The Early Word
April 2018

DPS Early Education Updates

Get to know an ECE Program: Swigert International

Humans Communicate Through Art

For the ECE Art Show our central idea was that humans communicate through art. Our students chose their two favorite art mediums for the show. We had photographs, paintings on canvas, aboriginal dot paintings, sculptures, and a collaborative totem pole.

- Shannon Evans, Swigert International Team Lead

Gold Nuggets from Max & Darzelle!

Documentation is about quality and not necessarily quantity. However district ECE Teachers have collected and uploaded over 230,000 pieces of evidence for the Fall and Winter checkpoints combined!

As the upcoming Spring TS GOLD checkpoint approaches, please do not hesitate to contact us if you want or need support around the collection and assignment of documentation.

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Mira's Mindfulness Minute

Take a minute to try the "Equal Breathing" technique:

How it’s done: Balance can do a body good, beginning with the breath. To start, inhale for a count of four, then exhale for a count of four (all through the nose, which adds a natural resistance to the breath).

Learn about 5 more techniques at: https://greatist.com/happiness/breathing-exercises-relax

DPS Early Education Updates Volume 3, April 2018
We’re proud of the collaborative learning partnership we’re cultivating with the University of Colorado at Denver. Our Executive Director of Early Education, Dr. Lisa Roy, traveled to the Pistoia and Reggio-Emilia regions of Italy with a team from UCD, in order to learn more about Italian early education systems that have been created during the past century through grassroots community engagement.

We caught up with Lisa, to enjoy her beautiful photos, hear about key take-aways, and learn about next steps for DPS.

What were your initial impressions of Pistoia and Reggio-Emilia when you arrived?

Before I went on the study tour, I had a few pre-readings and videos to watch so my initial impressions started there. Reggio loops their teachers – a concept I have always loved. Children and teachers stay together for at least three years and work on projects together for months at a time.

Both Reggio and Pistoia consistently talk about their role in responding to the right of all children to education, and these cities see themselves in a mutually beneficial relationship with children and the city as resources to one another.

Both cities put about 18% of their municipal budget into children’s education, from birth to age five. That is amazing!! That is on top of the State funded dollars from the Italian government. Children are first and the early childhood environments are welcoming and high quality.
What were some of your key take-aways from visiting each location?

I love how STEAM (science, low-technology, engineering, art, and math) are woven into child-centered activities from birth. One key take-away that our department already promotes is that all children are capable of constructing their own learning. Children are natural researchers, explorers, and creators. We can tap into the 100 languages of learning - the many ways that children have of expressing themselves.

Reggio teachers provide children different venues for thinking, constructing, revising, negotiating, developing and symbolically expressing their thoughts and feelings. The goal is for children and adults to better understand each other. Children participate together in an investigation - generating and testing their hypotheses, and demonstrating their understanding through one of the languages, including writing, dramatic play, sculpture, drawing. Children are encouraged to debate, defend, make course corrections, give input, and reflect.

Another key take-away was how involved the parents are. In one center in Pistoia, the children write a play, design costumes and the set design, and then direct their parents in a play. At another site, the parents shared quotes on the wall of what it was like for them when they were preschoolers at different locations around the City that the children have focused on in their projects. These cities do not provide parenting training; they provide opportunities for parents to be involved in their child’s learning. Finally, every site was different. The children, families, teachers, and community define the culture and the environment. It was amazing to see in person.
How can interested DPS teachers, administrators, and community members learn more?


What are some next steps, within DPS and in the greater Denver community?

It is my hope that the Z-Place initiative – a teacher and principal pipeline opportunity - in collaboration with Mile High Early Learning, Sewall Child Development Center, University of Denver, and University of Colorado at Denver – will be a Reggio-inspired training program. It would allow our new teachers and principals to see innovation in practice, while learning about early childhood development, pedagogy, funding, and policy.
How might the systems for community engagement in Pistoia and Reggio-Emilia be an inspiration for our communities in Denver?

There are many ways that Denver can engage with the community but one that struck me were the stories. What does a child experience in their community - from grocery shopping to playing in the park. One example from Reggio was the children learning about a wall around the park. They observed that little plants were growing out of the wall and did an entire project that included science and history.

In Pistoia, a center has focused on storytelling, and the children created a wizard as their icon. The wizard greets you at the door and is featured in their library. Needless to say, their stories, plays, and various forms of art reflect this icon. I was told that the wizard moved out of the City’s tower to allow the Mayor to work there. The Mayor is aware of this story and cooperates fully.
Nancy's Neuroscience Nanosecond!

Early Education Network Partner Nancy Mauro is our go-to resource, for up to the minute scholarly research within early education, with a special focus on the fields of brain development, language development and social emotional learning. Here are two great articles that she recommends this month:


https://education-reimagined.org/paradigm-shift/

Important Dates

May 7 - TS Gold Spring Checkpoint Due Date

June 4 and 5 - Denver Museum of Nature and Science ECE Teacher Professional Development Opportunity (flyer attached)

How to Find Us

In person:
9th Floor, 1860 Lincoln St., Denver CO 80203

On the phone:
720-423-2678, 720-423-2679 or 720-423-2676

On a computer:
http://earlyeducation.dpsk12.org/
DMNS AND DENVER PUBLIC SCHOOLS PRESENT

SCIENCE IN EARLY CHILDHOOD CLASSROOMS

JUNE 4 & 5, 2018 | MONDAY & TUESDAY
8:00 AM - 4:30 PM
DENVER MUSEUM OF NATURE AND SCIENCE
REGISTER HERE:
HTTP://BIT.LY/ECESCIENCE
WHAT DOES SCIENCE INSTRUCTION LOOK LIKE FOR OUR YOUNGEST LEARNERS?

This workshop introduces ways to incorporate problem based learning strategies into all of the routines of your early childhood classroom.

Explore hands-on materials in a way that fuels curiosity and leads to authentic questions and learn how to plan investigations that incorporate art, math and literacy.

These new strategies and tools will transform how you teach science and inspire your students!

Plan to attend on Monday and Tuesday, June 4 and 5, 2018, from 8:00 am to 4:30 pm each day, at the Denver Museum of Nature and Science (2001 Colorado Blvd., Denver, CO 80205).

Lunch will be provided each day.

Participants will earn 16 hours toward ECE specific professional learning, but they will not be paid for attending.

Class is limited to 40.