

John W. Hickenlooper
MAYOR



City and County of Denver

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Greetings to my fellow Mayors,

I am sorry that I am not with you today, but I had a commitment scheduled prior to the announcement of this meeting. I will miss hearing further about the Reggio Emilia approach to education, but I am pleased that each of you will get the opportunity, as Denver did, to learn about this community, its potential benefit to each of our cities and the return-on-investment that results when cities invest in early childhood education.

In October 2008, I met with the Mayor Graziano Delrio of the City of Reggio Emilia, Italy, to open the exhibit "The Wonder of Learning" at the Denver Public Library. At that time, Mayor Delrio and I spoke about the strong relationship among the various communities in Reggio Emilia — the educational, scientific, cultural, political and economic communities — all vital to the city's prosperity and how they supported the learning and growth of the young children of Reggio Emilia. My son, Teddy, went to a Reggio-inspired preschool and I know he greatly benefited from the experience.

Great cities not only invest in bricks and mortar, but know that the greatest return-on-investment, according to Nobel Laureate Dr. James Heckman, is to invest in quality early learning opportunities, as the cities of Denver, Reggio Emilia and some of your cities have already done. The Denver Preschool Program provides approximately 5,000 children annually with a tuition credit to high-quality preschool. The Reggio Emilia approach to teaching young children puts the natural development of children, as well as the close relationships that they share with their environment, at the center of its philosophy.

Enjoy the presentation by Ellen Hall, Lella Gandini and Jennifer Strange. It will inform you on the concepts of Reggio Emilia with at-risk young children in St. Louis, schools in Reggio Emilia, and the Wonders of Learning Exhibit that I was fortunate to see in Denver and that will open in Chicago this month. I know you will be as inspired and amazed by this innovative education approach as we have been here in Denver.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "John W. Hickenlooper".
John W. Hickenlooper
Mayor