training for all new staff that joins Presidio.
- With engagement with Reggio Emilia educators.
- Ongoing time to meet.
- We need time to exchange ideas. Until we have this, I feel we may not get far. I am optimistic and hopeful, yet also have a fear that people may become disillusioned and static in their thinking.
- Videos. Books written by us. Articles in magazines, journals, newspapers. Photos -- a photo gallery. In the vivid memories of children, parents and teachers!
- Tracking of progress so it is visible.
- Revising changes and maybe improving further.

#### **Parent Participation**

- Have workshops with the parents so that they will understand what we have done in the classroom.
- Create more opportunities for parents to get together, help them feel comfortable and enjoy school activities.
- More parent involvement.

### **Staff Scheduling**

- Less fragmented hours for staff.
- Ideally, a vast restructuring of staff scheduling, to divide the teaching hours equally, and have at least 1.5 hours paid daily planning time, plus weekly meeting time after the children went home.
- Good planning. The past year was marked by many “act first, think later” events.

### **No Response**

- No.
- No response.
- No response.
- Not yet.
- Not many yet, but have to look at the needs of the children.
- Not at this time –the overall concepts are still very new to me.

### **Ambiguous**

- We changed the classroom with white painting and the new house area.

### **Question 6**

*How has Reggio Emilia changed the way you look at the school environment?*

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**Findings:** 94% of the responses noted positive outcomes from the changes in environment and 6% (one response) felt the changes were arbitrarily imposed.

- Changes to physical and cultural environments were noted. Recurring themes in the responses were -- thoughtful, calmer, more comfortable, welcoming, sense of belonging, children can focus, home-like
  - One respondent noted that the environmental changes were arbitrarily imposed on the staff
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### **Teacher's Comments**

- The school is cleaner and more organized in its appearance. And, the teachers now seem to be more thoughtful in their approaches to teaching.
- To be more thoughtful and reflective of the community we are a part of.
- Look at environment, with more depth and clarity.
- Looking neater, more appealing to the eye, more orderly.
- Simplify and beautify the environment so that the children and their work shine.
- Less clutter – the school shows character – the rooms are cleaner
- An environment that makes you feel welcome, warm and inviting. The classrooms are more spacious and not cluttered.
- The photographs of the staff and children gives a sense of belonging.
- Try to make the room a better classroom. Space, room arrangements and respect are all very important.
- Work with parents and their involvement.
- Environment invites children to participate, simplicity of the environment help children more focus on their work.
- I “saw” how big of an impression the children’s way of learning means and how to show everybody else that point.
- After we changed the classroom where all feel welcome and have a sense of belonging.
- I feel entirely justified that I hated unrewarding time when I had to stay after school hours to put up bulletin board trim! I feel, however, that our room is still in transition, still a monument to relics of the non-Reggio approach: stacking and stashing children’s work rather than selecting highlighting and displaying. I feel we validate the work with the children themselves, sparing no chance to bring their efforts to notice, praise and commenting at morning and afternoon circle and many other times as well. We’re on the lookout for commenting favorably and often on our children’s creative efforts, and I feel children ‘get’ this and thrive on it in

our classroom. None of this quite answers the question. The way I look at the environment? So much more can be done to provide positive interactions, positive spin, positive experiences, positive projects ...

- The school is looking so much better. Aside from the obvious, to me, aesthetic change, I see that the children and parents are really responding to the changes. The children seem much calmer and comfortable in this space. I would like to see us continue with our efforts in this area. I would especially like to see us understand what our environment means in relationship to all the participating groups.
- The environment is more open in space and size. The environment now is more home-like with flowers and plants.
- Children are encouraged to be independent.
- I am more aware of how the little details affect the big picture. I pay attention to group size and try to do things in smaller groups so the children can benefit.

#### Challenge

- A new environment (minimalist and very white) was arbitrarily imposed on us. If staff does not have input in their work environment this project cannot work.

### **Question 7**

*What has been your favorite project this past year? Why?*

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**Findings:** Favorites projects ranged from activities with children, changes to the environment and workshops attended by the teaching staff:

Projects with children (Some projects mentioned were: Jamba Juice, beach, animal, soft clay, plays and insects)	65%
Redesign of environment	18%
Workshops	12%
No response	6%

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### **Categorized Teacher's Comments**

#### **Environment**

- Cleaning out the classroom and painting it because there is a sense of cleanliness and order that was not there before.
- I do appreciate the work we have done and continue to do on understanding the importance of environment. I think this is a great starting point and a good framework for which to research and study many aspects of working with children and amongst ourselves.
- The new mail box and new house area and the new materials. The new mailbox that make children build stronger relationships. I see the children play a lot in the house area and they learned how carefully to use the new materials in the area.

#### **Workshops**

- The retreat.
- Going on retreat. Visited other school.

#### **Projects with children**

- Juice project. Fieldtrip to Jamba Juice to see "behind the scenes". Documented/panels of trip, children's observational drawings, making our own Jamba Juice store at school – it covered art, dramatic play, cooking projects, literacy in one project and expansions.
- Our nature trip. Exploring sand & water at the beach.
- Enjoyed the ones we had. Do not particularly have a favorite. Enjoyed working with the children as a team, supporting them and documenting their dialogue and experiences.

The animal project. It incorporated imagery, literacy, dramatic play, large & small motor skills and hearing discrimination (animal sounds). The kids loved it and kept extending it.

- Working with the soft clay. Children really got into it and start adding own materials to the project.
- Self-portraits and clay work project, because it gave the children a chance to really take a good look at themselves.
- My all-time favorite project this year is the repertoire of plays children presented, based on stories they wrote. I think this is my favorite because my interest in original writing and staging performances closely coincided with the children's – we really co-collaborated.
- The insect project. Because I do not have an interest in bugs and I was able to grow with the children. It also was great to see children come up with ideas/materials to nurture and care for the insects.
- Introducing new materials to the children, documenting their interest, showing the parents the results in the children's portfolios. It shows the parents the great respect we have for the capabilities of their children; what we do.
- Art studio experiences.
- Art studio and Squareroom, because children can make their own choices.

#### **No response**

- One survey.

