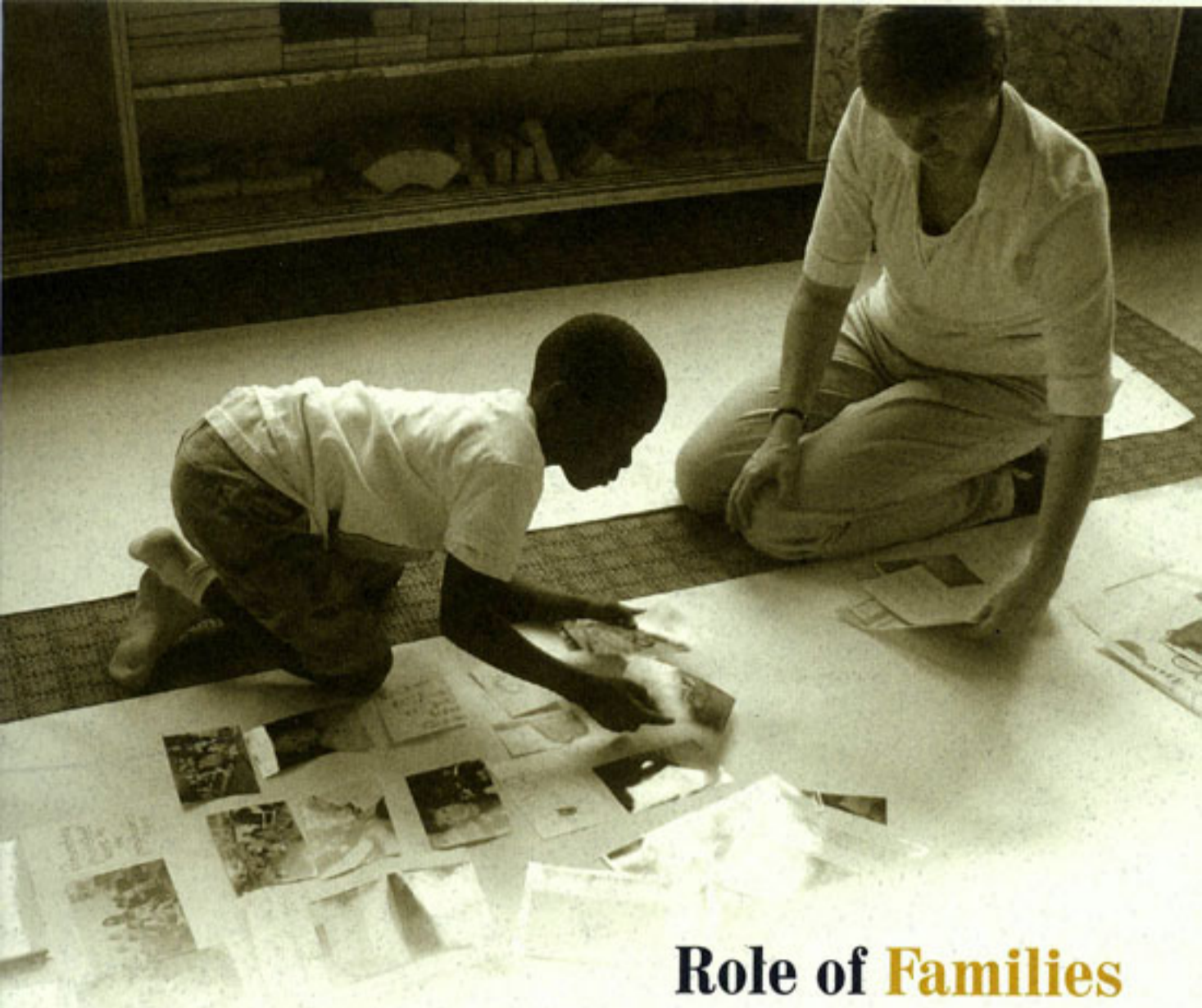




Visitor's Field Guide

GRAND RAPIDS

1. CHILD
discovery
CENTER



Role of Families

Families are essential components of the Centers. They are an active part of their children's learning experiences and help to ensure the welfare of all the children in school.

