



it began with family

As parents, we can all relate to the life-changing, path shifting, phenomenon that comes with bringing a child into the world. The experience was no different for Jeff Turner, founder and executive director of Tree Top Academy, who discovered his passion for early childhood education, after the birth of his daughter. Inspired by witnessing her development, and later, his son's development. Jeff's curiosity was just the beginning of his path to exploring Early Childhood Education. He found himself buried in the aisles of the library, consuming the works of Vygostky, Loris Malaguzzi and other pioneers of thinking and child development. This time of discovery was also met with the need for a preschool for his young daughter and infant son. Born from his relentless search for an engaging, nurturing preschool environment that shared his views on the power of learning through play and emphasizing thinking and curiosity, it became clear that his unique vision would only exist after a major shift from his corporate career, to the project of a lifetime - owning and directing a preschool. In 2011, Jeff discovered a preschool campus in Jupiter and soon relocated his family from Miami to the Jupiter area. Jeff immediately began changing the culture of the school to the Reggio Emilia philosophy by investing in workshops and conferences

for its teachers. The school was transformed into what we now know as Tree Top Academy. Jeff recalls, "The most exciting thing was seeing teachers inspired by an entirely new way of teaching. They were initially nervous to try Visible Thinking techniques and incorporate Reggio Emilia inspired projects into their classrooms, but they quickly noticed that the children were more engaged."

The ethos of Tree Top Academy has always been rooted in the belief that preschool aged children are capable of limitless learning and that a nurturing space which focuses on children's unique ideas, lays a vital foundation for a lifetime of deep and creative thinking. But an unexpected result of owning a preschool has been the culture of family that has developed over the years. "We feel so connected to the community by caring for the development of our local families." Cassandra Keller, Director of Tree Top Academy shares. In the same way that Jeff searched for the right fit for his children, we recognize that everyone sees something unique and personalized in their own Tree Top Academy experience. "That's what we've always been after - it's about providing a fertile learning experience for the individual child, our teachers understand that and thrive in giving that to each child. We approach learning by caring as if each child is family. "

"We believe (and science confirms) that children are born with the ability to acquire and incorporate an immense amount of information from their constant interactions with the world around them."

JEFF TURNER,
TREE TOP ACADEMY
FOUNDER + EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

TREE TOP *academy*

TIMELINE

- 2007**
Founder Jeff Turner, brought his first child, Jackie into the world. His interest in her **development**, brought him to libraries, to research **Early Childhood Education**.
- 2008**
Inspired by his research and inability to find an early education program that reflected the best practices he was learning about, Jeff was called to change careers. He began searching for a school to **transform into the vision** generated by this new passion..
- 2009**
Jeff's second child, Nolan, was born, accelerating his desire to develop a **high-quality early learning experience** for his growing family. Jeff was introduced to the educational ideas practiced in Reggio Emilia, Italy. Their practices reflected the philosophies of well respected early childhood researchers like **Dewey, Vygotsky, and Piaget**. They also reflected the way his children fed their curiosity about the world around them **through play**.
- 2011**
Jeff Turner found a school called the Professional Learning Center in Jupiter, Florida. On **January 14th**, the learning center was purchased and **Tree Top Academy was established**. Jeff moved his family from Miami to Jupiter.
- FEBRUARY 2011**
As the first push toward **changing the culture and learning approach** at the school, several teachers travelled to Miami to attend their first NAREA sponsored Reggio Emilia Conference.
- MARCH 2011**
Continuing the push to change the schools teaching culture, teachers attended their first Harvard inspired **Visible Thinking Conference** at Florida International University (FIU). Soon after, Thinking Routines were implemented in all of the classrooms.
- OCTOBER 2011**
Co-Founded Collaborate South Florida, a **collaboration** of shared ideas and teaching practices with Palm Beach Day Academy, North Broward Preparatory School, and EDU 1st Schools.
- 2012**
Jeff Turner attended a week long educational conference, Project Zero Classroom, at Harvard University's Graduate School of Education. He had the opportunity to **present an educational project** recently completed at Tree Top Academy which provided examples of Thinking Routines incorporated into Reggio Emilia style projects.
- 2013**
Tree Top Faculty submit a proposal to present an example of our teaching practices at the 2013 Visible Thinking Conference at FIU. It is accepted and **our first presentation** to an international education conference is well attended by teachers from **around the world**. Jeff heads back to the Harvard Graduate School of Education to attend their week-long seminar on the Future of Learning.
- 2015**
Tree Top Academy reaches **full capacity**, becoming a staple in Jupiter and the surrounding Palm Beaches, for Early Childhood Education.
- 2015**
Tree Top Faculty submit a proposal to present examples of our teaching practices at the 2015 Visible Thinking Conference at FIU. Once again, our proposal is accepted and another Tree Top teacher team has the honor of presenting to an international audience of teachers.
- 2016**
A teacher visits **Reggio Emilia, Italy** to see and learn from the philosophy in action.
- 2017**
Tree Top opens a **Kindergarten** program
- 2018**
International Conference on Thinking (ICOT) at FIU - Tree Top Faculty submit several proposals to present examples of our teaching practices at ICOT. One is an example of our teaching strategies at Tree Top Academy and one is a research collaboration with FAU. Both are accepted and five of our teachers are honored to present at ICOT to groups of teachers from around the world.
- 2019**
The challenges of COVID are met head-on. The school temporarily shuts down and **within days** the faculty of Tree Top Academy offered a full range of **virtual preschool** and Kindergarten programs on our Tree Top YouTube channel. By the time the school reopened 9 weeks later over **400 videos** had been produced.
- 2020**
To provide for the needs of the community, Tree Top opens a second Kindergarten class and launches Tree Top At Home, a **virtual learning experience** for homeschool educators.
- 2021**
Tree Top celebrates **10 years** of curiosity and wonder!
- 2022 AND BEYOND**
Tree Top is looking at different ways to meet the demand for quality early childhood education and **quality professional development** for teachers. Stay tuned.