



[www.sightlines-initiative.com](http://www.sightlines-initiative.com)

**Viburnum buds.**  
*(Ralph Weiss, photographer 1968)*  
We're very fond of this image as a metaphor for organic, interconnectedness, value, and complexity. It is multi-dimensional in another way also, being spherical. It reminds us of pathways, connective tissue, a neural network.

## Background and history of the organisation

The Sightlines Initiative was founded in 1995 by Robin Duckett who is currently the co-ordinator of the organisation working with a team of specialist early years artists and practitioners. The aim then was to create an organisation, which could be active and instrumental in helping to shape the future of early year's services. In 1997, in partnership with Newcastle City Council, Sightlines Initiative hosted the first English showing of the Reggio Emilia 'Hundred Languages of Children Exhibition'.

Following the hosting of the Hundred Languages exhibition, there were many exciting developments, driven by the overwhelmingly enthusiastic response of early year's practitioners keen to know more and develop their own practice.

A body of interested people developed, comprising local educators and artists. This enabled connection and reflection between centres, individuals and organisations in early childhood/arts services seeking to develop their work in this way. This enthusiasm was sufficient to enable the project to take significant steps forward by organising the first UK study tour to Reggio Emilia in 1998. Since then the organisation has grown and has links with 'Reggio Children' and the Reggio Emilia Institute in Stockholm

The initiative continues to develop a new professional awareness in early year's settings, promoting significant achievable advance in early childhood creative practice. This involves developing and maintaining a working practice that supports and enables children to represent their feelings and ideas.

### *Sightlines Objectives*

- To develop and encourage reflective, creative early years work
- To establish a UK reference point for professionals and others to access information and materials aimed at developing environments which support children in learning exploring, representing, and understanding
- To establish a base for training and advocacy

Sightlines advocates and develops a creative approach to learning through the development of projects which are responsive and reflective encouraging children to think and act creatively within a supportive setting. Artists and educators are encouraged to work as nurturers and guides to facilitate the children's experiences, observing closely, listening to the children's views and hypotheses and teaching skills where needed to enable the children to develop their ideas.

### ***UK reference point for the Reggio Children Network***

20 Great North Road, Newcastle upon Tyne NE2 4PS Tel: 0191 261 7666 Fax: 0191 230 5556

[info@sightlines-initiative.com](mailto:info@sightlines-initiative.com) [www.sightlines-initiative.com](http://www.sightlines-initiative.com)

Registered Charity No 1087834



## Recent programme of activities in three main areas

### *a) Sightlines is the UK reference point for the Reggio Emilia network*

- Organising annual Study Weeks to Reggio Emilia, Italy 1999/2000/2001/2002/2003/2004/2005/2006/2007
- Development of Sightlines Initiative web site, to host ReFocus, the information and discussion facility for the UK Reggio Network.
- Organising the 'Reggio Approach to Early Childhood Education' UK conferences 2000, 2002, 2004
- Planning and co-ordinating The Hundred Languages of Children National Exhibition Tours in 1997, 2000, 2004 and 2005.
- ReFocus Symposium Kendal 2002
- 'Children's, Spaces, Relations' Conference for architects and educators
- Architecture and Pedagogy Symposium – Milan 2005
- 'Dialogue with Reggio' day conference, Bristol 2005
- 'Being with Babies' Conference, Pengreen research centre 2006
- Reggio International Network meeting, Reggio Emilia 2006 Stockholm 2007

### *b) Training and professional development for EY educators and artists*

- Organising the Leaping Over the Wall series of four professional development days for early years educators, practitioners and artists' in the northern region. 2000-01 (In collaboration with Northern Arts.)
- 'Building reflective Practice'. Continuous professional development to support the 'Creative Foundation' participants and projects. 1998-2004.
- Production of the Rising Sun Woodland Pre-school Project video. 2001.
- Production of 'Feathers' and 'Mouse house' project narrative booklets
- Consultation and presentations at regional early years conferences across the UK
- Study week to Sweden and Denmark march and October 2003
- 'Celebration and Challenge' conference 2003
- Early Arts North East agency developed
- Production of ReFocus Journal (bi-annual) 2005 onwards
- Development of ReFocus Network, ReFocus Consultancy, website and membership 2005-2007
- Environments of Encounter QCA/ReFocus Conference, York 2007

### *c) Creative projects in early years settings.*

- The Fantastic Attic children's Exploratorium project at the Discovery museum, Newcastle, 2000
- Co-ordinating the Rising Sun Woodland Pre-school Project. An outdoor environmental project with under 5's ongoing from 1998 to 2007.
- Co-ordinating Young Children's Creative Thinking In Action. A three-year programme of work, supporting children's creative explorations, building new ways of working between artists, educators and children. 1998-2001 (This project involved 45 Early Years settings in Tyne and Wear).
- The 'Creative Foundation' 10 x educator and artist collaborations early years settings 2001 - 2004
- The Magic Wardrobe –Children's Exploratorium – Nuns Moor Play Centre – Newcastle 2000
- Floor Four – Children's Exploratorium – Discovery Museum – Newcastle 2004
- Frameworks for Creative Learning action research group – Newcastle 2005
- Hartlepool Creative Foundation project – 2006
- Chapter and verse, EY practice analysis group, 2007.
- Regional development programme for Early Arts North East Agency 2007

[www.sightlines-initiative.com](http://www.sightlines-initiative.com)

[Info@sightlines-initiative.com](mailto:Info@sightlines-initiative.com)

## **UK reference point for the Reggio Children Network**

20 Great North Road, Newcastle upon Tyne NE2 4PS Tel: 0191 261 7666 Fax: 0191 230 5556

[info@sightlines-initiative.com](mailto:info@sightlines-initiative.com) [www.sightlines-initiative.com](http://www.sightlines-initiative.com)

Registered Charity No 1087834