

**THE IMPACT OF THE CRISIS ON EDUCATION:
analysis of educational projects for the 0-6 age group and the perspective
of the educational centers (children's poles) in Italy**

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Abstract: The pandemic emergency has forced girls and boys to adapt to completely changed living conditions (closure of schools, confinement at home, social distancing). At the same time, the 0-6 educational services found themselves re-modulating programming and planning to ensure the right to education, learning, and psychological well-being needs of girls and boys. However, the period of distance learning has amplified the obstacles to equity in education, conditioned by educational poverty and socio-cultural disadvantages. The contribution, after presenting the main field researches that have multiplied in Italy in this last year, will focus on the initiatives promoted in the first period of the health emergency (March-June 2020) from the infant-toddler centers and preschools of Roma Capitale. The most important novelty of the new legislative decree (number 65) are the Childhood Centers, which host educational services for girls and boys in both the 0-3 and 3-6 age segments in a single building or in neighboring buildings, for a better use of resources through the sharing of services, spaces and tools. The contribution presents the results of the first phase of analysis of the more than 430 distance learning projects carried out in the municipal educational services of Rome between March and July 2020, collected by the Department of Educational and School Services of Rome. The data collected show the ways in which the services have managed to rethink, with different strategies and tools, relationships with girls, boys and their families and educational activities, ensuring the continuity of relationships and learning processes.

Keywords: Didactic Planning. Health-Educational Emergency. Educational Relationship. Educational Services 0-6 years.

O IMPACTO DA CRISE NA EDUCAÇÃO: análise de projetos educacionais para a faixa etária de 0 a 6 anos e a perspectiva dos centros educacionais (polos infantis) na Itália

Resumo: A emergência pandêmica forçou meninas e meninos a se adaptarem a condições de vida completamente alteradas (fechamento de escolas, confinamento em casa, distanciamento social). Ao

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mesmo tempo, os serviços educacionais de 0-6 anos tiveram a necessidade de adequar a programação e o planejamento de atividades para garantir o direito à educação, aprendizagem e necessidades de bem-estar psicológico de meninas e meninos. Entretanto, o período de educação a distância ampliou os obstáculos à equidade na educação, condicionados pela pobreza educacional e desvantagens socioculturais. A contribuição, depois de apresentar as principais pesquisas de campo que se multiplicaram na Itália neste último ano, incidirá sobre as iniciativas promovidas no primeiro período da emergência sanitária (março-junho de 2020) nos centros infantis e pré-escolas de Roma Capitale. A novidade mais importante do novo decreto legislativo (número 65) são os Centros de Infância, que abrigam atendimento educacional para meninas e meninos nos segmentos de 0-3 e 3-6 anos em um único prédio ou em prédios vizinhos, para um melhor uso de recursos por meio do compartilhamento de serviços, espaços e ferramentas. A contribuição apresenta os resultados da primeira fase de análise dos mais de 430 projetos de ensino à distância realizados pelos serviços educativos municipais de Roma entre março e julho de 2020, recolhidos pelo Departamento de Serviços Educativos e Escolares de Roma. Os dados coletados mostram as formas como os serviços têm conseguido repensar, com diferentes estratégias e ferramentas, as relações com meninas, meninos e suas famílias e ações educativas, garantindo a continuidade das relações e dos processos de aprendizagem.

Palavras-chave: Planejamento Didático. Emergência Educacional em Saúde. Relação Educativa. Atendimento Educacional 0-6 anos.

EL IMPACTO DE LA CRISIS EN LA EDUCACIÓN: análisis de proyectos educativos para el grupo de 0 a 6 años y la perspectiva de los centros educativos (polos infantiles) en Italia

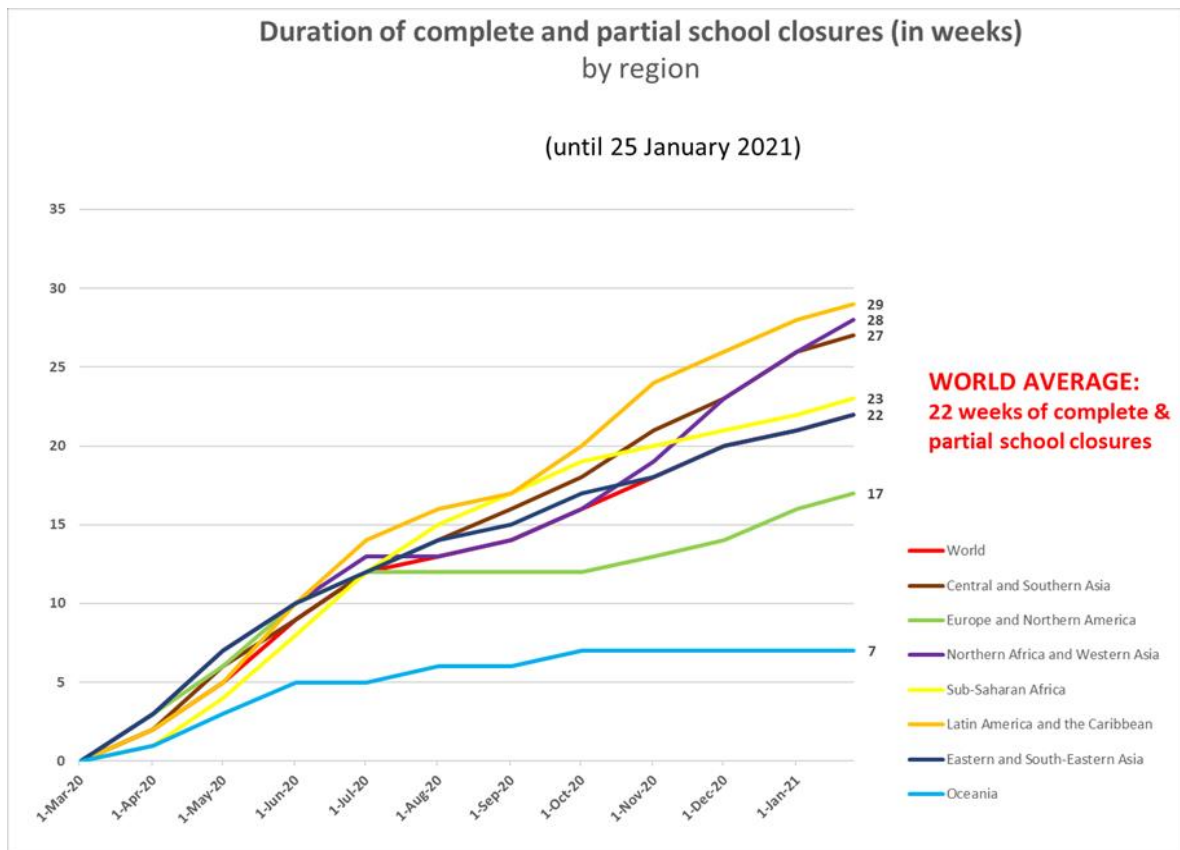
Resumen: La emergencia pandémica ha obligado a niñas y niños a adaptarse a condiciones de vida completamente cambiadas (cierre de escuelas, confinamiento en el hogar, distanciamiento social). Al mismo tiempo, los servicios educativos de 0 a 6 han tenido la necesidad de adaptar la programación y la planificación de actividades para garantizar el derecho a la educación, el aprendizaje y las necesidades de bienestar psicológico de las niñas y los niños. Sin embargo, el período de educación a distancia ha amplificado los obstáculos a la equidad en la educación, condicionada por la pobreza educativa y las desventajas socioculturales. La contribución, después de presentar las principales investigaciones de campo que se han multiplicado en Italia en este último año, se centrará en las iniciativas impulsadas en el primer período de la emergencia sanitaria (marzo-junio de 2020) desde los centros infantil y preescolar de Roma Capitale. La novedad más importante del nuevo decreto legislativo (número 65) son los Centros de Infancia, que acogen servicios educativos para niñas y niños de 0-3 y 3-6 años en un solo edificio o en edificios vecinos, para un mejor uso de recursos a través del intercambio de servicios, espacios y herramientas. La contribución presenta los resultados de la primera fase de análisis de los más de 430 proyectos de educación a distancia llevados a cabo por los servicios educativos municipales de Roma entre marzo y julio de 2020, recopilados por el Departamento de Servicios Educativos y Escolares de Roma. Los datos recolectados muestran las formas cómo los servicios han logrado repensar, con diferentes estrategias y herramientas, las relaciones con las niñas, los niños y sus familias y las actividades educativas, asegurando la continuidad de las relaciones y los procesos de aprendizaje.