### **Question 8**

*What would you like to see as a project for the future?*

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**Findings:** Responses fell into the following categories. Not only were projects mentioned for children, but also projects including parents and activities for staff:

- |   |     |
|---|-----|
| ▪ For the children<br>(music/dance, gardening,<br>clay, nature, tactile<br>sculpture) | 53% |
| ▪ Parent-related  | 24% |
| ▪ For the staff   | 18% |
| ▪ No response   | 6%  |
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### **Categorized Teacher's Comments**

#### **For staff**

- A sharing of ideas between teachers in other rooms with time to talk and exchange thoughts on implementing new ideas.
- Continue to work with the concepts explored at the retreat. We haven't really dealt with.
- I think we could benefit by exploring what positive things we can gain, what power we can exercise in a political way. I think for anything to really occur here we need to do more than work within the system as it stands, but rather make some informed changes to the system politically.

#### **Parents**

- Parent involved project.
- A project that would involve the parents.
- To have a project that involves the whole school and the parents.
- Work on a project with the parents where we can learn more about – with each other.

#### **For children**

- Some kind of project, which involves music/dance from different countries – cultural diversity exploration.
- Music and dance.
- Gardening – teaching children about how to care for living, growing things and where food comes from. Nutrition for young children is extremely important, I would like to see improvement in school food, perhaps prepared by staff members or volunteer parents.

- I'd like to see an accessible art studio with morning and afternoon scheduled times for each classroom and an art teacher who can focus his energy on making that space work in innovative ways.
- Children working with that porcelain like clay, which hardens into porcelain, and children can mold it and then paint over and then put gloss over it.
- The more nature study.
- I want to do relatively large-scale tactile sculpture. I envision it as perhaps a cardboard box and/or some twigs or other meaningful, solid object as a base. Then any and all who enter our classroom are invited and encouraged to wind yarn, thread, rubber bands, ribbon, string, rope, or other pliable material around the base. To experience the changing shape and aspect of the sculpture, each day we take time to both view and photograph the evolving shape.
- A big art work project with a classroom theme, because it will get the whole class involved in one project so all the children will have to participate.
- Something dealing with self-identity/interpretation.

**No response**

- One survey

**Question 9.**

*In your opinion, what have been the greatest accomplishments of the pilot program to date?*

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**Findings:** The response fell out of several categories. The physical changes in the environment are noted most often as the greatest accomplishment of the pilot program to date:

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|----------------------------|-----|
| ▪ Environment              | 59% |
| ▪ Staff                    | 29% |
| ▪ Art studio               | 12% |
| ▪ No response              | 12% |
| ▪ Community                | 6%  |
| ▪ Reading/Writing          | 6%  |
| ▪ Attitude toward children | 6%  |
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### **Categorized Teacher's Comments**

#### **Community**

- The idea of the school being a “community” is important. The addition of the staff photos and children’s photos throughout the school really gives a feeling of togetherness and community.

#### **Art Studio**

- Getting an art studio somewhat in shape.
- Getting an art studio teacher.

#### **Environment**

- The actual school environment, layout, and selection of materials.
- The implementation of children’s mailboxes.
- The improvement of quality not quantity.
- Better looking environment.
- Classroom arrangement.
- The environment both in and out of the classrooms.
- Working in my classroom.
- Changing the environment.
- The greatest visible accomplishment is paring down and clearing away the clutter to transform classrooms into veritable art galleries.
- Environmental changes in classrooms and throughout the site.

**Staff**

- Getting the staff to become more innovative with their work; reflect, observe, and go deeper than before.
- To get people thinking of new possibilities.
- We still run with that program, the greatest accomplishments are not done yet.
- I see teachers talking with each other much more and in a more considered way. I think we need to continue to learn to collaborate and take our work much more seriously. This is my challenge for myself. I see us getting rid of layers of excess, “baggage” and looking towards what is, for the children, parents and ourselves what is important and useful.
- Personal growth in individuals.

**Attitudes toward children**

- Greater recognition and appreciation of the children and their work.

**Program**

- The reading and writing program we have started in our classroom.

**No response**

- Two surveys.

### **Question 10**

*What are the main challenges facing the program? Do you have ideas for addressing these issues?*

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**Findings:** Responses fell into several categories, but no one challenge predominates:

- Attitudes 35%
  - Time 24%
  - Outside support 18%
  - Parents 18%
  - Staffing 12%
  - Decision-making 6%
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### **Categorized Teacher's Comments**

#### **Time (preparation, professional development, meeting, talking)**

- Time for documenting, planning and time for all of the necessary meetings seems to be an issue.
- Staffing schedules, no prep time, not enough staff development, no involvement from district administration, meeting time difficult to analyze.
- We will read our Reggio materials more and work more with out administrator. The main challenge is that we do have enough staff development and we should have more discussion sessions.
- We basically have no time to collaborate. I really do not see any of these great ideas being able to be thoughtfully implemented until this very key area is fully attended to. I wish I had a great idea for resolving this. It seems to me that this is an area that must be dealt with politically and until we understand the importance of it and work as a unified group.

#### **Attitudes**

- **Staff** who are still “old school” – reluctant, afraid of changes, more of the visiting staff in classrooms to see other room’s ideas and supporting instead of competition.
- A certain percentage of unprofessional attitudes among staff prevail. Staff who won’t produce unless they absolutely must. People who dislike change and thoughtfulness. This has been difficult to work with; I’m out of ideas.
- The main challenge is probably clearing away negative resistances to the approach. This can probably be done by examining valid objections or by making positive benefits supremely and irresistible clear or both.
- Getting everyone on the same page.
- Get people to discuss openly about their concerns/reservations about Reggio Approach.
- The main challenges are getting everybody on the same page in our school.

**Staffing**

- Administration should make permanent staffing a priority.
- Staffing – bringing the attention to the site manager.

**Outside support**

- Again outside support is needed.  
Continued financial support.
- After our 3<sup>rd</sup> year with the Innovative Teacher's Project, then what? Will need outside support.

**Decision-making**

- The big decisions seem to be arbitrary. Teachers should have the opportunity (and the money) to create their own environments and purchase their own materials.

**Parents**

- Helping parents understand the Reggio approach and be more active in the program. Putting what they learned into practice is difficult for some staff.
- Meeting all the goals of the Reggio Emilia. It's difficult explaining the goals to the parents – maybe some parents can join our meetings to begin to understand Reggio Emilia.
- I think the main challenges facing the program that each project shall let everyone had learned something and moved somewhere in his or her thinking.

### **Question 11**

*What are your hopes for the future of this program?*

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**Findings:** The responses fell into several categories, but similar themes that center around working together as a team (teachers/parents/children):

▪ Bring more definition to the program	35%
Dedicated staff/parents	35%
Various	18%
▪ Collaboration	12%
No response	6%

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### **Categorized Teacher's Comments**

#### **Collaboration**

- I hope to see more collaboration between the classrooms, between teachers and students.
- We should work together and have more positive attitudes instead of negative ones. That Presidio C.D.C. has the best program that we have ever had.

