

“Readiness is when they do it” ~ Magda Gerber

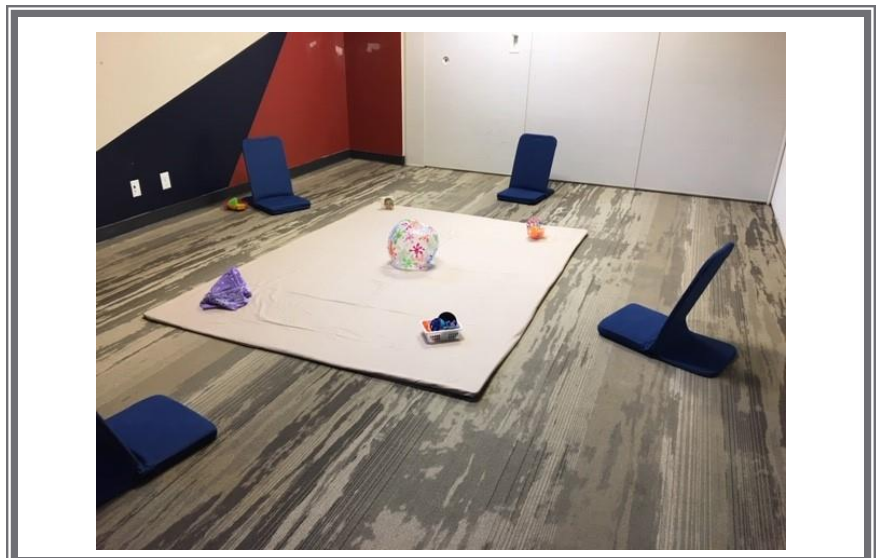
ENJOYING THE PARENTING JOURNEY IN A CULTURE OF COMPARISON & RUSH: HOW CAN THE RIE® PRACTICE CHANGE OUR OUTLOOK?

How often have you flipped through Facebook or overheard a conversation amongst parents that sounds something like this “my child is _ months old. She can sit up (walk, roll, whatever) and say these words” carrying on about all of the child’s ‘achievements’? Inevitably, there is always someone looking at those posts or hearing those conversations left wondering- Is my child ok? Are they doing enough?

Why is this comparison so prevalent in our society? What is happening for parents that they have to list the skills their child has in order for them to feel they have succeeded when in fact, these skills are often self-taught through exploration & play and really have little to no relevance on our “adult teaching” to acquire.

The other day, I saw something shared that read: “When you head to a cocktail party, how often does the conversation require you to tell others when you walked, sat up, said your first word...” It got me thinking. Why is it we rush and push for the next milestone? What is stopping us from celebrating those beautiful moments that are happening NOW and enjoying what our children are capable of in this moment? In a society where we are trying to build tolerance and acceptance for all people, isn’t it funny that we can’t even be boldly confident in who our child is right now doing what they are doing? This, and for

many other reasons, is why I appreciate the teaching of Resources for Infant Educators® (RIE®) founder and infant specialist Magda Gerber. She boldly taught that “childhood was not a race” and that all children would develop naturally and competently if given the time and opportunity to trust their abilities, and practice each skill through playful exploration. Not only that, she suggested that the child themselves choose how! Can you imagine? So what is it that we don’t trust? Why is it that we must inadvertently put our child in competition with others? What will it benefit? I believe it won’t. In fact, I believe that research shows the rush, the push for more skills may in the long run actually hinder our children and overall- our society.



Imagine a place that all people were accepted as they are. Imagine a world where being yourself, working at a pace that was self-selected and supported was encouraged. Isn't it logical that more would succeed? It only takes a moment to search comparison quotes and see the words of so many warning us of its ill effects. All the while we are missing those moments where something special is happening. Now, as an educator® myself, a mom, a director, I am reminded of the importance of noticing what's happening NOW, in this moment. While facilitating my Parent/Infant classes, the objective is just that- Observe! In this moment, what is happening? What do I see? What can I celebrate? Magda encourages us to celebrate it all. To acknowledge that this is all a part of a bigger purpose- lifelong learning. Where your child is now is exactly where they need to be. Exploring these concepts, experimenting with these movements, challenging their bodies and minds exactly as their bodies and minds needs to be challenged. Imagine that, setting aside our worry and trusting in your child's competence. Just as you know your body best or know the questions you are seeking- couldn't this also be the case for your child? I challenge you- take the opportunity to celebrate, encourage and support your child in this moment and see what will happen. I believe, that not only will this reduce stress and shift your focus from comparison, but it will highlight all that your child IS already doing so beautifully and fill your heart with thankfulness and joy- in my mind, what parenting is all about!

The RIE® practice is active in Edmonton and I would love to connect with you if you are eager to learn more! You can follow me on Instagram @earlylearning_musings or send me a message at kristy@mckernanbaptist.ca with your questions! Even one small step of stopping to notice and appreciate what your child is doing NOW, and slowing your pace to enjoy his/her timing is a step in the right direction! Thanks for joining us on our journey with RIE®! Here's to a fresh new start of amazing possibilities!



“Children, families and educators, learning and growing together

"I have spent my adult life trying to figure out why parents and society put themselves into a race -- what's the hurry? I keep trying to convey the pleasure every parent and teacher could feel while observing, appreciating and enjoying what the infant is doing. This attitude would change our educational climate from worry to joy." ~ Magda Gerber