Palabras clave: Planificación Didáctica. Emergencia Salud-Educativa. Relación Educativa. Servicios Educativos 0-6 años.

The impact of distance learning in education systems

In Italy, the month of March 2020 will be remembered by everyone as the month of the closure of schools, of the lockdown. Immediately after the first signs from China, Italy presented the first symptoms and infections of Covid-19 in Europe. From early March we can speak of an educational break, with the total closure of schools, and the transformation of the educational relationship from action in the presence, which has always been an educational resource, to a relationship to be managed remotely, to avoid health risks and the spread of the pandemic. The effects, in Italy and progressively throughout Europe and the world, have affected all social actors and institutions, including those in charge of education and training. The health emergency dictated by the pandemic has had a strong impact in terms of increasing inequalities globally, on the economic, social, ethnic and gender levels, exacerbating inequalities and inequities (BENVENUTO, 2021). The impacts of the pandemic on people's lives in various spheres (income, wealth, health, education, work and food security) have been unequal with an intersection and mutual reinforcement of economic and non-economic inequalities (BERKHOUT *et al.*, 2021). As regards the education system, the "virus of inequalities" in 2020 affected about one billion and seven hundred thousand students in schools in 180 countries around the world (BERKHOUT *et al.*, 2021, p. 39-40; UNESCO, 2021), determining globally, between March 2020 and January of the following year, the average loss of about two thirds of the school year (Figure 1).

Figure 1 – Duration of the closure of schools in the world during the pandemic to January 2021⁵.



A recent monitoring by the OECD (2020) reveals the concern of the effects of this forced closure, especially for students with Internet access difficulties or with a more disadvantaged socio-economic background.

⁵ From Unesco <https://fr.unesco.org/news/deux-tiers-dune-annee-academique-perdus-monde-cause-fermetures-dues-au-covid-19-lunesco> Access in: 22 June 2021.

The lockdowns in response to COVID-19 have interrupted conventional schooling with nationwide school closures in most OECD and partner countries, the majority lasting at least 10 weeks. While the educational community have made concerted efforts to maintain learning continuity during this period, children and students have had to rely more on their own resources to continue learning remotely through the Internet, television or radio. Teachers also had to adapt to new pedagogical concepts and modes of delivery of teaching, for which they may not have been trained. In particular, learners in the most marginalized groups, who don't have access to digital learning resources or lack the resilience and engagement to learn on their own, are at risk of falling behind.

The need to activate educational and didactic actions at a distance has therefore had an effect in terms of growth in educational poverty, impacting in pejorative terms on starting situations marked by the presence of disadvantage at a national level (NUZZACI *et al.*, 2020; SAVE THE CHILDREN, 2020).

In Italy numerous studies and researches have investigated the different aspects of distance teaching and educational activities, in the perception of the actors of the process, teachers, students and students, families, school managers, educational coordinators, at different levels of the education system (ALMADIPLOMA, ALMA LAUREA, 2020; BATINI *et al.*, 2020; CENSIS 2020; DI NUNZIO *et al.*, 2020; GIRELLI, 2020; LUCISANO, 2020; PAROLE O_STILI, ISTITUTO TONIOLO, 2021), highlighting to a large extent the need for an investment in key to formation, the desire to return to the presence, but also not to waste the experience. The closure of the educational places, together with the difficulties and fears, generated a strong, often local, push to build banks that would allow a continuation of teaching and the educational relationship.