#### **Bring definition to the program**

- That we can figure out what we want for our program so we can be truthful to our beliefs and can reflect the community we are and not copy Reggio Emilia.
- To firmly establish a progressive, peaceful, inspiring school for all staff, parents and children.
- Will it work after the three-year pilot program is finished?
- To develop it as a model program for other pre-schools.
- How we can continue and expand on our work. I am greatly concerned that things will “stall” and this will just become another trendy thing tried and failed. I do not want to see that happen, as I have seen with so many other things. I hope we can see how all-important our work is.
- That the administrators step back and see what is working, what is not, and why.

#### **Dedicated staff/parents**

- Bring more dedicated professionals into Presidio to work. I would like to see more thoughtfulness on infant/toddler transitions – I would like to see teachers transition to Room 4 with their children, perhaps starting the year off with 12 young infants who transition all together at around age 20 months room 4 with their teachers.
- I hope that the staff will continue to learn.

**Dedicated staff/parents continued...**

- I hope to ignite more real interest in the program in our parents. At present in our classroom, parents let us know if they're pleased or displeased about how their kid is doing. But mostly they are in a hurry during drop-off in the morning and in another hurry at pick-up in the evening.
- That teachers/parents see the importance of slowing down and allowing children to grow without forcing them. That it opens eyes and doors for educators to gain the respect that is well-deserved.
- Community involvement.
- Everybody fully understanding and practicing the Reggio Emilia that best works with his or her children.

**Various**

- Reggio practice will go beyond preschool to upper grade.
- My hopes are the children learning more new things that they are interested.
- Good things.

**No Response**

- No response.

### **Question 12**

*How have the students responded to this approach? What changes have you seen in the children over the past year? Any differences from previous years?*

---

**Findings:** Responses fell into three categories, response to changes in the environment, more focused and various:

- Environment 53%
  - More focused 29%
  - Various 24%
- 

### **Categorized Teacher's Comments**

#### **More focused**

- The kids seem more able to go to a specific area and occupy themselves without adult support. They love the listening center, the art area, and the mailboxes.
- More focused, more interested in classroom projects, experiences, less fragmentation in the art.
- Very well, with appropriate time to prep/introduce children to new materials, ways of thinking – they have become more focused and autonomous.
- The children seem more focused. More dialogue (communicative) more creative. More collaborative.
- Yes. The children are more confident & independent. The children would previously ask for assistance quite frequently and would become easily frustrated. Now they are more persistent and focused.

#### **Environment**

- The children seem happy with the changes beginning with the cleaning, re-organizing, and painting.
- Children have been introduced to more natural materials that wouldn't have occurred before. They responded well.
- The children had adapted well. Children love and enjoy the new environment. They have more choices for them to engage.
- The children love innovative play. They are being offered more kinds of materials, open-ended play and it is more appropriate for them. One can see a deeper interest sparked, more creative play.
- The children have responded in a very positive way. There are more opportunities for learning.
- Yes, the children love the classroom and the area, for example, the writing area, the mailbox, the quiet area and the listen center.
- They took better care of the materials as the environment; more create, especially using clay.

- After we changed the environment in the classroom it looked very neat and everything organized that children use a lot. For example, the new mailboxes that help children to build their stronger relationship and children have increasing respect for materials.
- The way the children have responded to the changes in the room are about the way they read and write, and the way they look at artwork is a big change from previous years.

### **Various**

- **I am** still in the process of studying and observing the children.
- You know, children have with greater or lesser expectation of being directed and told what to do. It is necessary on some levels of connection, and yes, probably I tend to do too much of that. But it does take time for children to believe *we really want to do projects they think up*. And also to find ways to extend their interests. And then they are also testing and challenging us, to discover how deeply we are committed to the approach. So – are we going to tackle interesting projects or be challenged by children, or what?

In the past year I've noticed encouraging changes in children's self-sufficiency and, always, their heartfelt response to beauty. They also have learned certain skills such as threading a needle, throwing a ball, helping another kid, knowing how to wipe a table or sweep up..

I don't know how lasting the main principles of conflict resolution have been. We've practiced sitting at the peace table all year. We have one child speak without interruption, and then the other, and then we talk over how to make repairs. I haven't seen the children utilize the technique on their own to talk out a difficulty.

- I always see that children, people, respond more openly and creatively as they are really listened to well. I think we are making steps in implementing this intention. It is a challenge for one. I become impatient. Again, I would hope we can continue to develop a culture here where we can make time to do this in a deep and meaningful way.
- The children respond to the energy surrounding them. This has been a difficult year

### ***Question 13***

*How do you feel the Reggio Emilia approach prepares children for future learning?*

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**Findings:** All seventeen surveys responded to this question. The following is a list of recurring descriptors used to answer how Reggio Emilia prepares children for future learning:

- |                         |                             |
|-------------------------|-----------------------------|
| - self-directing        | - explore & expand horizons |
| - focus                 | - communication             |
| - respect               | - self-esteem               |
| - collaboration         | - creative                  |
| - community involvement | - self confidence           |
| - listening             |                             |
- 

### **Teacher's Comments**

- Children are directing themselves in their interest areas and activities. And that curiosity is a natural teacher to help open doors and develop the mind in preparation for future learning.
- More focus, more respect, more collaboration, more community involvement/responsibility.
- Providing respect to the child as an individual, listening and validating the child and their work (stable sense of self esteem and confidence as an adult).
- Academically, I'm not sure, but hopefully they will have gained self-confidence, self-esteem.
- Teach the children to continue exploring the wider environment.
- It builds upon their interest and relationships. It offers them high quality materials. It shows a huge respect for their capabilities. It encourages their many languages of expression.
- The Reggio approach does not restrict a child from learning. It enables the child to explore and expand their horizons.
- To be more focused. To be more communicative. To be more collaborative.
- In combination with more traditional approaches it could work quite well.
- The approach makes us respect each other and get more focused with things.

