



BIG ATTEMPT

LET'S PLAY WITH

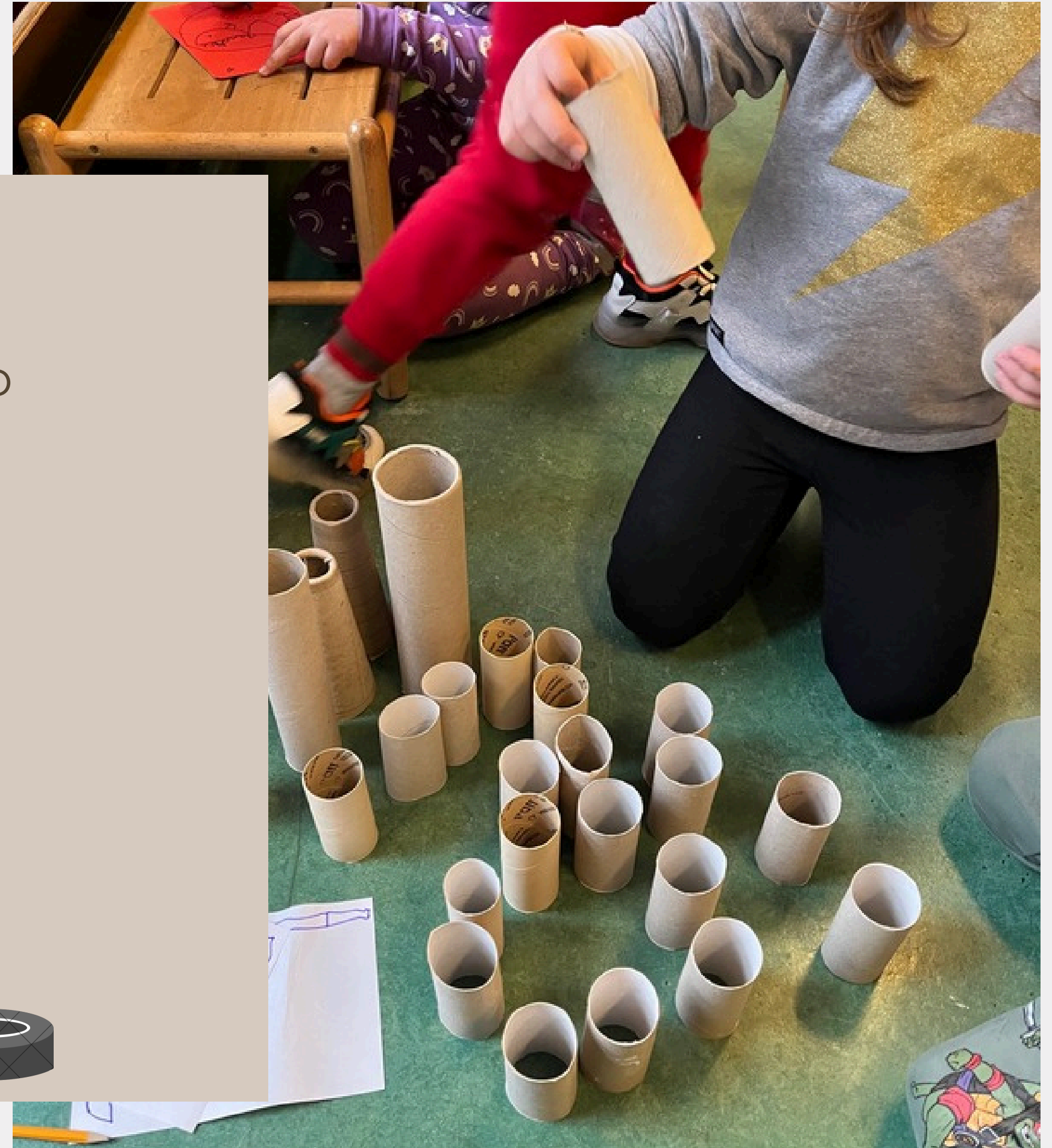
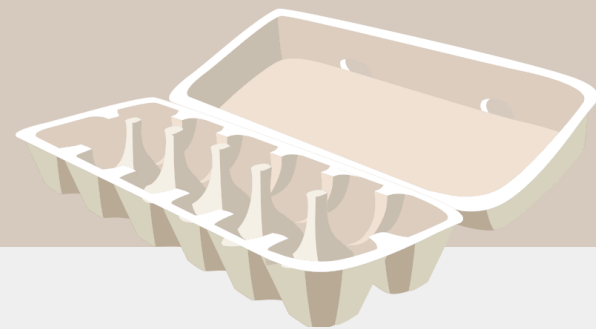
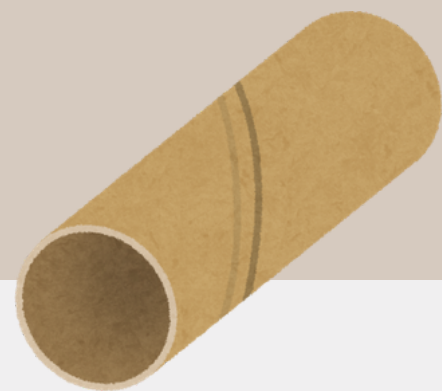
LOOSE PARTS &
UNSTRUCTURED MATERIALS

