

JB CLELAND KINDERGARTEN – LEARNING IMPROVEMENT PLAN – 2020

GOAL: Extend children's capacity to communicate with meaning and purpose

RATIONALE: Why this goal? - Critical reflections over time have helped inform the following:

- All children know how to communicate but may have their own unique modes and mediums for doing so and we need to understand and respond accordingly.
- All children are at different stages in their individual trajectories of communication.
- Children may choose to communicate verbally through words and language or non-verbally through actions, gestures, behaviours and creativity.
- Educators and families need to be patient, alert and intuitive to children's varying modes and mediums for communication.
- Non-verbal behaviours can be as effective and meaningful as verbal behaviours.
- Children need time to first 'Be' and 'Belong' within the kindergarten before we nudge them to 'Become'.
- Children's capacity to communicate is influenced by a variety of factors such as cultural identity and context; each child's degree of exposure to experiences prior to kindergarten; additional needs and, varying modes and mediums for communication.
- Intentional teaching strategies and educator roles, through the medium of play, can help nudge children into the next step in their individual zones of proximal development (the next developmental space with support from a 'more knowledgeable other') on the communication continuum.
- Growth is not about reaching an end point but rather about moving forward in relation to one's starting point.
- Guiding and supporting children to communicate with meaning and purpose requires engagement with executive functioning skills such as cognitive flexibility, impulse control and working memory- a need for children to stop, think, plan and organize their thinking, also known as metacognition, which are all vital foundation skills for future and advanced learning.
- Communicating with meaning and purpose is an essential skill for the purposes of supporting children in building a strong sense of identity and wellbeing; understanding and connecting with the world around them; becoming confident and involved in their learning; engaging in effective and meaningful social interactions and, in empowering them in their capacity to protect themselves, solve problems and negotiate challenges.

WHAT IT MEANS

Communication is the practice of: thinking; expressing and conveying thoughts, ideas, feelings and information of oneself and, from oneself to others.

Communication can be verbal or non-verbal; individual or reciprocal & be conveyed through a variety of mediums.

To communicate with MEANING means supporting children in deciding HOW they wish to communicate; guiding them in choosing the appropriate 'text' (medium) for communication.

Mediums for communication include conversations; actions; drawings; paintings; sculptures; constructions; movement; gestures; stories; songs; pretend play; etc.

To communicate with PURPOSE means guiding and supporting children in deciding WHAT they wish to communicate and WHY, while deciding WHO is going to be their audience.

SUCCESS MEASURE

Children present growth from their beginning points of entry, within their individual trajectories on the communication continuum. Observational data; ongoing educator documentation, assessment and reporting illustrating meaningful and purposeful communication together with parent/caregiver feedback, will provide evidence.

STRATEGIES AND ACTIONS

Extend CHILDREN'S Capacity

- Giving children time to 'Belong' and just 'Be' before rushing to 'Become'.
- Providing children active & stimulating environments for learning – sensory play; physical play; exploratory play; social play; pretend play; symbolic play.
- Giving children time to think, process and respond.
- Giving children ample access to open-ended resources that foster the need to choose, decide and problem-solve.
- Having active and passive spaces to support different learning behaviours.
- Planning for targeted and intentional small group learning experiences.
- Having a good balance of mediums – tapping into children's multiple intelligences – Linguistic/ Mathematical/ Logical /Kinesthetic Musical/Intrapersonal/Interpersonal/Spatial/Naturalistic.

Extend EDUCATOR Capacity

- Building a sound beginning understanding of the whole child through enrolment forms; questionnaires; conversations; meetings with relevant stakeholders etc.
- Establishing what each child knows, can do and understands when they begin kindy.
- Referring to professional readings and resources for consistency in thinking, language and approach and to better articulate and deliver practice.
- Deeper understanding and learning of intentional teaching practices relating to 'challenge of practice' commitment.
- Saying what one sees – labelling and lifting children's learning in order to stimulate communication with meaning and purpose.
- Reading-appreciating-understanding-responding to the '100 languages of children'.