- Many ways to express themselves and communicate with others. More creative.
- Help them feel more confident and have a higher self-esteem in the way they are thinking and learning.
- We shall prepare stronger communication between children to children, teachers to children and parents to children for future learning.
- We don't know what the future will bring – but aren't we all motivated and liberated by doing what we truly want to do, by getting a go signal to explore our interests and curiosities, and by following a course of exploration that validates serious effort and includes the contributions of each one in the group?
- One of the main things that I know is that when children are listened to and respected, that, in turn, is what they learn. When we closely observe children in the moment, with respect, they learn to be observers and respectful people. In a world that changes quickly, these are invaluable skills. The ability to see and respond to things as they are, appropriately, is a gift.
- I think it is the way teachers teach in Reggio Emilia is teaching without a lot of instruction, without a lot of instruction, more self-discovery and hands on teaching.
- Children are allowed to discover and grow to their fullest potential because the teachers are slowing down the process and working from every possible angle. Children can then retain, expand, and make connections.

### **Question 14**

*Describe what you perceive are the educational “building blocks” Reggio Emilia provides preschoolers.*

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**Findings:** 24% of the respondents chose not to answer this question. The other 76% used the following descriptors to answer what educational “building blocks” the approach provides preschoolers:

- Have an idea and a final product, deepening initial interests
- **Focus**, respect, **collaboration**, community involvement
- **Validating** the child as an individual, encourages self-trust
- Thinking and creativity

**Self-confidence – environment as educator**

Listening, observing, recording, acknowledging, and exploring and the understanding and importance of relationship both of people, objects and situations encouraged.

- Having teachers that believe in the competence of children.

Note: *italics* = mentioned more than three times

**bold** = mentioned more than two times

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### **Categorized Teacher’s Comments**

- The building blocks stem from the ability to have an idea, and a final product. The child is allowed to carry ideas and creative thoughts from beginning to end and this is “food for the brain.”
- More focus, more respect, more collaboration, more community involvement/responsibility.
- Projects based on children’s interests; validating the child as an individual through expansions in play/projects, documentation; and socialization and learning skills for the future.
- Self-confidence – capability, environment as an educator.
- Children can continue exploring their own interest. The teacher’s role is supportive rather than directive.
- To be more focused. To be more communicative. To be more collaborative.
- Creative spaces and materials, encouragement, options for extended learning, validation.

- Mainly “focusing” and “working together”.
- Art opens up many questions and learning process that encourages children’s thinking and creativity along with opening up many imaginations yet to be fulfilled.
- Preschoolers gain not only “hands-on” skills and social, verbal and kinesthetic skills, they also get recognition for deepening their initial interests. This encourages their sense of self-trust and a belief in their ability to accomplish & actualize.
- We know that one thing that is true about young children is that they are developing physically and neurologically at an unbelievable rate – more than at any other stage of human development; they are literally “constructing” the world. Reggio work stems from that understanding and emphasizes the free working of this process, listening, observing, recording, acknowledging, exploring and the understanding and importance of relationship both of people, objects and situations is encouraged. Respect of these ideas provide a framework.
- Having teachers that believe in the competence of the children. Providing children enough opportunity to explore/discover on their own. Finding importance in every process of the day and in the “little” things that children do.

**No response**

- Four surveys.

### **Question 15**

*How would you like to involve children's parents in the future?*

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**Findings:** Responses to parent involvement in the future fell into three categories:

Meetings	53%
Classroom participation	35%
▪ Various	29%

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### **Categorized Teacher's Comments**

#### **Meetings**

Involving parents is a key element in this approach. I think evening meetings, with proper and clear invitations, is a good way to involve parents (needs posted meeting dates so parents can plan to attend).

- Parent meetings, small interest groups, different topics, curriculum, etc.
- Meetings, joining in on hands on activities, social functions.
- More communication with parents. Extend the child's learning at home include parents at workshops, provide more information to parents about the approach.
- For the parents to attend a workshop on Reggio Emilia. To have resources for non-English speaking parents about Reggio.
- By holding parent meetings, and discussion of what we do in the classroom.
- Again invite the parents to our meetings or have a special meeting just for the parents.
- Hearing/receiving more feedback from them without having to initiate it all the time.
- I'd ask them what's their biggest problem with the child and I'd check with them about how the projects and activities we do in our classroom affect or change their child's behavior.

#### **Classroom participation**

- **More visiting parent** experiences. (Example: one parent of ours owns a pizza parlor - he came in and made pizzas by hand for us. It turned into our own pizza project).
- Our parents are very involved with our room; they are always extending themselves for our community. Create a parent cooperative school (parents must work in their child's room 2 hours a month).
- Participate in the project, volunteer in the classroom.
- I would like the parents at times to come in and work with the children or come and show the children more about everyday life.
- I'd also like to resume parents' visits where they lead the group and teach us about their culture or occupation. Let's display the objects we asked them to bring from home for the house area. (Dishes do not need to match!!)
- Getting them to keep up with their journal readings.

## **Various**

- **By** providing information about classroom activities; panels, photos and children's folders.
- I would like to hear their comments in response to this survey.
- Provide the project plan first, and then get parents to involve their children and teachers and parents discussing the project.
- I think the parents' involvement is directly linked to our involvement as educators – I do not see a dividing line here at all. I think most of all we need to become actively aware of what we are doing and why. Once we can do this, our own enthusiasm and thoughts will naturally draw participation from the parents. We are the sentinels, the ones that go before, in this process. Any contrived ways to involve others will fail.
- Getting them to get deeper understanding of our work and the everyday milestones their children accomplish.

### **Question 16**

*How would you involve staff more in the future?*

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**Findings:** Future staff participation fell into three categories:

- Meetings, discussions, workshops 65%
  - Relationship building 29%
  - No response 6%
- 

### **Categorized Teacher's Comments**

#### **Time (meetings, discussion, workshops, etc.)**

- Allowing time for open discussion and exchanging of ideas might help involve the staff more.
- More discussion sharing about what working and why. Dialogue with others that are implementing the approach.
- I know that I keep saying it, but I know that without respect that time to go into these things provides, more involvement is, not forthcoming. People can only stretch so far. It is my hope that I can find ways to stretch myself so as to help myself and others.
- More opportunities for AM & PM staff to meet to plan and prep for cohesive projects.
- I'd have a 10 or 15-minute segment during a staff meeting where two or three teachers from different rooms can informally interact, sharing an approach or a project or another surprise, so we can learn what's going on in our center.
- Meetings, joining in on hands on activities, and social functions.
- Make meetings more interesting by introducing some slides, videos and actual hands on Reggio Emilia.
- Giving time for classroom meeting.
- Discussing in the staff meeting and sharing the idea.
- Fully pay them to be on committees and attend functions.
- More workshops, meeting time within working hours.

