

Dear Room 9 Families,

Hi! My name is Bia Vergakis and I will be working as a student teacher in your child's classroom for the 2017-2018 school year. I completed my pre-primary practicum last semester in Chicago Public Schools. I chose Plato Academy for my primary practicum for a practicum fostering constructivism rather than direct instruction. I am excited to be in an environment aligning with my own personal philosophy as an educator. I am currently in my last year in the Early Childhood Education program at Columbia College Chicago. I am completing entitlement from the state, May 2018, in Early Childhood Education, teaching children birth through third grade, focused in bilingual education with a Learning Behavioral Specialist I endorsement.

I am from the northwest suburbs, and a Plato alumna. I have two brothers who are also Plato Academy alumni and our deep experiences and connections have kept us still very in touch with the school, our teachers, our peers and our principal, Ms. Koritsaris. I recently got married in Greece this summer and my husband and I currently live in Norridge. My love and joy working with children started when I did a service project my senior year of high school proctoring after care at Plato Academy. I later returned as a volunteer Spanish teacher and helped teach a preschool classroom at Plato. I have always worked with children from teaching and coaching swimming at the Northbrook YMCA to teaching a preschool program at a private Reggio-Emilia inspired school in Winnetka. Through this introduction to Reggio-Emilia practice, I traveled to Reggio Emilia, Italy completing an intense study tour from pedagogistas all over the world. These experiences with the Reggio-Emilia approach led me to Columbia College to receive state licensure as well as master early childhood education and development.

I am excited to join Ms. Lori Anne's classroom and I am honored to work with your child this semester! Please do not hesitate to stop in or e-mail me, as I would welcome the opportunity to get to know you along with your child. I look forward to a great school year together!

Warmly,

Bia Vergakis

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PS. Please enjoy the poem I have included on the following page written by the founder of the Reggio-Emilia approach to teaching.

The Hundred Languages

No way. The hundred is there.

The child
is made of one hundred.

The child has
a hundred languages
a hundred hands
a hundred thoughts
a hundred ways of thinking
of playing, of speaking.

A hundred always a hundred
ways of listening
of marveling, of loving
a hundred joys
for singing and understanding
a hundred worlds
to discover
a hundred worlds
to invent
a hundred worlds
to dream.

The child has
a hundred languages
(and a hundred hundred hundred more)
but they steal ninety-nine.
The school and the culture
separate the head from the body.

They tell the child:
to think without hands
to do without head
to listen and not to speak
to understand without joy
to love and to marvel
only at Easter and at Christmas.

They tell the child:
to discover the world already there
and of the hundred
they steal ninety-nine.

They tell the child:
that work and play
reality and fantasy
science and imagination
sky and earth
reason and dream
are things
that do not belong together.

And thus they tell the child
that the hundred is not there.

The child says:
No way. The hundred is there.

**-Loris Malaguzzi (translated by Lella Gandini)
Founder of the Reggio Emilia Approach**