A system has been developed within the school to support the principle of family participation and involvement. Parents and teachers team up to plan monthly events and opportunities for all families. A true collaboration is continuously evolving.





















Opportunities include:

- Participation in calendar events such as Open House, Conferences, Winter Celebration, Fall Celebration, Reading Month, The Bookfair, and The Spring Spaghetti Dinner
- Preparing and serving food at all school events and classroom parties and project celebrations
- Constructing furniture or environment needs
- Supporting classroom projects
- Attending presentations and planning workshops such as Diversity Discussions and Materials Explorations
- Maintaining the recycle/reusable room: The Hive
- Maintaining the school Museum
- Partnering with staff
- Creating specific groups such as Grandparents raising grandchildren, or families dealing with death



flow of the day



	Construction	Media	Manipulation	Mini Studio	Lab
Block 1					
Block 2					
Block 3					
Block 4					

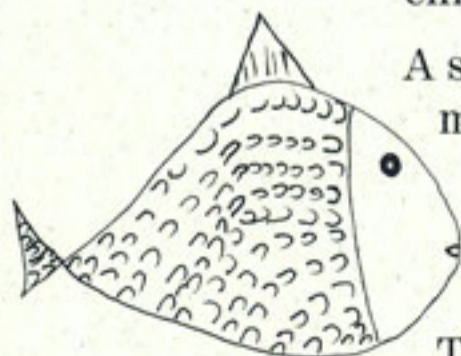


In a school inspired by Reggio Emilia, the environment is the third teacher. There are many ways to think about it, but one thing is for sure — it forms a tightly interwoven connection to the learning experience.

As you walk around the building you will see a studio space, which is a laboratory for exploration and problem solving with materials, a collection of books and *realia* in the Museum, reusable materials in the Hive, a dining room, and a documentation space for assembling studies.

Two classrooms combine to form one Discovery space. Defined areas in each classroom offer support for many ways of working; mini studios in the classrooms support the visual aspects of childrens' thinking.

A space is designed for construction, manipulating, literacy, math, and emergent projects. Multisensory input includes sound, natural lighting, plants and animals.



The documentation on the walls gives you a glimpse of learning experiences in progress, including the theories and ideas of the children. Organization, perspective and groupings are visible in each room.

A Reggio inspired school is amiable, dynamic and beautiful.