#### **Relationships**

- **With respect** and increased dialogue.
- Listen to staff and do make them feel so bad.
- Listening to them more carefully, it takes time!
- Develop the some goals and work together toward the goals. Develop positive relationships.
- By passing on things you do in your classroom. Compare notes, talk, exchange ideas and information.

#### **No response**

- No response.

***Question 17***

*Will you be returning to the Presidio site for the 2002 – 2003 school year?*

▪ Yes – 15

No – 1 (This isn't because of the Reggio Project, the project is mentally simulating and I enjoy that.)

Probably – 1

### *Question 18*

*Any other comments you'd like to make?*

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**Findings:** 70% of the respondents had no further comments. The 30% that had further comment are too varied to categorize.

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### **Categorized Teacher's Comments**

- Blocks to 100 percent enthusiasm, involvement and commitment to the collaboration approach need to be addressed in an open, friendly manner.

Also, I've recently been afflicted with a conviction that I receive 4 or more reprimands to every positive comment, and shouldn't it be the other way around? Of course, that's way better than no comment at all.

I appreciate your choosing this survey method of getting input. It's brainstorm come true to write my responses to this survey. Thanks for asking and thanks for reading my responses. This entire survey inspires me to ask "my" parents to evaluate the best and the worst of what they perceive to be their kids' experience in our classroom, before they move on.

- The pressure to volunteer many unpaid hours of our own precious family lives creates an underlying resentment in staff.
- This survey takes a lot more than 20 minutes. How is going to be "rated"?
- I am laughing at this question as I write! Most people that know me know that I always have more comments! This work, this "project" is a great undertaking both on a public level and definitely on a personal and profession level for myself. I sometimes get concerned that if, we, I will fail. Perhaps this is the way I was raised. Perhaps it is not about succeeding or failing in an ultimate sense. Perhaps it is about learning. If we want to the best for children then we must want the best for ourselves. Sometimes I settle for "ok" in my life and work. But what does "ok" mean? I am contriving to challenge myself with these ideas. I say – "let's do it!" This survey is wonderful – good to be respected in this way. Thank you!
- I had a lot of questions about what our goal was and where we were headed. It got overwhelming at times because we were jumping around trying to touch on several areas without completing one. There was too much information thrown at us without enough feedback on work we were doing.

### **No response**

- 12 surveys.

## Reggio Emilia Staff Survey

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**Findings:** Respondent finds the environment much more appealing, notes the children looking at displays coming in and out of the building, appreciates the dialogue that has begun to happen at the school, surge in energy, decrease in criticism about the Approach, would like to see more workshops and involve staff more (bring a friend). Sees constraint as time and building staff relationships. Would like to know what the advantages to the approach are with gifted children and how the approach differs philosophically to other educational approaches.

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### Comments by other staff

#### *Question 1*

*Describe any changes you have observed in the school environment over the past year*

I love the simplicity and fresh, natural materials. I feel lighter and look forward to finding the beauty in God's creations in the workplace/school. I like the clear, inviting and immediate impression I get when walking through the site.

#### *Question 2*

*Please note any observations that you have seen in the children that you have observed over the past year.*

I only observe the children as they enter or leave the school; however, I do enjoy and notice the difference when they are curious to see what's in the curio boxes in the lobby and they respond to the pictures of the staff and seem to enjoy discovering ("touching") the materials in the baskets.

#### *Questions 3*

*Describe any changes in the teachers you have observed over the past year.*

I like the personal accountability and creative input as a TEAM – enjoying the vision the teachers and paras have put together for their classroom environment. I enjoy seeing organized portfolios and inviting areas for parents to read to their children. I like the increased fellowship and dialogue regarding the school.

**Question 4**

*Have you noticed any changes in the staff since the start of the Reggio Emilia approach at the school?*

I have perceived a surge of energy and increased confidence in the teachers. In amount of study, discussions, reflections and professional development is reinforced by their unity in the Approach. Although unity is still in process, the amount of negotiating and criticism seems to have decreased. Since the retreat, resistance to the Approach has decreased from my perspective.

**Question 5**

*Have you seen any changes in how you approach your job at school?*

I enjoy the style of simplicity and vitality in natural materials with beautiful flowers and plants. I look forward to working in a peaceful, beautiful environment. I want to simplify my office visually and create more of a natural connection within my office with a few visually simple yet colorful plants amongst the room. I view plastic differently.

**Question 6**

*Knowing what you do about the Reggio Emilia approach, do you have ideas about ways to involve staff more in the program for the future?*

I believe the evening meetings and workshops and trips facilitate the group experience effectively. I could only recommend to further building relationships with staff and/or outreach to staff you normally wouldn't engage with – basically make a friend, and bring a friend; possibly team up with other classrooms on the project.

**Question 7**

*Describe any constraints you might anticipate in involving staff more in the Reggio*

*In constraints are typically family and time priorities. The resistance to change and growth and risking making relationships with staff are constant constraints.*

**Question 8**

*Are there any other comments you would like to make?*

I would like to learn more about the approach and discover the differences in educational approaches/philosophical? I am curious regarding the advantages and benefits for “gifted” children and how methods from my experience as a child, and now a parent, can compare with the approach. I am grateful for a leader with vision and passion and ultimately the skills to introduce, incorporate and implement the Reggio Emilia approach to a challenging group of personalities, temperaments and culturally diverse backgrounds.

## Reggio Emilia Parents Survey

### Question 1

*Describe any changes in the school environment you have noticed over the past year*

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**Findings:** Parents have noticed the physical changes to the school environment. A majority of respondents perceive the school as cleaner and more organized, and noted particular rearranged areas at the school. “Open and friendly”, “attractive”, “brighter” and “better learning environment.”

- 71% note the school is cleaner, more organized
  - 57% note a particular rearranged area
  - 36% note project work/staff photos displayed
  - 14% various comments (teachers more communicative)
- 

### Categorized Parent’s Comments

#### **Cleaner, more organized**

- Room cleaner, less clutter.
- Our school has become more attractive.
- The classrooms are brighter and cleaner.
- Upon entering the school, you notice the walls are painted a neutral white and cream, void of ornamentation. Somehow, I feel an attempt to minimize has been made.
- Paint in hallways & classroom brighter!
- The classroom environment is more open and friendly. Instructional materials are more accessible to children. (Much improved).
- Great, big, better.
- **Rooms are being** painted to reflect a simpler, less busy environment. Furniture is arranged, moved or removed to create a better learning environment.
- Everything looks more organized. My wife and I see the effort that has gone into rearranging the physical space of the classrooms in order to create a more conducive learning/sharing environment. It is definitely a much more friendlier environment.
- The Room 4 art room is more abundant with more experimental project materials. It’s brighter and well organized, for more hands-on opportunities.