The elements mentioned are emphasized in the educational contexts dedicated to girls and boys from 0 to 6 years and their families. The school was born as a place in the presence and even more so for nurseries and kindergartens (BOTTIGLI, FALASCHI, 2020; CREIF, 2020; GIGLI, 2021). In these contexts, the educational project itself is based in many ways on the relationship and participatory teaching, and the achievement of objectives involves activities in which contact, manipulation and exploration are essential, sensory activations that stimulate emotional and cognitive responses. They are therefore fundamental educational places for development, growth, learning, relationships between girls and boys and their families. The experiential contexts built and designed in the 0-6 educational

services are designed to guarantee individual and group learning processes (BONACCINI, 2018; MUSATTI, GIOVANNINI, PICCHIO, 2018) and favor both cognitive and affective and relational development, as Galardini points out (2019):

We like to define both the nursery and the kindergarten as "places of life", not to diminish their educational function, but precisely to make them places of growth, wanting with this definition to capture all the richness of the childhood experience that unfolds as it flows. of every day. It is certainly necessary to promote the cognitive growth of children starting from the early years, but this must take place without forcing and with an open and rich vision of growth, capable of grasping the strong link between emotions, affections, learning. The commitment of adults must be aimed at offering opportunities, solicitations, stimuli that encourage activities that do not force children into narrow frames, but that are proposed as experiences with meaning for their affective and emotional life and for the social relationships that involve.

Attending quality childcare services has very important effects on the cognitive and socio-affective development of girls and boys, particularly if they come from situations at risk of educational, economic or social poverty (VOTRUBA-DRZAL *et al.*, 2004). As stated in the document Pedagogical guidelines on distance learning links (LEAD), elaborated in 2020 on the basis of Legislative Decree 2017/65 by the Childhood Commission Integrated System 0-6 (Commissione Infanzia Sistema Integrato Zero-sei, 2020), to support educators and teachers in the work of strengthening educational relationships with boys and girls and their families in the educational emergency phase caused by the health emergency: "the sudden closure of infant-toddler centers and preschools abruptly interrupted the educational pathways of children's groups, but not the need for relations". In this frame of reference, it is therefore important to understand and make visible the ways in which the different contexts have actually taken action to carry out the educational links in the absence of the physical presence of the actors in the process.

The Ministerial Decree of 4 March 2020 of the MIUR left the responsibility for remodeling learning spaces and times to schools but also universities, in full autonomy. A management of a critical passage, which we will remember for a long time: from school in the presence, to school at a distance. But it is with ministerial note n°388 of 17/03/2020 that

requests and indications for the conduct of Distance Learning activities, DaD, as we have started to call them from that moment, are defined with greater attention.

What is meant by distance learning activities

Distance teaching activities, like any teaching activity, to be such, involve the reasoned and guided construction of knowledge through an interaction between teachers and pupils. Whatever the means through which teaching is exercised, the aims and principles do not change. In the awareness that nothing can fully replace what happens, in the presence, in a class, it is still a question of creating a "learning environment", however unusual in common perception and experience, to be created, nurtured, inhabited, remodeling from time to time.

Direct or indirect, immediate or deferred connection, through videoconferences, videolections, group chats; the reasoned transmission of teaching materials, through the uploading of the same on digital platforms and the use of class registers in all their communication and teaching support functions, with subsequent re-elaboration and discussion operated directly or indirectly with the teacher, interaction on truly digital educational interactive systems and apps: all this is distance learning.

The mere sending of materials or the mere assignment of tasks, which are not preceded by an explanation relating to the contents in question or which do not provide for a subsequent intervention of clarification or restitution by the teacher, must be abandoned, because they lack elements that could urge learning.

In fact, distance learning provides one or more moments of relationship between teacher and learners, through which the teacher can give the students a sense of what they have done independently, also useful for ascertaining, in a process of constant verification and improvement, the effectiveness of the tools adopted, also in the comparison with the methods of use of the tools and digital contents - therefore of learning - of the students, who have already offered solutions, help and materials in recent weeks. Obviously, the "virtual classroom" mode should be privileged as far as possible. (NOTE MI n. 388 of 17-03-2020).

The change aimed at maintaining a "reasoned and guided construction of knowledge through an interaction between teachers and pupils" has been a real test for the education system. An extraordinary test bench, except for the interruption in times of war or for emergency events from natural disasters⁶.

⁶ All the attention paid to emergency pedagogy in recent years has been well studied and reflected by many authors, including Isidori M.V., Vaccarelli A. (2013), Vaccarelli A. (2017).

The need to create a new learning environment, for which many were not at all prepared, initially threw schools and teachers into confusion, which in any case faced with the most diverse educational initiatives to guarantee students the constitutional right to education.

Many researches have highlighted the complexity in which teachers found themselves (BATINI *et al.*, 2020; GIRELLI, 2020; INDIRE, 2020; LUCISANO, 2020; LUCISANO *et al.*, 2020; NIGRIS *et al.*, 2020; PAGANI, PASSALACQUA, 2020; SIRD, 2020), the point of view of managers, of school and university structures and above all of students (ALMA DIPLOMA, ALMA LAUREA, 2020; SAVE THE CHILDREN - IPSOS, 2020), in the different orders and degrees and respective families (PASTORI *et al.*, 2020; SAVE THE CHILDREN, 2020).

The flexibility and adaptation to change, without going into the merits of the criticisms related to the discrepancy of the response, was certainly an indication of the responsiveness of the educational institution. The ability to try to solve the question of distance learning has involved a thousand and one problems. Facing a new situation, without sufficient weapons, has shown the complexity of the problem, but also the need for resources and interventions needed already in the years preceding the pandemic. Just think of the growing attention to educational poverty at the national level, to be understood as the sum of cultural poverty, lack of resources to access online teaching, difficulties in the spaces for the management of personal identity and family relationships. A specific research by Save the Children (2020) on the impact of the coronavirus on educational poverty has highlighted, among other issues, precisely the problems related to the need to manage the new forms of "educational relationship", the scarce resources for take advantage of teaching, from the point of view of families:

Among the families in greatest difficulty, many are those who would like more substantial help from teachers (72.4%) and easier access to distance learning (71.5%) because they consider school activities to be heavier for their children (63.4%), difficult (53.9%), excessive (46.7%). Among these, more than one in ten families (11.8%) can rely only on smartphones as a device to access distance learning, one in four (24.4%) fears that this situation will lead to some insufficiency for their children, 1 in 10 (9.6%)

fear that their children may lose the year (despite ministerial provisions), 8.6% that even this situation may lead to their children abandoning school. In fact, almost half of the families with greater frailties (45.2%) would like "schools open all day with extracurricular activities and support for families in difficulty", an option that is generally appreciated by parents in our country (39,1%). On the other hand, six out of ten parents (60.3%) believe that their children will need support when they return to school given the loss of learning in recent months. (Save the Children, 2020).