OUTLINE

SCHOOL: DON MINZONI, 5-YEAR-OLD
NUMBER OF CHILDREN: FLEXIBLE
TIME: 1 HOUR (ISH)

LOOSE MATERIALS USED:

- TOILET PAPER ROLLS
- SPIRAL BINDING
- TAPE
- EGG BOXES



DAY 1.



FIRST REACTIONS

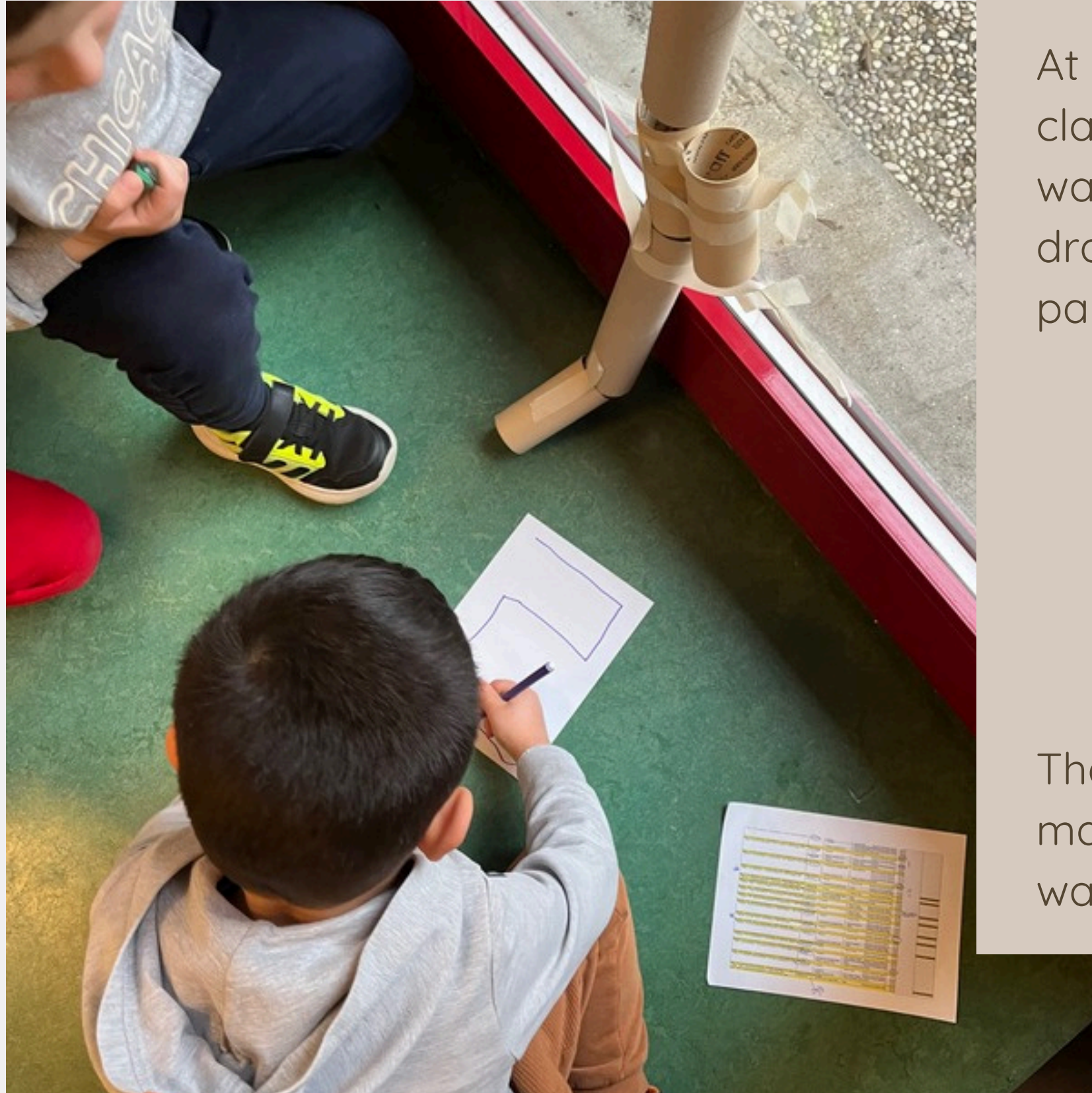
I took eight empty toilet paper roll tubes out of my bag and placed them on the floor. Some children came over and asked what they were. I told them and asked them to hold a few of the tubes.