Extend FAMILY Capacity

- Communicating the goal in easy to understand language.
- Sharing resources to empower understanding.
- Regularly checking in with families to source and report information.
- Taking families on the journey together.
- Making information accessible at all times.
- Inviting families and involving them in contributing towards the kindergarten curriculum.

Children communicate in many different ways.....

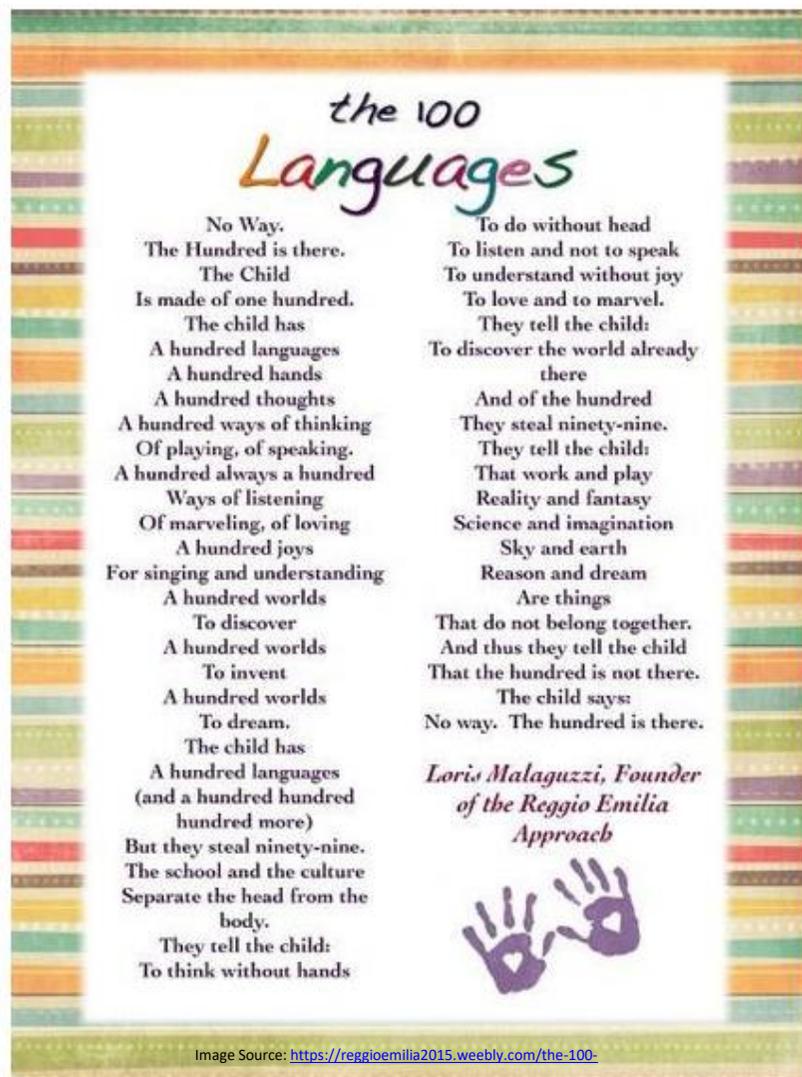


Image Source: <https://reggioemilia2015.weebly.com/the-100->

100 Languages of Children – Poem by Loris Malaguzzi, Reggio Emilia

The Reggio Emilia Approach (modelled on the principles of Early Childhood Education developed in the municipality of Reggio Emilia, Italy, post-World War 2) demonstrates what is possible when a society that values human potential, relationships and the power of imagination, educates its children.