What must be emphasized here, referring to the specific surveys and qualified research, reflections and analyzes, is that the pandemic, and with it the new situation of increasing complexity, has brought so much effort to the various professional figures in the educational field and education, but forced us to "rethink ourselves as teachers". The role and professionalism of the teacher has become the focal point, alongside the media and financial question of viability and safety conditions to be guaranteed. In the difficult management of the pandemic crisis, it can certainly be emphasized, as an element of criticism, how much the issue of technologies, infrastructures, resources, chairs and single-seater benches, has unfortunately taken precedence over the problems arising from the need for innovation education and professional growth of teachers.

The integrated education and training system from birth up to six years

In Italy, nursery schools, educational structures for girls and boys aged 0 to 3, were established in 1971 with Law no. 1044 as «Assistance in nursery schools for children aged up to three years as part of a policy for the family, constitutes a social service of public interest.

The nursery schools have the purpose of providing for the temporary custody of children, to ensure adequate assistance to the family and also to facilitate women's access to work within the framework of a complete social security system" (Article 1 of Law 1044 /1971).

At the end of the 90s of the twentieth century, supplementary services for early childhood were born, always intended for girls and boys up to 3 years of age. These services are:

- Educational services carried out in a home context (“Tagesmutter” or family nursery). Aimed at minors between 3 and 36 months, they are based in homes made available by educational staff. The aim is to offer a family environment, also through greater flexibility in frequency, which can be differentiated for each child;
- the parent-child centers. They offer a service to children between 3 and 36 months accompanied by parents or family members, who participate in educational and social activities;
- the play areas. Unlike the other services, they are not aimed at children from 3 months onwards but from 18. It is more geared towards offering opportunities for play and socializing and attendance is flexible, not full time⁷.

Nurseries and supplementary services are born mainly as a form of support for families, to allow parents to reconcile family and work. This function remains unchanged over time; however, educational facilities for early childhood are increasingly recognized as having pedagogical importance and a decisive effect in the emotional, relational and cognitive growth of girls and boys (BONDIOLI, MANTOVANI, 1987; GALARDINI, 2012; MUSATTI, PICCHIO, 2005).

This recognition also takes place at the legislative level with the Law n.107/2015 and the subsequent Legislative Decree n. 65/2017. These documents bring the nursery school and the supplementary services for early childhood back to an educational and cultural dimension rather than a welfare one, without prejudice, of course, to the reference to support for families.

In particular, with Law 107, infant-toddler centers and educational services for girls and boys aged 0 to 3 and their families have been integrated with preschools, aimed at girls and boys aged 3 to 6, in a single educational path. The aim of this change was "to guarantee boys and girls equal opportunities for education, care, relationships and play, overcoming inequalities and territorial, economic, ethnic and cultural barriers, as well as for the purpose of reconciling life, care and parents' work, the promotion of the quality of the educational offer and continuity between the various educational and school services and the participation of families" (LAW 107/2015, art.1 paragraph 181 letter e).

⁷ <https://www.openpolis.it/lofferta-dei-servizi-integrativi-per-la-prima-infanzia/> Access in: 22 june 2021.

In fact, the integrated system gives a line of continuity, also pedagogical, to services that, in Italy, have a different management: the educational services for children (or 0/3 years), managed by the Regions and local authorities, directly or through stipulation of agreements, by other public bodies or by private individuals and kindergartens, which may be state or equal, publicly or privately managed, which depend on the Ministry of Education and therefore on the central state.

With the Decree-Law number 65, which implements the indications of Law 107 of 2015, the integrated education and training system from birth up to six years is therefore established. The integrated education and training system guarantees all girls and boys, from birth to six years, equal opportunities to develop their potential for relationships, autonomy, creativity and learning to overcome inequalities, territorial, economic, ethnic, and cultural barriers. This is a very important reform because to achieve the goal of enhancing the educational experience of girls and boys in the first six years of life, it establishes some fundamental principles. Among these we recall the need for those who teach in these services to have obtained a specific university degree, for all educational staff to have continuous training in service, the definition of standard needs and the establishment of childcare centers intended to accommodate children. between zero and six years⁸.

The Educational centers (Children's Poles) represent the most important novelty of the legislative decree. These are structures that welcome educational services for girls and boys in both the 0-3 and the 3-6 age segment in a single building or in neighboring buildings, for a better use of resources through the sharing of services, spaces, and tools:

The Childhood Centers welcome, in a single complex or in neighboring buildings, several education and training facilities for girls and boys from zero to six years of age, as part of an educational path of pedagogical continuity that aims to make more the transition from nursery school to kindergarten is harmonious, taking into account the age and respecting the times and learning styles of each one. The Children's Centers are characterized as permanent laboratories for research, innovation, participation and openness to the territory, also in order to encourage maximum flexibility and diversification for the best use of resources, sharing general services, collective spaces and professional resources (D-L 65/2017).

⁸ <https://www.senato.it/service/PDF/PDFServer/BGT/01069685.pdf>. Access in: 22 June 2021.

Through the establishment of the Childhood Centers, therefore, the reform not only integrates the educational services for children and preschools, public and private, into a unitary system, but also, and above all, focuses on the needs and rights of the child to be welcomed in quality services with clear educational purposes and intentions, which offer the necessary guarantees for a correct psychophysical development of the child, providing for the participation of parents in the educational project. To propose the Pedagogical Guidelines for the Integrated System to the Ministry is a Commission for the Integrated System, with consultative and propositional tasks⁹. The Commission remains in office for three years and is made up of experts in the field of education and education of children from zero to six years designated by the Minister of Education, the Regions and Local Authorities.

In reality, the start-up of the Children's Centers and, more generally, of the integrated system is still in an initial and slowed down phase. The resources for the construction of the Educational centers (Poles) are paid by Inail (150 mn / € for the three-year period 2018/2020) and distributed among the regions with a Decree of the Ministry of Education. The regions must follow common criteria to acquire expressions of interest from the local authorities (municipalities or provinces) that own the areas subject to intervention and are interested in the construction of children's centers.