My next questions were about their shape. Finally, when a child asked me what they could do with them, I simply said, “You choose!” I said it in Italian as well.

At first, they seemed a little confused, but then they started thinking that they could put a ball inside the tubes. However, the balls they had were too big. So I said, “What if we had a smaller ball?” (and I mimed it). Some of them replied, “Yes, una biglia!”

A child attempted to create a path on the floor, but when they realised it was a bit tricky to get the marble to go through the tubes, I asked, “What if we put it there?” and pointed to the window.

DAY 1.



FIRST IDEAS

At first, they said no because they were worried that the classroom teachers might scold them. But when I told them it was fine with me, they carried on. Two of them suggested drawing the project first. They went to get some recycled paper and tried to draw it.

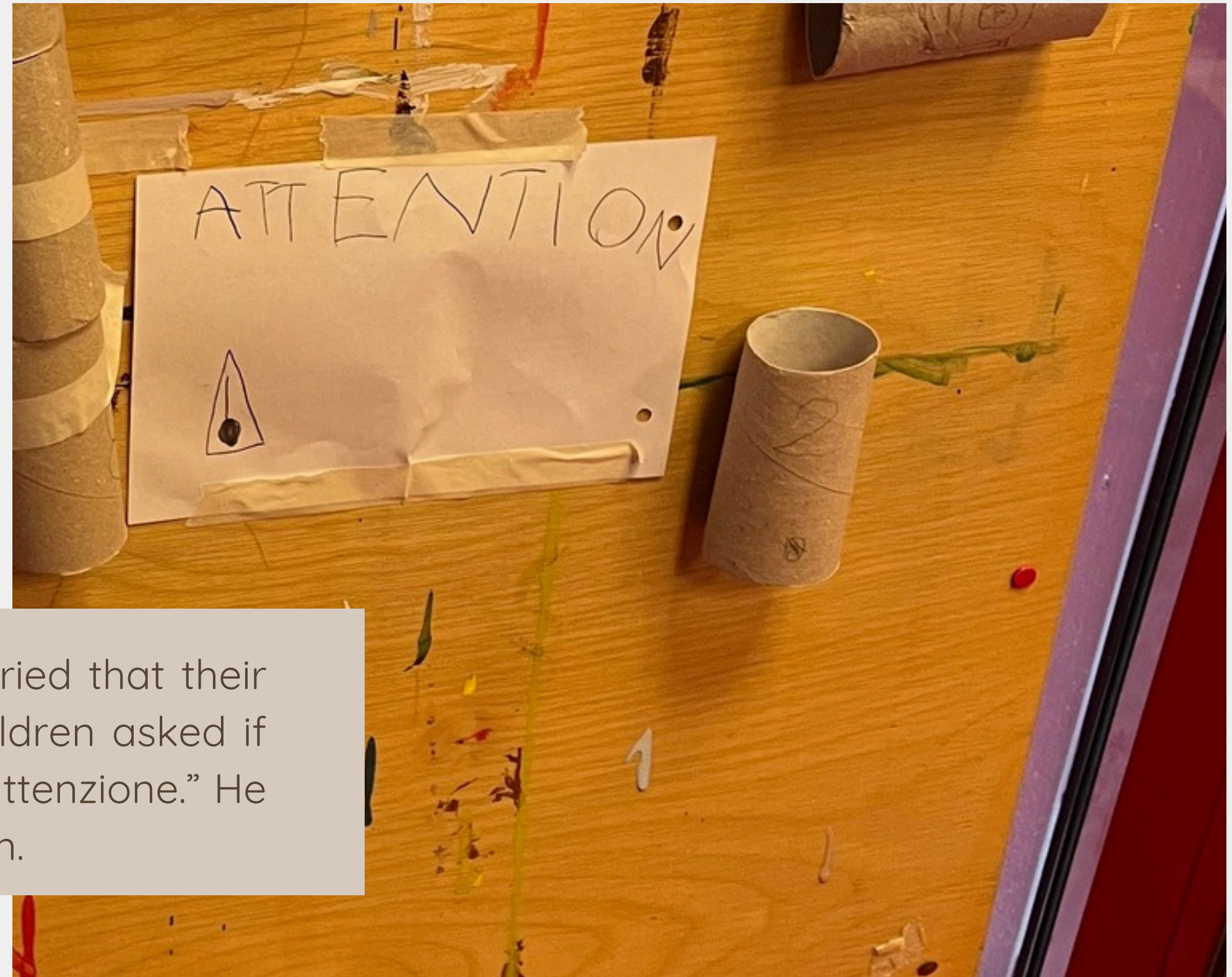
English language 🎵

- Go and get some paper.
- Go and get some pencils.
- We need some tape.

The drawings were really tangled at first. Some paths had so many curves and “giri della morte,” as they called them and wanted.

DAY 1.

Here, one of the children started drawing some lines to turn the toilet paper roll into a tunnel. They told me that tunnels are dark and black.



When it was time to go home, they were worried that their work would be taken away, so one of the children asked if he could make a sign that said “non toccare, attenzione.” He asked me to help him, and we wrote it in English.