#### **Rearranged areas**

- **Comfort area** conducive for breastfeeding, reading.
- Rearrangement of square room.
- Art studio.
- Most of the toys in my son’s room are in natural colored baskets, not plastic boxes.

- Building in general – Welcoming reception area – couch/futon, books. View of cozy part of Room 1/Infants is so appealing. Reading/couch areas in each room are so improved.
- In classrooms – specific re-design of space – colors, placement of furniture and “centers”, placement of sign-in sheets inside/deep into room to draw parents in.
- The gross motor room is a lot more useable.
- There are some changes in the school environment. The arrangement of the classroom is more organized than before.

#### **Project work/staff photos displayed**

- More project work displayed.
- Great pictures of children & staff.
- Displays of art & pictures of children/teachers.
- Photos of all staff on entry wall are wonderful.
- In the past year I have noticed a lot more appealing photos and classroom displays.

#### **Various**

- Many teachers have left.
- The teachers have been more communicative.

## Question 2

*Please make observations to any changes in your children as it related to their school experience in the past year.*

---

**Findings:** The responses are varied, but positive – recurring comments include satisfaction with vocabulary, language and liking to read. In general, the children are happy and love to come to school.

Note: One survey commented often that his son goes through phases of crying a lot when he comes to school – but respondent did not provide name for follow up.

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## Categorized Parent's Comments

- Seems to be on target developmentally. The PM teacher is very attentive to Reggio techniques – other teacher, not so engaged with philosophies.
- My son's vocabulary has really picked up. It is still hard to get him out of the center at the end of the day, which I feel speaks to the fact that he very enjoys being at the school. The little projects and occasional field trips appear to leave a distinct impression on my son as he cannot stop talking about them.
- He loves to talk on walks and look at bugs. He learned about shadow and light. He learned about sharing...likes to read, understands more! Developed imagination!!
- Children love to come to school more and they like to participate in the classroom activities.
- My children have made a lot of progress in their language ability
- My daughter loves her school. Her self-confidence has improved and her ability to speak has improved and work independently has made significant gains.
- My daughter is very happy at the Presidio Center, she rarely cries anymore.
- My child appreciates the bright paint and vast space.
- My son is extremely happy, when I drop him off and when I pick him up. He loves to read and do art.
- Since the teachers are working hard to involve the parents in the environment, i.e.. Sign in sheets deep inside, with adjoining log for preschooler to sign themselves in at the same time, writing of notes to my child for his mailbox, generally, more parents spend more time in room, event just to drop off; my child, and others, seem to sense

that adults want to be with them, respect and value them as people. Not all parents participate, but those who do improve experience for all the kids.

- Our son goes through phases of crying when left at school.
- N/A—No response – two surveys.

### Question 3

*Have you noticed any changes in the past year, in the quality/type of work your child is bringing home from pre-school?*

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**Findings:** Due to the random sample of parent surveys, some respondents had children too young to be bringing work home from school. The responses fell into two categories:

- Not applicable/too young/no response 50%
- Perceived improvement on work sent home 50%

Areas of improvement mentioned: pictures having more meaning, projects more detailed, and progress in writing and letter recognition.

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### Categorized Parent's Comments

#### **Not applicable/too young/no response**

- Nothing to compare to – child is in room 1.
- N/A
- No, daughter is not bringing home much work yet (too young) but the folder of stories and photos of her time in school are great.
- I have an infant, 7 ½ months old.
- No
- No response.
- He hasn't brought anything home, yet.

#### **Brings home work**

- A good amount of clay work with elements collected on walks from the natural environment, leaves, sticks, pinecones, included in the clay. I really like the wire sculptures. My son's done some digging of dirt for new garden that goes with a story on how plants grow. A change to try some weaving and he really enjoyed the shadow dancing behind the screen. Since my son has occupational therapy for fine motor issues, all of the above projects are really beneficial. I've even read that painting an easel is helpful in making children's arms stronger.
- Understands color better, tries to draw circles, pictures have more meaning/stories
- My daughter brings work home on a regular basis. Work sample consist of art projects and other independent, emerging writing samples.
- To build penmanship and beginning educational skills. My son is not bringing too much artwork home, he is only two, but the projects he has done are so much more detailed.

More obvious progress in writing and letter recognition so I/we as parents can watch/experience the learning process – not that they are learning necessarily earlier (maybe they are?) but having this progress so easy to see because of the projects, the documentation (love it), the mailboxes. With my older daughters I wasn't as aware of each step in their learning, not drawn into it.

- His writing has improved. The painting, sketches and coloring now have a recognizable shape.
- My children have improved a great deal in their homework.

#### **Question 4**

*Describe any changes in the teachers you have observed over the past year*

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**Findings:** Surveys indicated more attentiveness, enthusiasm, positive attitudes, encouragement of parental interest over the past year. Teachers are seen in a positive light and note positive changes overall.

- Comments related to last year 50%
  - Comments regarding teachers in general 36%
- 

#### **Categorized Parent's Comments**

##### **Comments related to the past year**

- Some teachers more if more flexible regarding new ideas. Some teachers more interested in each other and status quo.
- They become more observant and attentive to students' needs. They have established a closer relationship with children.  
Enthusiastic to develop the class environment.
- I noticed that the teachers' interaction with my son to be more direct, their attitudes have seen to lighten up. It's been a nice change.  
They seem to encourage parental interest in all that goes on in the classroom, but this might be attributed to my interest in the whole Reggio approach. You give you get back; it's a reciprocal thing. If parents don't raise their interest/involvement, their kids still benefit from the program and from other parents' increased involvement. Their parent just miss the great ride!
- The past year has given me a chance to know my son's teachers a little better. I have tremendous respect and admiration for Flo and Esther in particular. The two do an amazing job.  
The teachers have also improved a lot.

##### **Comments in general**

- **My daughter's teachers are outstanding!** They are, indeed, the best benefit of attending the Presidio CDC. They continue to nurture, guide, love and discipline (teaching) her in a positive manner.  
Staff is excellent and truly cares for development of children.  
The have always been very interested in my daughter. They take their work very seriously and that makes me feel very comfortable. The treat her as if she were a part of their family.  
Always friendly and good teachers for my child.
- As parents, we have always been particularly pleased with the teachers – they are some of the best; the staff of Room 1 and 4. We really feel they have provided a confident, nurturing and educational environment. They work well with what they have.