As the *Report on educational services for children in Italy* highlights:¹⁰

The regional measures for the implementation of the integrated system are now being added to the body of legislation in force, which essentially concern the following areas:

- I. Programming guidelines for the system, based on the indications of the National Action Plan.
- II. Allocation of the resources of the National Fund among the municipalities eligible for funding and definition of intervention priorities.
- III. Expressions of interest addressed to the municipalities for the construction of the Children's Centers and definition of the evaluation criteria (Dipartimento per le politiche della famiglia, 2020, pp. 68-69).

⁹ <https://www.istruzione.it/sistema-integrato-06/commissione.html> Access in: 22 June 2021.

¹⁰ The Report is the result of the three-year collaboration agreement signed at the end of 2018 between the Presidency of the Council of Ministers - Department for Family Policies - Istat and the Ca' Foscari University of Venice and can be consulted here https://www.istat.it/it/files/2020/06/report-infanzia_def.pdf Access in: 22 June 2021.

In fact, the Italian Regions, as owners of 0/3 year services, are currently preparing guidelines for the implementation of Decree 67 and, therefore, for the creation of educational centers, with different times throughout the country.

The Lazio Region, with the Regional Law n.7 of 5 August 2020, it was the first region in Italy to implement Legislative Decree 65/2017 which innovates and revolutionizes educational services for 0-6 years. The regional law has the explicit objective of combating the phenomena of early school leaving and educational poverty, guaranteeing equal conditions of access and participation to educational services for girls and boys, without any distinction of gender, sex, ethnicity, age, disability. and religious orientation of families, guaranteeing equal opportunities for education, instruction, care, relationship, and play¹¹. Article 17 of the law is dedicated to Children's Centers and states that:

1. In order to consolidate the integrated education and instruction system from the first months of life to the age of six and to promote educational continuity, the Region, in agreement with the regional school office, taking into account the proposals made by local authorities, plans the establishment of Poles for children, intended as areas within which there are at least one educational service for children and a school for childhood.
2. In each of the Poles referred to in paragraph 1:
 - a) general services with the same functions, as well as external spaces, can be shared as long as their design and sizing guarantee the functionality and correct performance of the services;
 - b) the environments for the playful and recreational activities of the educational services constitute the main tool for implementing educational continuity, favoring play and meeting between groups of girls and boys of different ages and personal different training within shared and usable spaces according to the educational project.

A few months before the implementation of the Legislative Decree, moreover, in March 2020, the Lazio Region itself published a public notice concerning the possibility for Municipalities to access Contributions for the redevelopment of municipal-owned school buildings to set up Educational centers (Poles) for Infancy referred to in Article 3 of Legislative Decree 65/2017.

The path towards the establishment of the 0/6 year old educational centers has begun.

¹¹<http://www.consiglio.regione.lazio.it/consiglio-regionale/?vw=newsDettaglio&id=2804#.X4Qod9AzbIU>
Access in: 22 June 2021.

The organization of the educational service 0 - 6 years in Rome

The educational experience of the Services for girls and boys aged 0 to 6 in Rome begins, as a first experience of continuity, with the experimentation of the bridge sections of the Municipality of Rome (today Roma Capitale), which was followed spring promoted by the Ministry of Education.

The so-called "spring sections" are educational projects aimed at children between 24 and 36 months of age mostly associated with kindergarten to encourage effective continuity of the training path. These projects were born in Italy in 2006 with art. 1 c. 630 of the law 27 December 2006, n. 296, to meet the growing demand for educational services.

In a first phase, the spring sections were activated on an experimental basis and between 2007 and 2013 they functioned as an integrated educational service associated with kindergartens or nursery schools thanks to various agreements entered into in the State-Regions Unified Conference. In 2013, thanks to the Framework Agreement no. 83/CU these educational realities have been put into a system and their essential criteria have been defined, dictating the guidelines for their activation.

Unlike the school advance institute, which allows girls and boys to access a service even if they have not yet reached the minimum age, the spring sections have a specific project dedicated according to criteria of pedagogical quality, flexibility, compliance with this specific age group. With the Legislative Decree 13 April 2017, n. 65, the spring sections entered the integrated education and training system from birth up to six years.

Today on the territory of Rome the capital there are 28 bridge sections, with a non-homogeneous distribution in the fifteen municipalities in which the city is organized and with an absence in 4 municipalities, essentially in the western area of the city (Fig. 2).

Figure 2 – Distribution of the Bridge Sections in the Municipalities of Rome.



In the territory of Rome, after the first experiences of the Primavera sections, limited to the group of children aged between two and three years, in 2015, among many difficulties and resistances, some 0-6 year-old experiments were started, located in various parts of the city, in single nursery school or immediately adjacent structures.

The starting point of these experiments is the idea that it is essential that educators, educators, and teachers can reach a common idea of the child and his/her growth path, making use of a joint training that involves the acquisition of a common language, and a reflection on which educational project to undertake to give coherence to the experiences of both educational segments.

The initial difficulties were stimulating for a profound reflection on how to orient oneself to follow up on what immediately proved to be a potentially winning project.

Some essential strategies have been identified to ensure the success of the project:

- First of all, organize a common formation between educators and teachers,
- Secondly to arrive at a common plan, the result of the reflections developed during this joint training,
- Subsequently, the experimentation of joint educational projects, establishing the actions to be carried out with the 0-3 year group and how to continue them with the next 3-6 year group,

- The constant documentation of each initiative, the subsequent transmission and exchange of good practices with other services with the support and assistance of the Departmental Documentation Center which organized thematic workshops and seminars, stimulating dialogue between educators and teachers,
- For the success of each phase, the coordinating role of the figure of the educational officer, generally coordinator of both services, and, for this reason, guarantor of the coherence of the actions of each segment, is strategic.

The basic training of educational and school staff has always provided for an organization in mixed groups, generally combining a nursery and a kindergarten coordinated by the same official, or nearby services, also coordinated by different officials, in any case proceeding with training actions in 0-6 optics. Currently, the expansion of the areas consisting of about 5/6 0-6 services are managed by a single Official.