DAY 2.

DESIGNING A NEW RUN

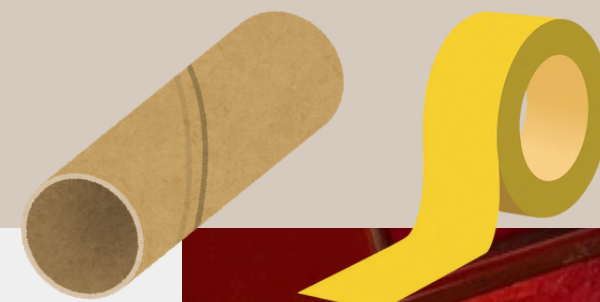
The following week, the first thing the children asked me was to continue with the “pista.” We moved it onto a mobile panel so we could place it wherever we liked, and we started again.

This time, three main things changed:

1. They wanted to create **two paths** instead of one—one blue and one red—because they found some strips of these colours.
2. They wanted to make **signs** too.
3. They began to realise that the **paper tape is too weak** to hold the toilet rolls.

Next time, I'd like to introduce them to the blue tape and see what happens if we use it instead of the paper tape – bad idea? good idea?

WHAT IF?
?



DAY 3.

CREATING NEW RUNS

This time, we decided to lay the board on the floor and see if we could create a route from there.

I gave them two new materials:

- Blue tape
- Spiral binding

At first, they were a little confused about what the blue tape was. Some said, “è chewing gum,” while others said, “è colla ma appiccicosa,” but they quickly understood how to use it. They started with a tiny piece and then asked for more, but they soon realised that the bigger and heavier cones would fall even with six pieces of blue tape.

Another child asked if we could make two lines instead of one with the spiral binding—they were so happy when I gave them this.

