



MADGE SEXTON

K I N D E R G A R T E N

McLaren Vale

More about our atelier.

Historically

In the early 1950's the region of Reggio Emilia in Italy pioneered an approach to the education of young children which has had a huge influence on thinking and practice worldwide. Reggio methods are based on a model of child centred activities where learning is initiated by the child and, with adult help and guidance, travels in directions chosen by the child. There is a strong emphasis on practical and group work. A key element of the Reggio approach is the '*atelier*', or studio, which is a place where children can carry out their projects.

In our atelier

The space of the *atelier* or art studio has been created for the *atelieristas* (art studio teachers) to add their perspective and experiences in the visual arts, to promote a new kind of dialogue with the children.

The *atelier's* function is to support the use of materials and media as languages for expression and learning by the children.

The *atelierista* works collaboratively with the other staff to further the educational project and objectives of the entire kindergarten. The *atelier*, also supports the process of documentation, of making the learning and relationships of children, teachers and parents visible.

We refer to the use of "graphic languages" to make the learning experience "visible" with the documentation being a visible form of listening. Without the careful attention to how ideas are represented, and the use of the *atelierista's* art expertise, the children's work would be less visible to themselves and to the wider public.

By using graphic arts, or any form of visual artistic representation, we become able to share with others what children are thinking, doing, feeling, learning, and experiencing.

The *atelieristas* teach the children art techniques to give them tools to express their ideas.

Being artistic and creative is highly valued within Madge Sexton Kindergarten, and our *atelier* reflects this with art mediums always available and accessible to the children.

The *atelier* is aesthetically pleasing and the environment designed purposefully.

Our *atelier* is filled with recyclable materials (e.g., glass beads, pipes, sockets, ceramic pieces) and natural elements (e.g., rocks, stones, beans, barley, seeds, seed pods, dried flowers). All of the materials are laid out aesthetically on open shelves and in clear containers and accessible baskets.

Children have many opportunities to learn, practice, and apply techniques related to visual arts.

Art is the medium by which the educators are encouraging the children to communicate.

It is the medium by which their teachers "listen" to the children.

Graphic languages, the *atelierista*, and the *atelier* are all critical to the goals of the philosophy and belief systems we uphold at Madge Sexton Kindergarten.