Even the complementary in-depth training with a practical impact, that flanked the basic training, was carried out in mixed groups between educators and teachers, especially as regards laboratory experiences such as “the workshop of doing and thinking”, “the construction of the game”, “the narration”, “the exchange of good practices”, etc. workshops conducted by the operators of the Documentation Center.

Apart from the concrete realization of real 0-6 services, which to date are still quite limited in number, (about 20 in which the 0-6 passage is also directed from an administrative point of view) the experience of joint training and the comparison on Good Practices organized by the Documentation Center offered the opportunity to get to know each other in the diversity of each service and to pass also to valid contaminations that led to a broader reflection on the needs and characteristics of the different age groups of their groups of children.

Today we have come to a joint reading of the services and a subsequent joint planning on specific issues, identified thinking about the characteristics and needs of each of the children of the groups followed in both segments. In addition, many experimental training projects have also been organized over time, structured in 0-6 courses, such as the course on education to respect gender differences or the poles of play spaces.

The basic idea remains to theoretically deepen the knowledge of the peculiarities of the child in the different stages of age and to experiment, through the laboratory activity,

trying firsthand, the ways of conveying an educational/didactic path to be proposed again later, with the children.

This type of approach has also characterized this last school year, marked by the emergency linked to Covid-19, which forced the closure of all educational services in March 2020.

Emergency educational planning in the educational services of Rome

Starting from March 2020, the educational and school services of the integrated system of Roma Capitale have launched distance educational initiatives and activities in order not to suspend contacts with children, girls, and their families, taking advantage of the indication of the Decrees of the President of the Council of Ministers (DPCM) relating to the Coronavirus emergency and the subsequent Circular of the Ministry of Education (prot. 388 of 17.3.2020). To collect and to keep track and memory of the projects developed during this new experience of educators and teachers, the Department of Educational and School Services of Roma Capitale has launched the initiative "Waiting for it to end ...". The documentation of the Educational Services is available in the Online School section of the Roma Capitale¹².

As part of a broader research on distance learning in the Capitoline 0/6 Services, we started the analysis of the more than 430 distance learning projects carried out in the infant-toddler centers and preschools of the fifteen Municipalities of Rome, using some indicators: the platform chosen, the communication method, the recipients, the type of activity, the personalization of learning, the possible presence of an intercultural project or intercultural and inclusive aspects.

The experience offers an example of how to rethink learning activities and, in particular, the relationship with families, the third actor in the educational relationship. Undoubtedly, and in particular for educators, teachers, girls, boys and their families, the interruption of the relationship in presence, the backbone of the educational planning of 0/6 years Educational Services, has involved difficulties in many ways greater compared to other

¹² <https://www.comune.roma.it/web/it/scheda-servizi.page?contentId=INF561042>. Access in: 22 June 2021.

segments of the education system. At the same time, however, it activated the mobilization of important resources aimed, in particular, at the consolidation of the educational relationship, with a view to supporting families, a very important issue in the framework of the integrated system of 0-6 year old services.

Here we recall part of these experiences carried out by educators and teachers of the infant-toddler centers and preschools of Rome, analyzed as part of an ongoing research on educational and remote educational actions in the 0-6 Capitoline Services. The study has the general objective of reading the change in educational practices, generated by the emergency situation, through two lines of investigation:

- a) the analysis of the educational activities carried out to support girls, boys and their families in the moment of emergency by the educational services coordinated by them (Benvenuto, Sposetti, Szpunar, 2021), through the administration of an anonymous online questionnaire addressed to POSES of all the educational services of Roma Capitale;
- b) the analysis of the more than 400 remote educational activities carried out in the infant-toddler centers and preschools of the fifteen municipalities of Rome; the projects analyzed are part of the documentation required by the Department of Educational and School Services of Rome as part of the "Waiting for it to end ..." initiative and will be the subject of a specific study here.

Through the initiative "Waiting for it to end ...", the structures of the Integrated System of Roma Capitale were invited to send a brief description of the project started, sending it to the Nursery and Childhood Documentation Center of the Department of Educational and School works sent by educational groups.

Following the indications of the initiative, the infant-toddler centers and preschools sent the documentation, sending pdf files or a series of slides, more or less numerous to describe their work: all the projects report the activities suggested to families, in most of the cases accompanied by photos of the teachers in activity and photographic material of return of the parents, with children who carry out the didactic proposals or show the products made.

The analysis of distance learning projects, published in the Online School section of the Roma Capitale site, was started by examining a random sample of 84 projects out of the 433 sent, divided as indicated in the table below (Figure 3).

Figure 3 – Projects analyzed on the total of published projects.

	Projects analyzed (v.a.)	Projects published (v.a.)	Projects analyzed on the total (%)
Nurseries	33	169	19,5
Kindergartens	48	254	18,9
Educational centers	3	10	30,0
Total projects	84	433	19,4

As we can see, there are also ten of the approximately twenty educational centers, which represent a first experimentation of continuity, including administrative ones, between infant-toddler centers and preschools. On the page of the site that collects the projects, Educational Centers 0-6 are included in the lists of the two types: 8 are included in the list of Kindergartens (1 Educational Center is included in the list of Município VII, 2 are in the list of Município V and XII, 3 in that of Municipality VI) and 1 in the list of nursery schools (Município VII).

At present, 84 distance learning projects out of the 433 sent have been analyzed, extracted with a systematic sampling procedure. In summary, the analysis of the projects, both for infant-toddler centers and preschools, reveals the widespread sense of responsibility among educators towards boys, girls and their families when schools and educational facilities are closed, imposed by the health emergency: the teams of teachers have organized themselves to give their contribution, maintaining a continuity of relationship with children and families, offering support and listening, so as not to leave them a sense of abandonment in that difficult moment of social isolation. The educators have adapted to a different way of "being" with their groups of children, overcoming, in many cases, the mistrust of computer media to keep the relationship alive even with parents, establishing relationships through Distance Educational Links¹³.

