For my final paper, I am investigating the Reggio Emilia approach to early childhood education. Reggio Emilia is a town in Italy that is the site for one of the most innovative preschool system in the world. Italy has a nationwide dedication to the best education and early care for young children, and has laws in effect for the public funding of all preschools. This particular city in Italy is well-known for its collaboration between parents, teachers, children, and the community to provide dynamic learning environments for students. Currently, the city finances and runs 22 schools for children ages 3 to 6 years, in addition to 13 infant-toddler centers. All of this in one city!

In my paper, I will be going into depth on the logistics of this approach, but to give a quick summary, I will include the key component of “the image of the child”. This is simply the belief that each child has rights, rather than only needs. One of my sources, entitled “Examining the Reggio Emilia Approach to Early Childhood Education” by Valarie Mercilliott Hewett, explains that this belief views the child as “beautiful, powerful, competent, creative, curious, and full of potential.” This approach really holds the child in the highest regards, and it has proven to be effective in producing valuable learning outcomes. There are a few other key components to this approach, including the role of the teacher as a facilitator, the classroom as learning environment, and the project approach in the curriculum.
I’m organizing my paper to include the following sections of information (if anyone can think of another issue to address within my paper, feel free to let me know!)

Here is my outline as it stands:

I. The Reggio Emilia Approach to Early Childhood Education
   A. History of Reggio Emilia, Italy
   B. Key Components of the approach
      1. The role of teachers, parents, and students
      2. Documentation of students (assessment)
      3. Role of project work
      4. Creation of the curriculum
   C. Benefits and potential downfalls to the approach
   D. Examples of curriculum and daily instruction

Of course, I will also include an introduction and conclusion to my paper as well.

This topic is of great interest to me as an early childhood teacher. The Reggio approach is gaining immense popularity in the United States, and I have had first hand experience in a Reggio-inspired classroom. The Early Learning Center at Terra Community College is where I taught for one year, and they adopt this approach to teaching young children. Although I worked there for one year, learning about Reggio was a constant, ongoing goal to which I’m still striving for. There is so much information to learn as a teacher, and I will enjoy investigating this approach further through my paper. As for my sources, I’ve found almost ten glorious articles regarding this approach, as well as a few websites and one video. Here are a few of them: