

Perceiving Problems as Possibilities

Encounters with Perspectives

Satellite Children's Centre
Toddlers Program



REGGIO-INSPIRED
**LEARNING
CENTRE**
Frog Hollow

Reconstructing the word “problem”



Like anything in this world, there are more than one way to perceive a “problem”.

How we choose to define a word will make an immediate impact on how we interact with it.

A problem can be defined as: a matter or situation regarded as unwelcome or harmful and needing to be dealt with and overcome.

A problem can also be defined as: an inquiry starting from given conditions to investigate or demonstrate a fact, result, or law.

The “Problem”

For a few stressful weeks at the toddler’s program, educators found a growing “problem”.

They observed that the toddlers climbed on shelves, pushed things through the shelves and went through them. They climbed anything they could think of – even walls!

This was stressful because it created mess and chaos and the parents were worried that the same behaviour was starting to happen at home.



“What we call chaos is just patterns we haven’t recognized. What we call random is just patterns we can’t decipher”

- Chuck Palahniuk



The educator's first reaction was to put all the toys away from the shelves and to take the toddlers to parks and places so they could climb on appropriate structures.

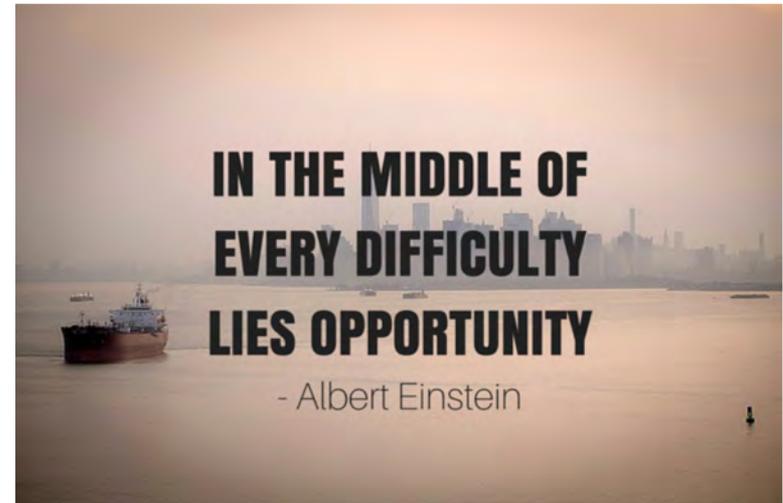


The educators knew that this was only a band-aid solution – the real “problem” was not yet dealt with.

The educators asked themselves:

“Why do the toddlers climb?”

“What do the toddlers see or feel when they climb or go through shelves?”



At Frog Hollow we believe that problems are inquiries – a starting point where possibilities are awaiting to be discovered.

Educators looked back at the observations and discussed further...



What happens when we climb?

When toddlers climb, they feel confident; they push their boundaries; they work together as a team to problem-solve; and they see things from different heights & angles – different perspectives.

Possibilities

“What opportunity is this problem offering to us?”

“How do we recognize patterns in this chaos?”

“How do we negotiate our intentions with those of the toddlers?”



The educators started thinking about new possibilities.

The toddler's room became a space that invited children to use large motor skills to see things in new perspectives.

Things were hung from the ceiling or put in unexpected spaces.





As we continue to work with this inquiry we observe how toddlers share ideas, problem-solve and practice their fine and gross motor skills to reach, climb, bend & manipulate their bodies to see things from different perspectives.

We ask ourselves:
How does experiencing different angles,
heights and spaces change our perspective?













When engineers building a train tunnel beneath a Japanese mountain found they had a problem with leaking water they could simply have pumped it away. Instead they bottled it and sold it as mineral water and within a few years built a brand worth over \$50m/year.

When Alexander Fleming discovered that one of his culture dishes had grown mould instead of bacteria he might simply have thrown it away or made sure it was cleaned properly next time. Instead he took a closer look and discovered penicillin, saving millions of lives.



In our busy, time constrained world, it can be difficult for us to stop and observe a problem from a different angle. But we live in a complex world where attention to details is the key to success.

We must make time to stop and reflect and we must allow for different perspectives to encounter and interact.

We come across big and small problems many times a day – in our personal and work life; at home and at school.

Imagine the possibilities if we were to take our time with each problem and discover the potentials.