Source: <https://reggioaustralia.org.au/>

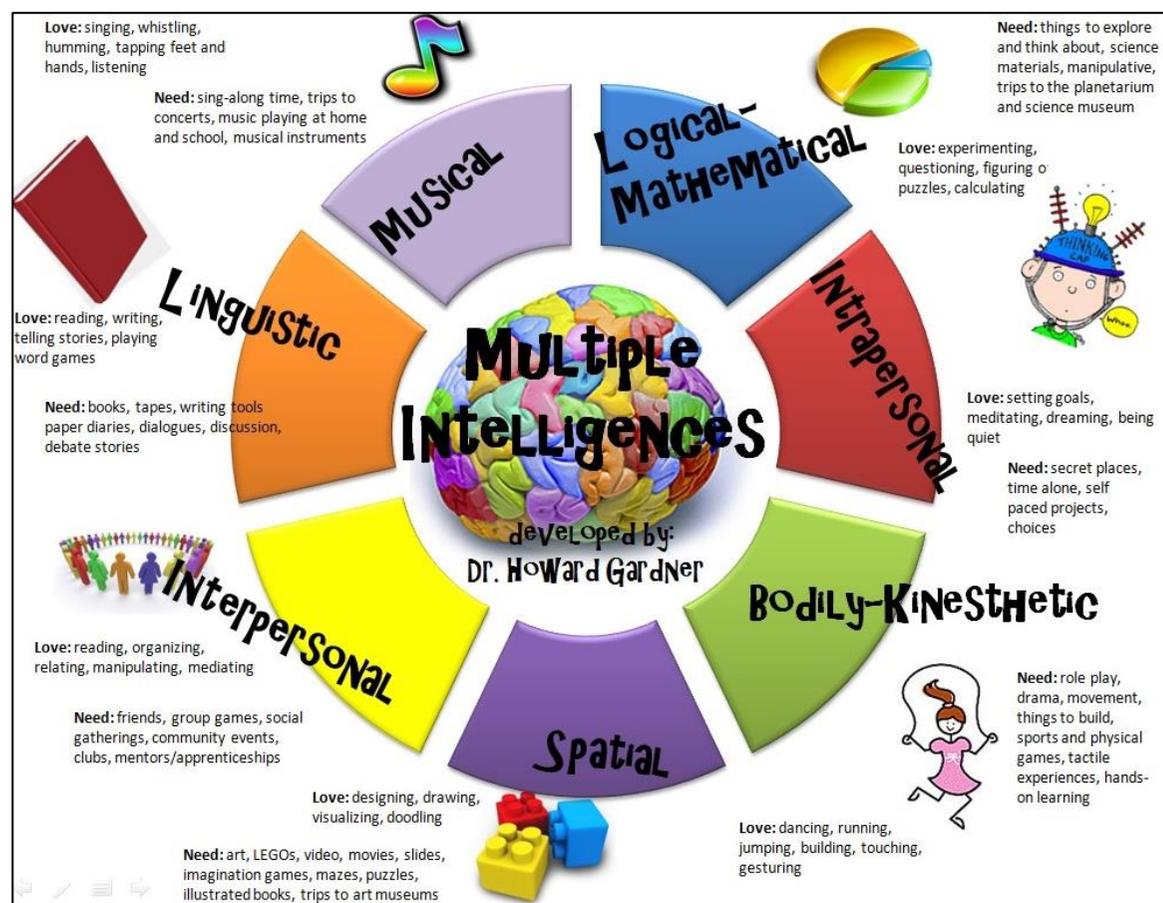


Image Source: <https://www.imageneducativas.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/12/Inteligencias-Multiples-Infograf%3C%ada-IL.jpg>

Dr. Howard Gardner is a developmental psychologist whose theory of Multiple Intelligences addresses the human mind, thinking and learning in a pluralistic manner. He believes this approach helps open up all kinds of ways of teaching and learning where children can be taught in ways that make sense to them and take advantage of their strengths. It helps widen the scope of the meaning of education and the multiple ways in which children learn.

Source: <https://www.gse.harvard.edu/hgse100/story/lasting-impact-multiple-intelligences>