## Question 5

*Do you have any observations of changes in staff over the past year?*

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**Findings:** The low turnover, friendliness, enthusiasm, community, seriousness with which they work were all observations of changes of staff over the year. Challenges noted were the high-turnover of staff and the inconsistent delivery of the approach. Due to the random sample of parents, turnover could be higher in one room than others. Inconsistent delivery of the approach was only mentioned by one respondent. Overall, strengths outweigh challenges two-to-one.

Strength of staff	43%
Challenges for staff	21%
No response	29%

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## Categorized Parent's Comments

### Strength of staff

- I'm not aware of any major staffing changes with regard to classroom 8.  
Staff has become more enthusiastic about their work.  
Always friendly and good teachers for my child.
- There is truly a sense of community at the Presidio CDC. The staff has one out of their way to ensure the positive well being of my daughter. All staff takes responsibility for the children.
- The staff has been pretty consistent not too high of turn over which is nice.
- They are serious in their work.

### Challenges for staff

- **This much attention** needs to be made on not only 'approach' but also the consistency of staff delivery of approach. Staff consistency is problematic at PCDC. To many subs, too much inconsistency for child. This paradigm will in structure will surely affect this work and work against principles.
- Two of five main teachers/para team in my son's pre-school room left this spring. He doesn't talk much about their replacements. It would be nice to be told, via newsletter/memo from head teacher or site manager, about staff changes, a little bio about new staff, etc. so we know who is spending time with our kids.
- Many teachers have left.

### No response

4 – no response

**Question 6**

*We would like to have more parent involvement in the future. Please note if you are interested in the following activities:*

- Reading materials 71%
- Learning about the role of parents 43%
- After hours seminars 43%

**Comments:**

- Re: Seminars: nice if it could be held during the day.
- Re: Reading: Since books are available in the reception area of school, I've had the opportunity to look at some. The book on measurement and children was interesting. I will try to introduce the concept of measurement to my son in this way. And in another book the toilet paper layout for a mathematical grid on a lawn for a dinosaur makes me think of Leonardo da Vinci.

## Question 7

*Are there any other comments you would like to make?*

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**Findings:** The additional comments are of course, varied. One of the respondents is from Italy and is familiar with Reggio Emilia and is thankful for the professional care given to her child. Majority of responses are positive, thankful, and a couple of suggestions for making better class transitions for child/parent and providing supportive assistance as a rule for special education students.

Varied responses	64%
No response	36%

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## Parent's Comments

- Better transitions between classes for parents. Teachers should introduce parents and child to new teachers/room/routine or new teachers should introduce selves/room/routine to parents. Even a simple one-pager would do.
- My son has been attending Presidio Child Development since October 2001. Since my child is one of the four per classroom, full inclusion, special education students. I would welcome the Reggio Emilia belief that all children from the community are included and supportive assistance is provided as a rule.
- Presidio seems to be making some productive positive changes. I have had my kids enrolled since 1997 so I have seen some good changes in the school.
- Thank you for all you have done for Kali this year. She has become a confident, assertive, bright girl in this world – much to your credit. Your hard work and dedication has certainly paid off!
- I can't express enough how grateful I am and fortunate I feel to have Sofia at the Presidio Center. Her caregivers are so professional and genuinely interested in her development. I feel blessed that they are in Sofia's life. She is always so happy with them, it's like they are family to Sofia and me. **Being Italian myself, I realize the positives of the Reggio Approach and being a single mom with no family nearby I'm thankful Sofia will have this experience.**
- All around great program.
- I appreciate it when the teachers take time to explain my child's development in a very personal and individual basis. They take the extra time to also read to him – which he loves and thrives upon. I would like to see more of his projects from school.

- I suggest that the teacher should spend more time with the children in the classroom reading storybooks, and other reading materials instead of spending a lot of time in outdoor activities.
- My husband and I have 3 kids (1 preschool, 2 school age) at Presidio, since 1995. We've seen a lot of changes, almost all improvements over the years. It's nice to have a specific theoretical approach to what our kids do all day or after school and I really like and agree with the Reggio Emilia approach. Sandy Osborne is a great manager in all regards and we are so fortunate to have her leadership at Presidio CDC.

Other parents are envious of the quality of childcare we have. I sure hope the parents on subsidies appreciate what they get at PCDC!

5 - No response

## Conclusions

After eleven months into the first year of a three-year pilot, most survey responses were quite positive. The teachers, other staff and parents can all site changes in the past year that have been beneficial to the children at Presidio Child Development Center.

Considering the constraints to the pilot program's implementation – no district support, little time for professional development, a.m. and p.m. teaching staff -- it is encouraging that the teachers want to learn more about practice, find ways to be collaborative and involve parents.

The parents see changes in the environment and the teachers (more communicative both with parents and children), and parents would like to learn more about the Reggio Emilia Approach themselves. There appears to be only a few teachers that feel like the approach has been arbitrarily imposed on them, and parents who have issues such as crying children and turnover in the teaching staff.

### Teachers

In general, respondents appear to embrace the approach. They want to learn how to be better practitioners, and would like more practical guidance in the classroom and through readings. Teachers would like to see more positive feedback. They enjoy the project work and have many ideas for new projects. The teachers would like to see more parent involvement with projects and in general.

The environment is noted as the biggest change in the past year (94%), but only 24% of the teachers see it as a benefit over other methods of teaching. The greatest benefit the teachers see over other methods of teaching are in the areas of exploration, listening/seeing and respect for the children (94%).

Going forward for the future, it is heartening that the teachers' responses to how the approach prepares children for future learning used descriptors such as more focused, collaborative, self-directing, respectful, listeners, self-esteem, self-confident, communicators, and creative. When asked what changes the teachers' have seen in the children in the past year, 35% responded with "more focused" and 53% cited a positive response to the changes in "environment".

The areas of the approach that are identified as most difficult to adapt to the Presidio site are various staff issues and are found in the areas of inadequate substitute teachers and paras, little collaboration, better communication, no district support, and fragmented schedules (59%). The main challenge, related to staff issues for the teachers is time: documentation, workshops, meetings, collaboration and planning (71%).

Also of note is the concern that teachers see "attitudes" as an issue facing the approach (35%) -- "getting everyone on the same page", "negative resistance to the approach", and "discuss openly about their concerns/reservations about Reggio Approach."

### **Other Staff**

Only one survey was returned from the five other staff members not in a teaching role. The survey was very positive about the changes that had occurred at the site over the past year, citing the environment as more appealing, an increase in dialogue at the school and a surge in energy. The constraints were seen as the lack of time and difficulty of building staff relationships.

