

# My Goals for Early Years Education

As an Early Years teacher dedicated to the principles of the IB Primary Years Programme (PYP) and the Reggio Emilia approach, my goals can be significantly enhanced by integrating my understanding of various educational philosophies. Having already traveled to Finland and studied its renowned education system, I have gained insights into its exceptional practices. Now, I am eager to expand my knowledge by studying the Reggio Emilia approach in Italy. This is in addition to completing my Diploma of Early Years Education at Australia College, which focusses on the Australian Curriculum EYFS. Here's how I can blend my experiences and aspirations into my professional goals:

## Knowledge Goals

**Deepening Understanding of Reggio Emilia:** I aim to immerse myself in the Reggio Emilia approach by studying directly in Italy. I aim to explore its key principles, such as the emphasis on child-led inquiry, collaboration, and the role of the environment as the "third teacher." Understanding these concepts in depth will enhance my teaching practices. I intend to complete my Diploma by July 2025.

**Integration of Outdoor Education:** Drawing from my studies in Finland, I appreciate the importance of spending time outdoors for learning. I aim to incorporate similar practices in my classroom, inspired by Finland's model of spending 45 minutes indoors followed by 45 minutes outdoors, fostering academic engagement and physical activity. Outdoor play promotes physical health and emotional well-being, aligning with my holistic student development goals (O'Brien & Murray, 2007).

**Child-Centered Environment:** I will investigate how the Finnish educational system and the Reggio Emilia approach can create environments that emphasize student agency, collaboration, and inquiry. This understanding will help me design inclusive and engaging learning spaces. I will continue to develop my knowledge about how Australia promotes literacy and numeracy.

## Skills Goals

**Creating Learning Opportunities Outdoors:** I aspire to enhance my ability to design outdoor learning experiences that engage children with nature. Emphasizing the Finnish belief that "there is no bad weather, only bad clothes," I will cultivate a mindset that values outdoor exploration year-round.

**Flexible Dress Practices:** I plan to implement strategies that allow children to change into outdoor clothing from age 3, promoting independence and self-regulation. This practice aligns perfectly with my Reggio Emilia goals of fostering autonomy and encouraging children to take ownership of their learning environments. If the Finnish children can get indoor clothes off, in about five

minutes, and they can dress themselves in their -20 degree outdoor clothing, why can't some three year olds not be able to put on a jacket without assistance?

**Documentation of Learning:** I will develop my skills in documenting children's indoor and outdoor explorations. This documentation is essential in the Reggio Emilia approach and Finnish practices, showcasing children's learning processes and encouraging reflective storytelling.

### **'Fit' in a Team Goals**

**Advocating for Outdoor Learning:** I want to inspire my team to adopt outdoor learning practices influenced by the Finnish and Reggio Emilia approaches. By collaborating to develop a curriculum that integrates outdoor activities, we can enhance children's engagement and learning outcomes.

**Professional Learning on Reggio Emilia and Finnish Practices:** I plan to lead collaborative discussions about the successful aspects of the Reggio Emilia philosophy and the Finnish educational system, including the impact of extended paid paternity/maternity leave, which supports early child development.

**Fostering a Culture of Reflection:** I will promote reflective practices within my team, focusing on the benefits of child-centered and nature-oriented approaches. This reflection will draw on my knowledge from Finnish education and the Reggio Emilia philosophy.

### **Best Practices for Early Years Goals**

**Outdoor Learning Spaces:** I aim to create dynamic learning environments encouraging exploration and creativity. Establishing an outdoor classroom where children can connect with nature reflects the Finnish approach and Reggio Emilia's belief in the environment as a teacher.

**Inclusive and Flexible Learning:** Following Finland's emphasis on inclusivity, I will design learning experiences that accommodate diverse learners, allowing for differentiation in how children engage in outdoor and indoor activities, which aligns with Reggio Emilia's principles.

**Family and Community Engagement:** I will emphasize the role of families in education, inspired by Finland's community support systems and the Reggio Emilia approach. Encouraging parents to participate in outdoor and inclusive events will promote learning through play and exploration.

By integrating the insights I gained from my studies in Finland with my commitment to learning the Reggio Emilia approach in Italy, I will enrich my teaching philosophy and practices within the IB PYP framework. My dedication to creating rich learning environments prioritizing indoor and outdoor experiences will empower children to thrive holistically. Embracing the belief that "there is no bad weather, only bad clothes," I aim to inspire resilience and adaptability in my students, preparing them for their educational journeys.