

THE NSW GOVERNMENT AND CHILD SAFETY

It is a great pity that a spirit of 'the ends justifying the means' seems to have permeated large sections of our society. After two recent child deaths on buses caused by unsafe doors (RTA workshops have been closed for some years so this is a common problem according to the press), the following letter appeared in the Sun Herald:

"Children and buses :

We were discussing the children caught in the bus doors; as pensioners we agreed a child's life is more important now than ours, so would it be possible to increase the pensioner ticket to \$2 and help pay for conductors? I feel sure every pensioner would agree with this.

Muriel Atkyns, Collaroy Plateau"

Berenice Nyland

THE HUNDRED LANGUAGES OF CHILDREN

Increasingly, educators from America and Australia are going to Northern Italy to visit the schools of Reggio Emilia. After the second world war, a school was built literally by a young teacher and people in the local community. This school has developed into a whole system. The municipality of Reggio Emilia caters for 40% of the 0-3 year olds and 50 % of 3-6 year olds in its municipal centres. 12% of the local government budget goes to programmes for infants and young children.

The community and teachers who started the first school were driven by a horror of the past and how the future could be improved by a progressive, collaborative approach to education. Over the decades a strong educational community have built up a system that works. *"The principal*

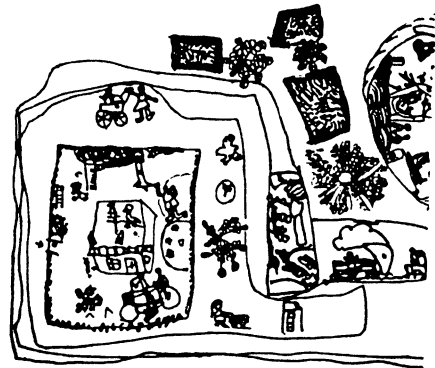
educational vehicle involves youngsters in long-term engrossing projects which are carried out in a beautiful, healthy, love-filled setting" (Howard Gardner).

A recent Australian visitor was struck by the variety of projects the children had become involved in. A few from the list:

- How houses are built
- The dinosaur project
- How many greens are there?
- Shadows at night
- The Rights of the child.

In the entryway of the Diana School some five year olds have designed a poster that proclaims their view of children's Rights, quote:

"Such exploration of ideas is exciting and can only be of benefit to the whole community."



"Plan of the Diana School" drawn by 5-year old children for incoming 3-year old children.

An exhibition entitled **'The Hundred Languages of Children'** is currently touring Australia. This display was in Melbourne in July and will be in Perth in September. It has been described as provocative and illuminating.

Berenice Nyland

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The production of this issue of Australian Children's Rights News has been generously supported by the South Australia Regional Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers).

Thank you.