

## Photography with the Children

By: Ana Delgado

As part of our practice, all of the Preschool Teachers write documentations from observations of the children. We write about what they are doing, what they are saying and sharing as they work. We also take a lot of pictures. The children are very accustomed to seeing the cameras out and having their pictures taken while they are busy working and exploring in the Preschool.

One day Yuri asked me for the camera, she pointed at the camera then at herself. I asked if she wanted to use the camera and she smiled and nodded her head yes. I gave her the camera and explained that the strap needed to be kept around her neck to keep the camera safe, I asked if she needed help to use the camera and she shook her head no. She confidently took the camera into her hands and began taking pictures. She carefully positioned herself to capture images of her friends and of the art work displayed in the Preschool. The other children watched her curiously, they let her take their pictures and then they negotiated taking turns with the camera. We had a morning class busy with Photographers for many weeks.

On another day Rayne saw me taking a picture, something we all do daily, but on this day she intently watched as I photographed the children. She approached me, "I want to try" she said, I gave her the camera and also explained about the need wear the strap. She took the camera and without hesitation began to take pictures of Baran, her dog "Momo-Chen" and of the room. The other children observed her taking the photographs, Baran asked for a turn and together the girls were able to negotiate sharing the camera and taking turns. The afternoon class began their own exploration of the camera for weeks to come.

By creating an environment where the children feel empowered to make choices, where they have ownership over the space and the materials allows for their confidence to grow and their abilities to flourish. We strongly believe in inviting the children to try new possibilities, to use real tools and to take risks while learning about their potential. By not only allowing the children to use the cameras but by showing them that we trust them with them, we are fostering their development as learners.



*“The cornerstone of our experience, based on practice, theory, and research, is the image of the child as rich, strong, and powerful. The emphasis is placed on seeing the children as unique subjects with rights rather than simply needs. They have potential, plasticity, the desire to grow, curiosity, the ability to be amazed, and the desire to relate to other people and to communicate”.*

*~ Carlina Rinaldi*