To interact remotely with girls, boys and their families, most of the educators, in the projects where this aspect emerges (42 cases) used whatsapp (38): the application gives the possibility to exchange messages, send video and audio, to make video calls, even in groups. But there are examples of other channels: facebook group, skype, mail, telegram, zoom, meet, weschool. Some projects refer to generic IT media, some have resorted to multiple channels, exploiting the characteristics of each for a more functional interaction and

¹³ In Italian with the acronym LEAD (Legami Educativi A Distanza/ Distance Educational Links).

exchange. The commitment of the educators, in fact, was not limited to sending activities to be suggested to parents to be carried out at home, but was aimed at bringing their affection to the children and giving support to families also through comparison telephone calls, videos group calls, sending photos, appointments on some platform for collective wishes on the occasion of birthdays that could not be celebrated in the company of their peers.

The activities proposed by the educators and teachers resume the path started at the nursery and kindergarten, which was suddenly interrupted. These are inputs, suggestions, stimuli to create spaces and moments of sharing within homes and families, through the carrying out of manipulative and sensorial activities, development of fine motor skills, drawing and painting, music and reading, movement and personal care, pre-graphing and pre-calculation. The activities, in general, are divided by age groups, suggesting materials and tasks suitable for the development of children.

All educators suggest to parents the reading of books, sending video messages in which they tell fairy tales, stories and nursery rhymes taken from a book or accompanied by drawings that children can reproduce or recreate: reading is therefore an educational tool to be encouraged in all homes. to develop children's expressive, imaginative and listening skills and, in some cases, also to help them understand and elaborate moments of their development. In the lists of books indicated in the presentations of the projects there is the book "The colors of emotions", on which eleven schools have also focused activities to allow children to recognize their emotions, in that difficult moment for them and their families, to knowing how to tell or represent them through words and drawings or artifacts, to "[...] help children to give voice and name to their emotions (joy, anger, fear, sadness, calm, love). It is important to help the child to observe and know their own state of mind and that of others and acquire the ability to express themselves in different languages ("Brazil" Kindergarten, Municipality II).

The projects refer to activities related to circle-time and rituals offered at the nursery and kindergarten, to awaken and keep alive the emotional and affective memory of boys and girls, recalling daily rituals performed together with the group.

The following table (Figure 4) shows the activities indicated in the projects, which have been grouped into general categories. Almost all the projects (82) indicated more than one activity.

Figure 4 – Activities indicated in the projects of the Educational Services.

Didactic activities proposed	v.a.
Reading	68
Graphic-pictorial activities	63
Sound-musical activities	47
Manipulative-sensory activities	45
Creative activities	33
Horticulture	30
Educational cards	25
Fine motor activity	23
Daily routine	16
Psychomotor activities	14
Kitchen workshop	14
Teaching of religion	11
Scientific laboratory	6
Theater and dramatization workshop	5
Yoga	2

The arrival of spring is used by all the teachers for graphic-pictorial activities, to encourage direct observation, to ask boys and girls to plant a seed, take care of it and see it germinate, favoring contact with nature and discovery of the world, in continuity with outdoor horticulture projects started during the school months in person.

Four projects, in particular, underline the importance of continuing to carry out, even at home, activities of personal care and collaboration in the management of everyday life: washing hands independently, combing hair, are activities for the discovery and care of own body; setting and clearing the table, putting away the materials used and the games, are tasks to be encouraged in girls and boys, to support them in the development of autonomy.

Ten projects accurately report the educational objectives of the various proposed activities; an example is shown in figure 5.

Figure 5 – Slide extracted from the presentation of a Kindergarten project.

FESTA DELLA TERRA

Proposta:

- Attraverso un video messaggio inviato tramite WhatsApp alla rappresentante di classe, la maestra ha spiegato il significato della festa e invitato i bambini a realizzare un albero con materiali di riciclo

Obiettivi:

- Conoscere le regole basilari per rispettare l'ambiente che ci circonda
- Formulare domande e ipotesi
- Conoscere l'importanza del rispetto della natura
- I bambini verranno stimolati al riutilizzo ad al riciclaggio dei vari materiali per costruire un albero
- Conoscere una festa innovativa e le sue finalità
- Conoscere l'importanza del rispetto della natura

Attività

- Realizzazione di un albero con materiali di riciclo




Almost all the projects analyzed (77%) enrich the presentation of remote work with photos that testify to the carrying out of the activities by educators and boys and girls, each in their own home, and with messages from parents that return enthusiasm and gratitude for the closeness and support received from the teachers.

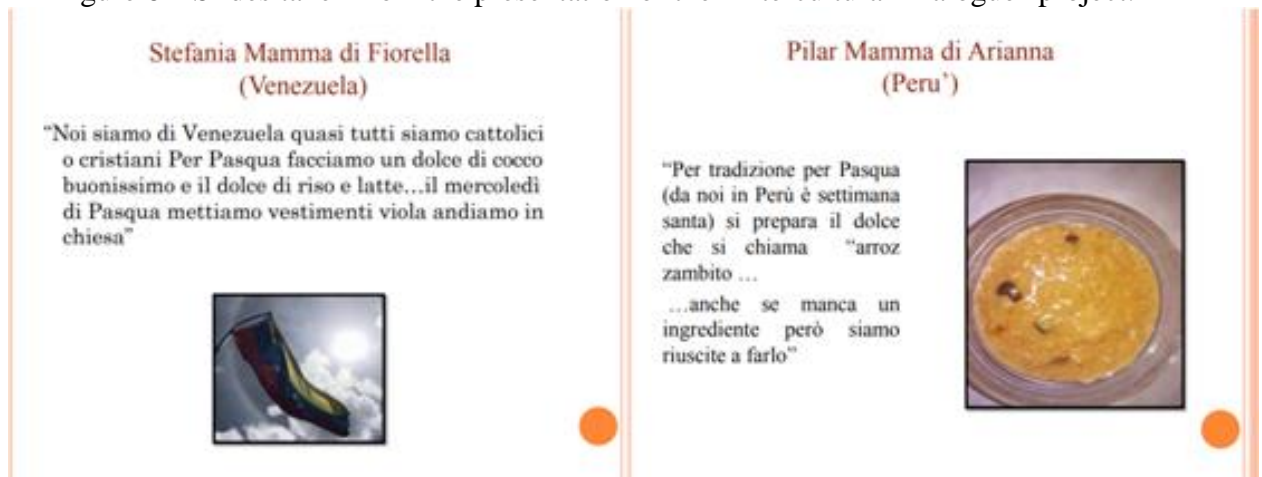
The theme of the personalization of learning is central to the organization of inclusive courses. From the analysis of the projects, it emerges that in a quarter of the experiences presented by the preschools (12) it is declared to have paid particular attention to children with special educational needs or the disabled, without interrupting the integration and inclusion paths promoted at school with proposal of ad hoc material or video calls with families to resume with the children the path carried out during the school year. In most cases, the activities carried out with the children are not explicit and no documentation is reported in this regard; one school refers to the activity of reading through images, another school reports the following activities: games with shadows, puffypaint pasta recipes, salt dough, didò and various games to build.