emergent

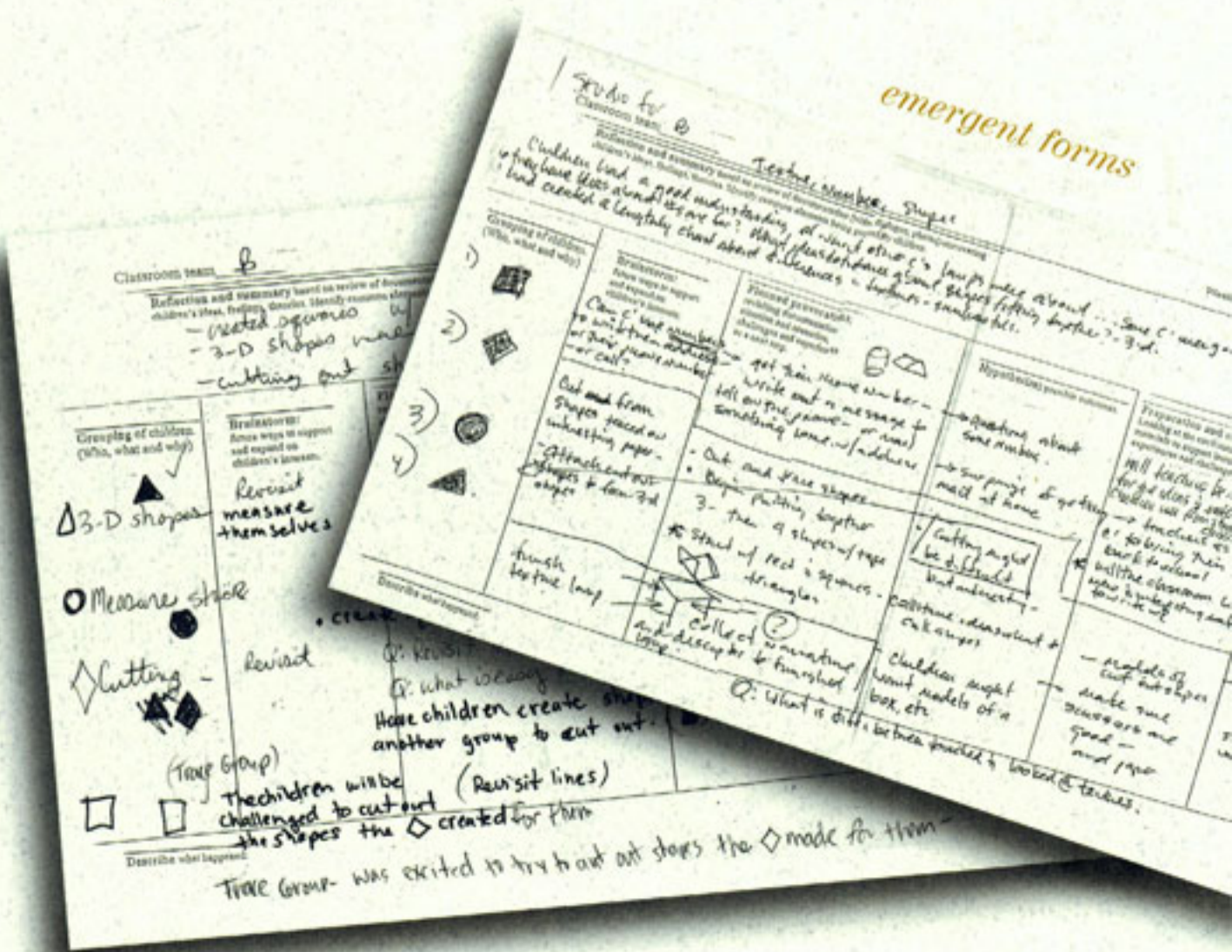


Curriculum at The Discovery Center:

The content of the curriculum includes specific **standards** from the four core academic areas: Language Arts, Mathematics, Science and Social Studies. The content also addresses **life skills**, which include values, strategies, attributes and characteristics found in living real life such as relationship skills, emotions, perspective, values, organization, diversity, thinking skills, conservation and more.

The process that is used to deliver the content is called *emergent*. An emergent process begins with the interests of the children and becomes activities that can grow into involved projects. The emergent process depends on a strong partnership between the teacher and the student, which involves observation, listening, sharing theories, reflecting, planning and preparation.

As the content is embedded within an emergent process, assessments take place in the form of state testing, portfolios, standard assessments and documentation.



*Learning
together
through
documentation*



Research questions to inspire your observations

1. What kinds of conversations do you hear occurring in the classroom?
2. How many “languages” are being used to express ideas, theories, thoughts, and feelings?
3. What different kinds of thinking and learning are being supported through the school environment?
4. What themes, ideas, and arrangements are found in the museum?
5. What ideas of communication, relationships, and community have you uncovered?
6. Is there a sense of routine or ebb and flow to the day? What does it look like?
7. What kinds of collaboration and interaction are noted?
8. How are teachers and children learning together?
9. Describe the various roles the teacher plays.
10. How are concepts of diversity apparent in and through the school?

You are encouraged to reflect on this field experience by:

- Considering the role of the Lab School in the lives of professionals, families and educators
- Wondering about the nature and purpose of our work
- Comparing learning environments
- Contrasting individual experiences
- Examining personal values
- Entertaining a different point of view
- Opening your mind to the potential of children
- Enjoying the process
- And coming back again