When it was time to go home, they said they would need something stronger to stick the rolls and the spirals next time.



WHAT IF?



DAY 4.

CREATING NEW RUNS



Before starting to create new routes, we talked about how the blue tape was not strong enough and that we needed something stronger this time. I showed them a new type of tape, and some of them were very excited to try it.

Then they decided whether they wanted to create one or two routes. We voted by raising hands (I didn't vote—it was their choice), and they chose to create two routes: one for a big marble and one for a small marble. They also decided to place the egg carton at the end.

They created the first route. They asked me for the tape by saying "please" and "thank you," without any prompting from me. I think they connected this situation to what happens during "snack time" at the café.

I gave them the marble, but it kept falling and didn't reach the end. Several of them suggested that they needed to cover the holes, and that's what they did. Pictures will follow on the next slide.

English language ?

"Tata, scotch please"

"Thank you, Tata"

"Pleeeeeeease"



"Diventerà una pista bellissima" L.

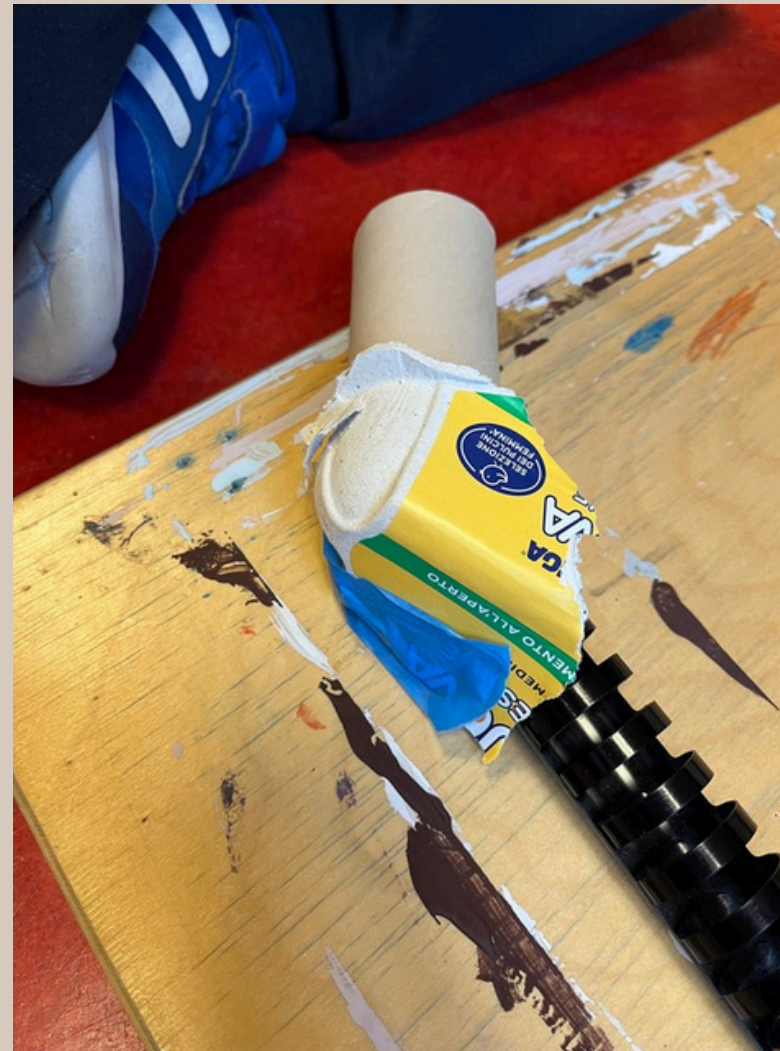
DAY 4.

HOW TO COVER THE HOLES



"Oh no la biglia si è incastrata, posso guardare con il mio cannocchiale tata? pleeeeeease" L.

> Before this happened, we tested the run by counting, 'One, two, three, goooooo!'



"Tata, guarda, così la biglia non cade sicuramente!" E.



"Metto questo alla fine così non cadono le biglie" E.

DAY 4.

CREATING NEW RUNS



small marble run

big marble run

egg box “così le biglie non cadono” E.