The analysis of the projects carried out up to now does not, however, allow for the enhancement of the work of the infant-toddler centers and preschools in the context of

integration and inclusion: among the projects examined only that of a preschool is focused on interculture, while in other projects we can only highlight the presence of elements that favor education in acceptance and the enhancement of diversity, which are found mainly in the readings suggested to families.

Only one project focused on interculture was examined, carried out by a kindergarten in Municipality XIV which has a section of 25 children, of which 15 with parents of foreign origin: "Even if at a distance we still decided to carry on the our intercultural project "Getting to know each other, recognizing, sharing" which remained pending with the closure of the school, because we would like to create a context in which there is a concrete recognition of all families and all children, wherever their origins lie so that every story it brings with it experiences, growth processes, identity constructions. " Easter has therefore become the occasion for an "Intercultural Dialogue", a workshop dedicated to Easter recipes from the different cultures that inhabit the section. By way of example, two slides of the presentation of the project are shown in figure 6.

Figure 6 – Slides taken from the presentation of the "Intercultural Dialogue" project.



Conclusions

The experience achieved through the projects presented in the last part of the contribution seems to highlight a common project in the infant-toddler centers and

preschools of Rome, which could represent the cornerstone of the logic of educational continuity from 0 to 6 years.

The existence of a common planning is in fact indispensable for a concrete realization of educational centers that can accommodate girls and boys, creating an effective educational continuity between segments of the service system that have so far operated in most cases separately with methods and different teaching approaches. The Poli represent a possible future that will require a great effort in terms of training educators, educators and teachers.

In general, the projects and documentation materials analyzed to date offer a concrete and contextualized example of the way in which it is possible to transform educational planning, rethinking learning activities and, in particular, the relationship with families, the third actor in the educational relationship, in maintaining LEADs.

The educators, aware of the fundamental role of families, especially at that time when schools were closed during which the goal was to continue "doing school, not at school", organized themselves to suggest to parents' activities to be carried out with their children, so as not to interrupt the children's educational path, but also to offer ideas on how to spend peaceful and meaningful time with the family. Here is an extract of a letter that the teachers of a kindergarten addressed to parents: "[...] It is up to us teachers and above all to you parents, even more in this particular time, to pass on to our children and our little girls the certainty and security of not being alone, and that together we overcome even the toughest difficulties ... that's why serenity and hope must be our companions today and for all the days to come. " ("Chalet del sole" kindergarten, Municipio IX).

Many projects (one out of three) report messages from parents that testify to the support received by the teachers through distance learning; the message of a mother of a child who attends kindergarten is reported: "It was a concrete support to our days, a help in planning the precious time available, a way to feel even closer and connected, both with the teachers who among us parents. I never thought I would be able to excite my son by involving him in activities for the simple fact that he knows he is not alone, and that the same activity has been carried out by his friends, each in their own home. It is a sharing of ideas, didactic cards, materials, messages and experiences that mark our long days. Every day we face a different theme, and, in the maximum freedom of the child, we create small works

that will become a reminder of these sensations experienced in the time of the Coronavirus (" Taggia "Kindergarten, Município XIV).

The ministerial note n.388 of 17/3/2020 reminds to pay particular attention to those with learning difficulties and who can experience the situation of isolation with greater criticality: the remote interaction must allow it not to be interrupted, as far as possible, the inclusion process. But the difficulty of the task clearly appears in the emergency situation that does not allow proximity, relationship in presence, sociality within the group, all fundamental aspects, especially in the age group 0-6 years and even more so for children with difficulties, to be accompanied on their growth path.

In the presentation of a project of the Kindergarten, a message from a mother is reported which highlights the importance of the help that was offered to her by the teachers in guiding her child's growth and learning path: "I simply wanted to tell you that A. he was truly fortunate to have met you on his way because I am convinced that, with your dedication in carrying out the work you are assigned to, with your support and with the love you show towards him, he will improve further, with the hope that one day he can live his life in absolute freedom and independence like all his peers. Thank you "(Andersen Kindergarten, Município XIV).

The document of the Ministry of Education Pedagogical guidelines for the integrated system "zerosei"¹⁴ refers to a training ecosystem, where "the multiple cultural influences meet but are not always recognized. They are not "cultures" linked only to the origins of the parents, but also educational cultures, family choices concerning values, children's life regimes, health, nutrition, rules and style of relationships, languages and relations with the various media".

In this complex and varied social reality, the intercultural dimension and plurilingualism require skills that are widespread among educational professionals and forms of encounter between children, between parents and between families and school staff. In the projects analyzed this aspect emerges directly in a partial way, but, rather, in a more transversal way, in the reading activities proposed to girls, boys and their families.

¹⁴ <https://www.miur.gov.it/linee-pedagogiche-per-il-sistema-integrato-zerosei> Access in: 22/06/2021.

Placing ourselves in a post-emergency perspective, it seems to us that the capitalization of the experience gained during the initiative we have described can go in a double direction, through the offer of an institutional Web space to:

1. infant-toddler centers and preschools for sharing educational documentation in a 0-6 perspective;
2. families to facilitate a more active participation by offering them a sort of window on the initiatives implemented in the services, from which to observe the possible declinations of the educational project. Furthermore, this space could be open to families as a window for participation and discussion.

Preparing the material to be shared remotely with girls, boys and their families, has forced educators and teachers to make the additional effort to think of distance as a resource. With this in mind, it was necessary to share and make transparent practices that often remain within educational groups and that do not always find a space of visibility. We believe that this effort to build and disseminate knowledge and experience can also have a value in a self-reflexive and training key for educators and teachers.

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