### **Parent**

The parent surveys reflect a group of people who believe in the teaching staff and see positive changes in the development of their children. Their comments in general, are very heartening.

The parents indicated changes in the physical environment of the site (71% cleaner, more organized), as well as a change in attitudes of the teachers (more engaged, more communicative). Since the survey was disseminated to a random sample of parents (infant through preschool) fifty percent of the respondents could either not see any changes in the work their children brought home, or was not applicable to the age of their child. Some parents are concerned with the turnover of staff and others perceive the staff as quite stable (could vary from classroom to classroom).

Parents are interested in learning more about Reggio Emilia – 71% interested in reading about the approach and 41% would be interested in learning about their role and after hour seminars. Parents' interest in seminars is lower than their interest in reading, is probably an issue of time as well.

### **Challenges**

The biggest challenge for implementing the approach at the site, appears to be time: time for the teachers to prepare, discuss/collaborate, train; time for the other staff to get more involved; and time for the parents to participate. Sprinkled throughout the survey were comments about the need for positive feedback and changing people's attitudes about the approach.

### **Upside**

The Presidio Child Development Center has a lot to feel good about; made progress the first year of the project, parents are happy, other staff that responded welcomes the changes, and the teachers, although strapped for time, took the time to give a thoughtful response and want to find ways to make the approach work. After the first year in the pilot are seeing the children more focused, respectful, self-directing, and creative.

## **Appendix A**

### **Respondents who provided their names for further discussion**

#### **Teachers**

- Linda Blum
- Frederick S. Kahrs
- Danielle Longridge

#### **Staff**

Jessica (last name?)

#### **Parents**

- Mollie Matull
- Tagomori-Lai Family
- Nina Paulucci
- The Shaw Family
- Kathy Hanson
- Kelsay Aukatsay/Kirsten Plitschel
- Victor Chen

## Appendix B

### Confidential Reggio Emilia Approach Presidio Site Annual Survey for Teachers

The purpose of the following survey is to get your insights as a teacher involved with the Reggio Emilia approach at the Presidio site for the past year. This information will inform plans for the future (e.g., improvements and/necessary changes). Your comments are strictly confidential. Should you wish to provide your name for further discussion to any of your responses, a space has been provided below. The survey should take no longer than 20 minutes to fill out. Please deposit in the box provided in the administrative office at the Presidio. Our deadline for responses is July 26<sup>th</sup>. We look forward to receiving your responses.

Thank you for your help.

Optional -- Name: \_\_\_\_\_

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#### *Responses can be brief – one to four sentences*

1. You have been introduced to the Reggio Emilia approach over the past year. Briefly describe your experience. What worked well? What did not?
2. From the perspective of learning Reggio Emilia, what could be provided to make you a better practitioner for the future?
3. What are the benefits of the Reggio Emilia approach over other methods of teaching you have experienced?
4. What aspect of the Reggio Emilia approach is most difficult to adapt to the Presidio site?
5. Do you have ideas for sustaining the Reggio Emilia at the Presidio site over time?
6. How has Reggio Emilia changed the way you look at the school environment?
7. What has been your favorite project this past year? Why?

8. What would you like to see as a project for the future?
9. In your opinion, what have been the greatest accomplishments of the pilot program to date?
10. What are the main challenges facing the program? Do you have ideas for addressing these issues?
11. What are your hopes for the future of this program?
12. How have the students responded to this approach? What changes have you seen in the children over the past year? Any differences from previous years?
13. How do you feel the Reggio Emilia approach prepares children for future learning?
14. Describe what you perceive are the educational “building blocks” Reggio Emilia provides preschool children.
15. How would you like to involve the children’s parents in the approach in the future?
16. How would you involve staff more in the future?
17. Will you be returning to the Presidio site for the 2002 – 2003 school year?  
Yes/No
18. Any other comments you would like to make?

**Confidential**  
**Reggio Emilia Approach**  
**Presidio Site Annual Survey for Parents**

The purpose of the following survey is to get insights from parents who have observed the Reggio Emilia approach at the Presidio site for the past year. This information will inform plans for the future (e.g., improvements and/or necessary changes). Your comments are strictly confidential. Should you wish to provide your name for further discussion to any of your responses, a space has been provided below. The survey should take no longer than 10 minutes to fill out. Please return in the envelope provided or deposit in the box in the administrative office at the Presidio. Our deadline for responses is July 26th. We look forward to receiving your responses.

Thank you for your help.

**Optional -- Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

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*Responses can be brief – one to four sentences*

1. Describe any changes in the school environment you have noticed over the past year.
2. Please make observations to any changes in your children as it relates to their school experience in the past year.
3. Have you noticed any changes in the past year, in the quality/type of work your child is bringing home from pre-school?
4. Describe any changes in the teachers you have observed over the past year.
5. Do you have any observations of changes in staff over the past year?
6. We would like to have more parent involvement in the future. Please note if you are interested in any of the following activities:
  - Reading materials about the Reggio Emilia Approach \_\_\_\_\_
  - Learning about the role of parents in Reggio Emilia \_\_\_\_\_
  - After hours seminars \_\_\_\_\_
7. Are there any other comments you would like to make?

**Confidential**  
**Reggio Emilia Approach**  
**Presidio Site Annual Survey for Staff**

The purpose of the following survey is to get insights from staff members who have observed the Reggio Emilia approach at the Presidio site for the past year. This information will inform plans for the future (e.g., improvements and/or necessary changes). Your comments are strictly confidential. Should you wish to provide your name for further discussion to any of your responses, a space has been provided below. The survey should take no longer than 15 minutes to fill out. Please deposit in the box provided in the administrative office at the Presidio. Our deadline for responses is July 26<sup>th</sup>. We look forward to receiving your responses.

Thank you for your help.

**Optional** -- Name: \_\_\_\_\_

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*Responses can be brief – one to four sentences*

1. Describe any changes you have observed in the school environment over the past year.
2. Please note any observations that you have seen in the children that you have observed over the past year.
3. Describe any changes in the teachers you have observed over the past year.
4. Have you noticed any changes in the staff since the start of the Reggio Emilia approach at the school?
5. Have you seen any changes in how you approach your job at the school?
6. Knowing what you do about the Reggio Emilia approach, do you have ideas about ways to involve staff more in the program for the future?
7. Describe any constraints you might anticipate in involving staff more in the Reggio approach.
8. Are there any other comments you would like to make?