Five minutes before snack time, one of the children suggested creating two routes instead of just one—one for the big marbles and one for the small marbles.

I asked the other children if they agreed with the idea, and they all thought it was great. One of the children even complimented the child who had the idea, saying, “Brava E., è un’idea GENIALE!”

Then I asked them, “How can we tell which route is which?” Here are some of the ideas the children suggested:

- “We can colour the routes in two different colours—pink and orange,” one child said.
- “We can put two different pieces of paper so we know,” as shown in the picture.
-

We will discuss this further the next time we meet.

DAY 5.

LET'S PAINT THE RUNS!



When I arrived at the school, the children, the class teacher, and I sat down together for circle time. I asked them how they were and showed them the routes they had built. Some of them were very enthusiastic about them. I mentioned that last time, E. had asked if we could colour the two routes, and we all agreed that it was a great idea.

But what colours?

To decide, we voted. I asked each child which colour they wanted the routes to be. In response to the question, "What colour would you like?", the majority of the children answered in English.

The colours that received the most votes were:

- Red
- Yellow
- Rainbow



route for
small marbles

- Blue
- Black
- Gold



routes for
big marbles

E. started drawing some signs and the traffic lights.

L.: "Ma E. le biglie non vedono" E.: "Fa lo stesso, io li voglio fare comunque"

L: "Ok, posso aiutarti io?" E: "Okay va bene" L: "Grazie E., sei gentile"

DAY 5.

LET'S PAINT THE RUNS !



Before starting the painting activity, I asked each child to get a paint pot. Then, I asked them to choose a brush and a paper cup for the water. Finally, I asked them to fill their cups with water.



English language

*"Posso prendere quello pink , Marti please ? " M.
"Yes sure" - "Thank you, Martina"*

To let them dry, we placed them on the radiators.



DAY 6.

LET'S PAINT THE RUNS!



English language ?

"Tata, a me piace tanto il black."

"Questo tata, in the bin?" (the child was pointing to a piece of paper)

"Tata, ma dov'è il red?"

"A me tata piace solo blue"



DAY 7.

LET'S FINISH THE MARBLE RUNS!

As soon as I arrived at school, we printed an A3 sheet with the marble runs designed by the children to use as a reference. Then we split into two groups: one group recreated the runs, while the other drew some road signs. I helped them fold the tape and stick it onto the toilet roll tubes.



English language

*"Is this long or short
(pointing to the toilet roll tubes)?"*

L. "E' short, tata."

"Scotch, tata, please."



DAY 7.

LET'S FINISH THE MARBLE RUNS!



"Ora ci possiamo giocare, tata?"

Everyone gathered around the table to look at the nearly completed marble runs. In the picture, I was adding extra tape to secure the toilet roll tubes more firmly.



"Tata, è bellissima"

DAY 7.

LET'S FINISH THE MARBLE RUNS!

Here are the "parking sign" and the "traffic lights" they decided to add. They created many more signs, which they will add next time.



"Lì in mezzo, così" T.



"Tata, posso mettere il segnale del parcheggio? così sanno dove fermarsi" E.



"Il semaforo qui tata, così" L.

"Ora ci giochiamo!"



DAY 7.

LET'S PLAY WITH IT !

Here, A. is using it for the first time! The marble made it to the parking area! We did it!



Now:

- The marble runs are placed in the classroom, where the children can play with them freely.

What's next?

- They will add extra signs.
- Who knows... I'll ask them!

REFLECTIONS

It wasn't easy, but it was easier than I thought, and it was also a lot of fun!

All the children were engaged in the activity; even those who usually hang back asked to join in. I have to admit, I was a bit worried at the beginning about not having a plan—but don't worry, they've got one ready for you. Actually, they have many.

I'll definitely try again. It was a big attempt, but what excites me most is that this “marble runs” project is not finished yet. We'll see where it leads us—maybe nowhere—but at least we played, they played, and we had fun. The English language was used in a real context, and they used it freely. It all felt pretty natural.

Teacher Martina

**PLAY IS ENOUGH.
PLAY IS ENOUGH.
PLAY IS ENOUGH.**



This should be our educational mantra for the first 5 years.

JANET LANSBURY